AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS EMPLOYABILITY EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

EXPLORING THE ISSUES IN A COMPENDIUM OF CASE STUDIES

Editors

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FOREWORD

My father Mungurrawuy Yunupingu of the Gumatj clan, and my mother Makurrngu Gurruwiwi of the Galpu clan gave me inner life balance through the moieties of the Yirritja and Dhuwa. I am Yirritja and my clan is balanced by the Dhuwa clan of my mother.

On the lands of the Gove Peninsula the Yolngu people have contemporary roles, duties and responsibilities of their nation. Across time the Yolngu people have inherited the knowledge of their fathers and mothers as well as the laws learned in repeated song cycles, beginning with the singing by mothers into the ears of their babies and through the discipline of song and dance. Our lives are created through the ceremonies where the laws for ownership of the land and seas are gained and passed to future generations. The universities of the Yolngu people are the ceremonial grounds where the life and essence of the clan is kept in balance. Through the cycles of song and dance generations of Indigenous people have learned how to lead better lives and maintain contact with the land. When the Balanda (non Indigenous) came to Arnhem Land they brought a new type of education that can show the boundaries and borders, set out in the maps of our minds, on djorra' (paper).

My father ensured I embraced the Balanda education. Although concerned I might lose my Gumatj identity he sent me to school at Yirrkala where I began to learn the education relationship between the Yolngu and Balanda worlds. The move into mainstream Australian education was also driven by my teacher Mr Ron Crocksford. He not only continuously harassed my father and mother to send me to school, but steadfastly encouraged my learning. If was during this period of dual learning from my Elders as well as the Balanda teachers at Yirrkala and Brisbane, that the miners came to the Gove Peninsula.

During the next few decades Australian Indigenous people have been dispossessed in comparable ways. Locally, there has been a great deal of conflict between the miners, the government and the Indigenous people. On a wider front while the Australian Indigenous community holds respect and honour of ancestors with endeavours to retain their distinctive linguistic cultural and social frameworks there is confusion as we must learn English and the living style of the Balanda. It has come to pass the younger generation of Indigenous people are relatively poorly educated in the traditional and contemporary social indicators entrenching socio economic disadvantage, and specifically fewer job prospects. Overtime, the Australian Indigenous community has been left out of the economic life of the nation, for seldom has this sector been meaningfully and consistently included in policy debate.

A more peaceful pathway (*mägaya dhukarr*) for resolving these issues is likely to be found in education. Few have lived in the Indigenous and non Indigenous worlds from the time of the Bark Petition – the Barunga Statement – that sparked the notion of reconciliation to the current time. Fewer understand the enormity of the problems confronting contemporary society and indeed, have a vision to guide reconciliation. The required learning can be represented when produced in context and place and packaged in a book to be read and understood in other places. Although traditional structures have long disappeared in most Australian Indigenous communities much of the lost heritage could be revived to improve the pace of development. Meaningful change will follow from honest negotiation by the Indigenous and non Indigenous stakeholders.

Within this book are some insights how genuine Indigenous enterprise has been celebrated across the Australian nation. I invite you to share the knowledge how some of the problems of colliding cultures and languages have been resolved in the immediate past.

Galarrwuy Yunupingu AM
Political Leader of the Gumatj Clan

INTRODUCTION

Cecil A. L. Pearson, John Burgess & Kantha Dayaram

This book is about Indigenous Australians and their commercial engagement with the dominant non indigenous society. Long before the first European settlements in Australia Indigenous people traded not only among themselves, but with seafarer from Asia for hundreds of years to have the distinction of being the first international business merchants of the country. Yet today Australian Indigenous entrepreneurs have largely been excluded from the Australian small business marketplace. There is also a lack of understanding about Australian Indigenous education epistemology and learning pedagogies. Despite ongoing investment in education and training by State and Territory governments, Indigenous Australians remain the most disadvantaged citizens of the nation in terms of health, education and labour market criteria.

This book seeks to understand, engage with and demonstrate through case studies the challenges and the way forward for Indigenous enterprises. The book is designed for the candidates of the MBA Global Programme administered by Curtin University, which resides on traditional ancestral lands of the Noongar peoples. Graduates of the programme are likely to travel paths obliging sensitivity to disparate cultural differences and the material of this book is designed to inform, challenge and engage the candidates.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 overview the elements of the book through case studies located in remote regions of Australia. In Chapter 2 Pearson and Daff describe a national accredited vocational educational training (VET) scheme for Indigenous people that was installed in a secluded mining town in the Northern Territory (NT) of Australia. Initially, the programme focussed on preparing Aboriginal people for employability in the highly regulated Australian mining sector, but relatively few participants embraced the Western learning pedagogy of the programme. Nevertheless, the inaugural introduction to the notion of industrial work commissioned Indigenous epistemology as the VET programme advanced to spawn a burgeoning local Indigenous labour force providing capacity for a

rapidly expanding entrepreneurial sector. The chapter outlines the factors that generated a substantial increase in positive attitudes to work of the Indigenous graduates, and the establishment of a commercial Indigenous business on the remote Gove Peninsula of the NT.

Chapter 3, authored by Pearson, Yunupingu-Marika and Daff, document the pedagogical challenges that confronted the deliverers of the extended VET programme. Differences between Australian Indigenous and non Australian learning pedagogies are delineated and explored with contributions from Western Australian Noongar people, the New South Wales Wiradjuri Elders, as well as Leaders, both women and men, of the Yolngu people of east Arnhem Land of the NT. For thousands of years Aboriginal people used their knowledge and learning to eke out a lifestyle in an inhospitable land supplementing their existence by trading with other clans and seafarers, who visited the Australian coastline. But the intensity of Australian Aboriginal entrepreneurship has declined. Paradoxically, Aboriginal people used their art to reveal and explain to outsiders the meaning and lore that underpinned their society, but today a distinctive feature of Australia's cultural and creative art has been excluded from entrepreneurial, economic opportunities. This situation is explained in later chapters.

In Chapter 4, Pearson and Helms reveal how for decades government programmes designed to finance and support Indigenous small business have been woefully targeted. This is evidenced by the few Aboriginal Australians who have become successful entrepreneurs. Independently, government legislation, specific to Australian mining on Aboriginal land, has been the catalyst to serendipitously foster a prosperous vibrant and sustainable Indigenous social entrepreneurship on the Gove Peninsula of the NT. Conceptually, and different from traditional tenets of entrepreneurship, the emergent framework is coupled with building of community capital and the generation of infrastructure for the common good. These substantive achievements have been elusive to previous government Indigenous specific policies and programmes. The chapter outlines how these local vocationally aligned programmes were developed.

Since the 1993 Native Title Legislation mining companies in Australia have increasingly, but initially reluctantly embraced the Aboriginal world. Historically, the involvement with the Indigenous community was largely unplanned, with a focus on operating the mining and related activities, including the building and servicing of towns. But with the passage of time greater commitments have been made to engage stakeholders in matters of mutual concern. In Chapter 5 Morgan, Singleton and Rola-Rubzen write about corporate engagement with Indigenous communities in terms of environment, culture and knowledge under the umbrella of corporate social responsibility. The message of the chapter is that

successful minerals companies operating in Australia need to be more than just technically competent, they also need to build seamless and efficacious partnerships with the Indigenous community in which their operations are conducted.

Indigenous small business can offer a pathway toward economic independence. However, few Indigenous Australians are employed in entrepreneurial activity, and in desert areas the lack of facilities, limited personal and technical infrastructure, as well as separation from markets, considerably restricts Aboriginal business opportunities. Dayaram and Rola-Rubzen detail in Chapter 6 the role of female Indigenous operators in an agricultural small business that employs local Indigenous knowledge to produce a range of jams, spreads, sauces and non alcoholic drinks, colloquially referred to as bush tucker foods. The business is undertaken in the remote Kimberly region of Western Australia. Implementing effective Aboriginal enterprise development is predicated on culturally appropriate Indigenous community partnerships, and the issues are explored and identified in the chapter.

Art lies at the heart of Australian Aboriginal society. As a medium connecting the spiritual dimension of existence, Australian Indigenous art has profoundly impacted the non Indigenous world. In Chapter 7 Acker positions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in both the local and international contexts, with emphasis on the latter. Generating marketplace interest attracts considerations of remoteness and isolation, historical prejudices, political constraints and economic realities offset by product attractiveness, creativity and ethnographic uniqueness. That Indigenous Australian art holds an important place in the genre of contemporary fine arts is not only demonstrated by financial sales, but by their housing in networks of commercial galleries and dealers, as well as hanging in significant public and private collections. Despite the contribution of Australian Aboriginal art to the enrichment of society and community, a compelling narrative explains why attracting global audiences has been problematic.

Petersen and Congreve focus on factors confronting the sustainability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art centres. In Chapter 8 the authors trace out the establishment of these art centres in remote Aboriginal communities from their church mission heritage to become commercial outlets for Indigenous art works. Regional isolation from the contemporary international and national marketplace has attracted access to commercial finance as well as professional services to support the art centres, normally through public funding. However, contentious policy changes together with changing funding allocations threaten the existence of art centres. The impending demise of these art centres highlights the clash of values and cultures between the Western perspective of business control and ownership, with the Indigenous relationship emphasis of kin obligation and communal ownership.

Aboriginal people are considerably socially excluded in all sectors of Australian society. This condition is prominently demonstrated by a lack of Indigenous voice as Aboriginal people are consistently studied, often by well meaning non Indigenous researchers with systems and frameworks very different to the cultural protocols of Australian Indigenous society. In Chapter 9 Pearson and Burgess flesh out the core of these research regimes that have provided material linked to the formulation of narrowly focussed Aboriginal specific government (Commonwealth, State, Territory) policies and programmes. The chapter discusses the challenges of conducting research in an Indigenous setting and concludes with the proposition a renewed research focus with greater attachment to socio cultural complexities underpinning the Australian Aboriginal community is warranted.

Each chapter is constructed to engage, challenge and inform the reader. At the close of each chapter is the opportunity for readers to evaluate their understanding of what has been read. A guide of the extent of personal acquired knowledge in each chapter can be derived for attempting the **CASE STUDY QUESTIONS** section. Readers are encouraged to go beyond the material presented here and read the recommended references attached to each chapter.

BROKERING INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT AT A REMOTE COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter you should be able to do the following:

1. **Have a wider appreciation of the holistic nature of Aboriginal alternative spiritualties encouraging a profoundly different pathway to equality than the views of non Indigenous Australians.**
2. **Why the social policy assumptions of Australian mining operations require revisitation before they have potential to improve the multiple disadvantages of remote Aboriginal people.**
3. **To develop an understanding of the importance to reconcile traditional Indigenous heritage with mainstream societal values.**
4. **Appreciate how vocation education and enterprise development can be facilitated by partnerships recognising the diverse prior skills and aspirations of the relevant stakeholders.**

Abstract   Ensuring mining activities are socially beneficial to the affected Indigenous people is an extremely difficult task. This chapter provides a historical account how alluvial mining in a remote region of Australia has unexpectedly led to capacity building within the regional Indigenous communities. Emerging from a colonial era, that restricted the growth of social capital in Indigenous communities, the chapter penetrates culturally relevant domains seldom pursued by academics and practitioners. Indeed, the content exposes the struggles experienced by certain proponents and groups of both Indigenous and non Indigenous society. Readers will appreciate some of the substantive obstacles that need to be overcome as the resident Indigenous people strengthen their cognitive processes when endeavouring to balance their traditional heritage with the mainstream values of modernity.

Key Words   Indigenous, Yolngu, Mining, Vocational, Educational

Key Concepts   This chapter explores issues for remote communities within the paradigm of Indigenous social policy. A continuing separation between Indigenous and non Indigenous societies vigorously expressed in controversial perspectives of land rights, a preference for enjoying a hybrid economy lifestyle while fulfilling a degree of social participation in the rubric of mutual obligation are complexities embracing contemporary Australia. The chapter reveals a pathway for a stream of innovative and new directions worthy of consideration.

INTRODUCTION

East Arnhem Land of the Northern Territory (NT) of Australia is the homeland of the Indigenous Yolngu people. Evidence from archaeological, linguistic and historical records reveal ancestors of the current Yolngu people were among the earliest Australians when they travelled on a land bridge from southern Asia to the northern shores of the continent some 50,000 years ago (Muir 2011). Most of today's Yolngu people live in relatively small remote outland centres and communities on their ancestral lands on the Gove Peninsula (Altman 2003). At these places they practice a hybrid economy to include traditional hunter gatherer pursuits supplemented by Federal government financial support arrangements facilitating a bilingual education system encouraging language revival of the clan mother tongue (Altman 2002; Hughes & Warin 2005). The Gove Peninsula is also known as the Miwatj region, meaning the morning side, as it is the most eastern part of the NT. Figure 1 presents places of interest mentioned in this chapter as well as chapters 3 and 4.

The Gove Peninsula was impacted by military action during the Second World War, which was to seed the Australian Indigenous Land Rights Movement. The escalating aggression by the Japanese on the north of Australia in the early 1940s left a legacy of protracted court proceedings concerning Australian Indigenous land rights (Milirrpum v Nabalco Pty Ltd & the Commonwealth of Australia 1971). A number of military aerodromes were constructed in the NT and one of them was at a site later to be named Gove after Sergeant William Julius Henderson Gove, who was killed in 1943 at Rabuma Island, near Milingimbi, when flying an American Hudson bomber. The Australian number eight mobile works squadron was in 1942 assigned the task of building a 5,000 feet airstrip, but when gravel was unavailable bauxite ore was used. Development of a mine site, building a refinery, creation of a town named Nhulunbuy, and construc-

FIGURE 1
Regions of influence of the Indigenous
VET programmes in the Northern Territory
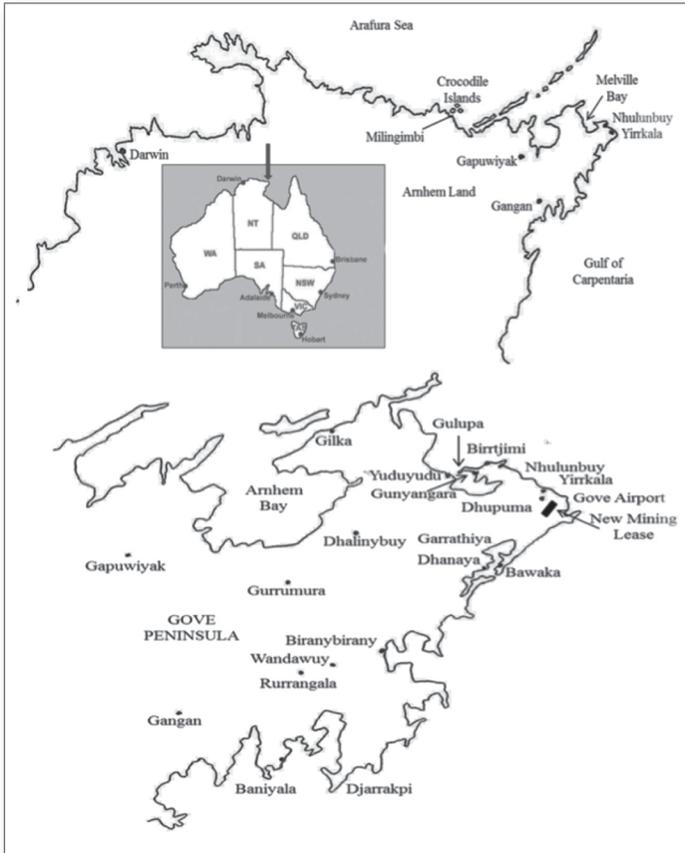
tion of auxiliary infrastructure in the late 1960s was strongly opposed by the local Yolngu people, and the political dispute gained traction in the Australian community over the next two decades (Going for Gove 2008; The Gove Bauxite Development 1968; Trudgen 2000).

Pivotal events at Yirrkala in the 1960s led to the unravelling of colonial constitutional arrangements for mining in Australia. After the arrival of the Reverend Wilbur Chaseling in 1935 many hundreds of Indigenous Yolngu people had left their homeland communities and congregated at the Yirrkala Methodist Mission for spiritual and physical sustenance (Shepherdson 1981). But within two years of the building of the Walkabout Hotel in Nhulunbuy substance abuse was disintegrating the local Aboriginal society. Continuing escalation in substance abuse and grievance for the lack of consultation about land acquisition resulted

in a mass exodus of the Yolngu people back to their ancestral homelands in the early 1970s (Altman 2003). This enclaved action on the Gove Peninsular triggered wider dissent about Indigenous land acquisition. When uranium mining in the NT was controversially undertaken and oil exploration at Noonkanbah (Kimberley Land Council Newsletter 1979) in Western Australia was enforced under police supervision and duress to the local Indigenous people bitterness for these government actions spread as mass rallies on the streets of Australian cities. In 1992 the Mabo decision (Mabo 1992) by the High Court of Australia recognised the rights to land of Australian Aboriginal people (Native Title 2009). The Court ruled Australian common law required that Indigenous rights to land had survived the acquisition of sovereignty of the continent by Britain in 1788 with "… the arrival of Captain Phillip's First Fleet…" (Suter 2003, p. 89).

The preceding paragraphs identify factors that have combined to initiate shifts in public debate on policy for Indigenous Australians. In particular, the brief overview reveals elements of the Yolngu rich heritage have a resounding relationship in reforming the direction of mineral resource extraction legislation in Australia as well as the national policy on Aboriginal land rights. Like other Indigenous societies the Yolngu people are in a journey of crossvergence as they are challenged to search for a fine balance between tradition and key components of modernity. Not unexpectedly, recent public debate has called for a rethinking of socio economic relationships between the Aboriginal community and the wider Australian national culture.

During the past decade a great deal of attention has been given to the issue of how to improve Indigenous employment in northern Australia. Emerging evidence is some of the more robust endeavours, and particularly the implementation of vocational education training (VET) programmes in this environment, are strengthened by partnerships. In spite of the exceptional difficulties of delivering nationally accredited VET programmes in remote regions of Australia, the chapter content adds contribution to the notion of learning partnerships. The content describes how partnerships with registered training organisations, Indigenous enterprises, government (Federal and Territory) departments, and industry reinforced the imperatives of learning generic skills, vital for sustainable employability.

MINING AND INDIGENOUS EMPLOYMENT

Bauxite mining on the Gove Peninsula has profoundly and unexpectedly, shaped the destiny of Yolngu society. Prior to mining commencing a great deal of Yolngu people were camped on the Yirrkala beach that was flanked to the north by the

Arafura Sea and to the south by a large lake of fresh water. Other clans lived in the nearby bush land, but all of these groups were in sight of the church manse and a large cross that had been built to the east of them on an elevated headland (McKenzie 1976). With rudimentary recruitment and selection practices willing Indigenous people were selected and trained to maintain the banana plantation, grow and harvest the root crops, to work in the school or medical centre, or undertake general maintenance to the mission lands. During the war when some 4,000 military personnel were stationed at the Gove airport or Gunyangara, from where a flotilla of PBY Catalina flying boats operated, some 50 Yolngu men were recruited as a reconnaissance unit. This small company was never issued with firearms, but was trained how to make Molotov Cocktails and was exposed to the killing power of a machine gun. There was an expectation this group together with a network of coastal Indigenous communities from the Crocodile Islands to the base of the western side of the Gulf of Carpentaria would defend Australia from Japanese invasion (Thomson 2006). After 1968 when construction began to build the town of Nhulunbuy, the mine site and the refinery instrumental employment practices were used to acquire Yolngu labour. The evidence is that the missionaries selected Yolngu mission workers, who travelled by bus to the work sites, where they would undertake low skilled tasks at the Northern Australian Bauxite and Alumina Company (NABALCO), but once the mining operations began in 1971 the company ceased Indigenous employment (Cousins & Nieuwenhuysen 1984).

Transitioning an Indigenous Labour Force

The Nhulunbuy mining refinery operations have directly and indirectly delivered job opportunities for Indigenous Australians. Refinery construction provided employment for Yolngu men in low skilled tasks while a high demand for sand cement bricks was met by Yirrkala Business Enterprises (YBE) operating a brickworks at the Nhulunbuy industrial site (3 km west of the town and is still there today, but derelict) where a small group of Yolngu males under non Indigenous supervisors made the product. When the refinery began operating and the demand for bricks declined these Yolngu workers were made redundant. Two of the early Nhulunbuy buildings to be completed were the four stories Gove House for single men accommodation, and a large industrial laundry. A number of Yolngu females, supervised by a German lady, washed and ironed the linen for Gove House, but when the Yolngu clans returned to their homelands the women ceased their employment. For a relatively short time a number of Yolngu men and women experimented with social reconfiguration and work practices in these arrangements that were radically different to traditional lifestyles.

A sea change in improving the mainstream employment prospects of Indig-

enous Australians in the Nhulunbuy mining/refining operations was to take three decades. Despite assumptions establishing a mining operation in a remote region will redress the chronic dysfunction of Indigenous communities (i.e., low life expectancy, low levels of formal education, and labour participation, high infant mortality, high levels of cardio vascular disease as well as unhygienic and poor housing) Indigenous participation in Australian mining workforces remains low. The regulatory regimes of the Australian mining industry influence the entry levels of employee formal education and training. Consequently, most people who work at these sites have nationally recognised training, a trade qualification or an university degree. Furthermore, they must be over 18 years of age, physically fit to be able to work in onerous and dangerous task domains, committed to safety, to be free of recreational drugs and alcohol, and to attend regularly and punctually (Industry Snapshot 2010). Few Indigenous Yolngu have been employed in contemporary work places. Moreover, Australian Indigenous society is involved in alternative spiritualties with the non human environment that have origins in *Dreamtime* creation stories (Muir 2011) and this knowledge has to be orally learned at cultural days and festivals requiring frequent long absences from the workplace (Yunupingu 2009). Furthermore, long standing evidence attests Australian Indigenous people suffer marginalisation and exclusion from mainstream education institutions (Hughes & Warin 2005) leading to many of the local Yolngu job applicants lacking critical literacy and numeracy competencies. Traditionally, Indigenous Australians have been detached from the mining industry, and ill equipped to fulfil the task demands. But in the last decade and a half resource extraction corporations operating in Australia have taken a more proactive approach to increasing Indigenous participation in mining workforces (Biddle, Taylor & Yap 2009).

INDIGENOUS VET PROGRAMMES AT NHULUNBUY

There have been three proactive approaches by the resident mining companies at Nhulunbuy to improve the level of Aboriginal employment. First, was the Y(BE) N(ABALCO) Operator Training School (YNOTS) scheme. Second, was the Arnhem Learning Education and Regional Training (ALERT) programme. Third, is the recent Ralpa and Goyurr initiatives that are aligned with the continuing ALERT programme. Each of these training and employment arrangements is described in greater detail.

The YNOTS Scheme

The YNOTS programme was a product of a tripartite partnership between YBE, NABALCO and the Australian Federal Government. This scheme, which commenced on 16th July 2001 with 34 trainees from 60 male Yolngu applicants,

was for a 30 week nationally accredited training course. Graduates completed modules in road construction, earthworks, equipment operations, and life skills (e.g., work routines, health and safety, financial management). The trainees were recruited from the Indigenous communities of Galaru, Gapuwiyak, Gunyangara, and Yirrkala; and training was undertaken some seven km beyond the Gove airport on the mining lease. The YNOTS course was officially launched on Monday 1st October 2001 by Klaus Helms and Cynthia Carroll of NABALCO. The Federal Government Department of Employment Workplace Relations and Small Business were represented by Josie Guy and Senators Trish Crossing and Warren Snowden, the NT Government by Syd Stirling, and YBE by the Chairman Dangatanga Gondarra (EWN Publishing 2002). A total of 19 Yolngu men graduated from the first course.

Paradoxically, the success of YNOTS led to its abolition, but like the mythical phoenix was to rebirth in other VET arrangements. When the refinery operations were commenced in 1971 the complex was designed to produce 800 tonnes per annum (tpa) of alumina, but by 2004 the capacity had grown to 1.9 million tpa, and the mining corporation Alcan proposed to secure future operations by expanding capacity to 3.8 million tpa (Alcan Gove 2008). This project was massive. A workforce of some 6,000 skilled personnel was brought to Nhulunbuy, and these people were accommodated in fully messed buildings that were brought to the town for the life of the project. One of the biggest industrial developments in Australia, estimated at U.S. $2.5 billion (Alcan Gove 2008) would require an even greater workforce, and the focus was on YNOTS, which was transformed to a labour pool. When the expansion of the Gove refinery drew to a close in October to December 2007 many of the now work experienced Indigenous people were provided work opportunity by YBE, thus, the company was not inclined to continue the YNOTS scheme. The new mining operator Rio Tinto Alcan Gove saw advantage in divesting the NABALCO experiment of YNOTS as the company had a different vision for Indigenous VET. This was the birth of ALERT.

The ALERT Scheme

The ALERT programme is a nationally accredited VET scheme. A minimum attainment of graduates is the award of Certificate I Resources and Infrastructure Operations when four mandatory units and four elective units are completed to nationally recognised standards that are delivered by registered training organisations (RTOs). Some graduates further their skills and educational qualifications to levels of Certificate II, III or IV in streams that are orientated to industry and business training. The ALERT VET programme, which provides a pathway for Indigenous people to achieve a systemic lifestyle change, has a number of unique features.

An important dimension of the ALERT programme is the delivery of skills and relevant work knowledge to award levels of national recognition. In Australia, the VET sector, which is the largest provider of post compulsory education, has three key features.

1. Industry led. The employers and industry representatives define what outcomes will be acquired from the training.
2. National focus. The Australian VET system is jointly managed by State, Territory and Australian Governments.
3. Client focussed. The delivered VET programme has flexibility and relevance to be responsive to the needs of the client.

These elements had a significant bearing on the delivered ALERT programme courses. On the one hand the Nhulunbuy client required instruction that had regional relevance. On the other hand the regional deliverers had a response capacity. Each Australian State and Territory maintains a set of publicly owned Tertiary and Further Education (TAFE) colleges/institutions. A number of the ALERT programme courses were delivered by the Nhulunbuy TAFE with some presenters travelling from Darwin. While the importance of VET is recognised in the pursuit of delivering education and training for the current and future needs of business and industry there are discernible barriers "… across different regions of Australia." (Walstab & Lamb 2009, p.453). The ALERT programme was not immune from these challenges. Consequently, the resident mining company as the facilitator of the ALERT programme, was obliged to engage in a number of partnerships and relationships to address issues of infrastructure, course delivery, technology as well as training and development in relevant skill sets.

Preparing the ALERT Programme. Long before the ALERT scheme began operating extensive networking occurred. At the local level far reaching dialogue was held in informal or formal meetings with Indigenous and non Indigenous people in forums across the hierarchical spectrum of society. For residual records much of the pertinent detail about ALERT was presented in a written report of some 90 pages prepared by the second author. A primary objective of this report was to garner support from a wide array of stakeholders including the Traditional Land Owners, Indigenous organisations (national, tertiary, local), Australian governments (Federal, State, Territory and Local), educational institutions, the business sector as well as the mining industry. Conversion of existing buildings to make them suitable for teaching and administration staff, recruiting ALERT trainees, providing equipped classrooms as well as hygiene facilities and auxiliary equipment consumed considerable resources in terms of time and funding. While a plethora of other matters were needing attention, too many to list here, one issue that continued to attract investment of importance, and had remained unresolved after a year of investigation was the selection

process, that was the requirement the programme be oral based. The reason being that many of the participants did not possess the literacy skills required to negotiate course notes and textbooks.

An invitation was made to the first author to design a non literal test that would assess the capacity to learn industrial work skills. At the Nhulunbuy site a six item instrument devoid of English symbols was developed, pre tested twice, and administered to Indigenous Yolngu applicants within a fortnight. The primary objective of the test is to assess 18 aptitudes of a candidate, and hence, the label of Discovery Session 1. And according to the seminal work of the renowned American sociologist E. Lawler (1981) that an aptitude is a function of ability, the aptitude scores of the Discovery Session are surrogates of ability.

During a one hour period the candidate works on six activities to obtain a total aptitude score (i.e., summation of 18 aptitudes). As each activity is undertaken an assessor gauges three different aptitudes each one with seven, seven point interval scales. To obtain consistency of scoring over time a score profile has been written for each activity. Data have been collated since the initial use of the Discovery Session 1 in May 2007 from a total of 13 assessors of which 53.8% were Indigenous people. Assessments reveal the reliability of the assessors is greater than 90%, and the Discovery Session 1 is a robust predictor of employability. Greater delineation of the Discovery Session 1 activities and the assessments have been presented (Pearson & Daff 2011).

Execution of the ALERT Programme. The first selection process was undertaken in May 2007, but recruitment began a lot earlier. Core contemporary values of the Yolngu people are a result of continual modification of the principles of their traditional law and living, the *Maḏayin*. The emergent norms, that guide interactions to generate knowledge and trust to facilitate cooperation, are constructed around blood lines of kinship as well as obligation to reciprocation in a gift giving society. While the networks and norms give capacity for mutual and collective benefits they are inextricably connected to the immediate and extended family. Within the mindset of the Yolngu people family is a stronger stimulus for ensuring life success than exposure to training; a contention reinforced by low rates of Australian Indigenous formal education. Consequently, connection with the nuclear and extended family within the community was the central theme of processes employed for the recruitment of ALERT candidates. For several weeks in advance of a programme intake there was extensive interaction between ALERT personnel and the local Indigenous community. At the close of this process the applicants did complete a written family contract, and while this formal agreement had utilitarian value for the mining company administrative records, of greater importance to the family was the building of trust and binding social relationships with the ALERT staff.

During the initial weeks of the ALERT programme compliance regulations were completed. For those without Birth Certificates identification processes had to be initiated so the ALERT trainees could open a bank account, be issued with a taxation file number, have connection to Centrelink, and begin the creation of a superannuation portfolio. Those Yolngu people who may have worked previously, and even the majority who had been on welfare, needed to have their arrangements finalised before their first fortnightly payment, but even more demanding was the more consuming investment required for those trainees who came from extremely remote places (e.g., Elcho Island), and did not have prior identification. Within the first week all candidates had to undergo a compulsory medical examination, be issued with personal protective equipment (PPE), and complete a selection procedure.

The selection procedure had three main parts. First, candidates completed a Discovery Session 1. Second, a rudimentary assessment of numeracy was undertaken with a long piece of paper on which was written a line of numbers from 1 to 100. The assessor announced a number, the candidate had to say the next number and point to it on the line. An overview of number relativity was determined with four cards, and on each one was written the same four numbers (e.g., 1 2 3 4), but the decimal point was between a different pair of numbers. The candidate was required to put the cards in ascending or descending order of numerical worth. Third, an appreciation of English literacy was obtained with five flash cards, and on each one a different common word was printed. The candidate was asked to read the word. Also, candidates were given seven plastic letters (vowels and consonants) and asked to use the letters to make words, and once a word was made the letters could be reused to make another word. The candidates were invited to write a few words to answer the three questions,

- Where is your favourite place? What do you like about the place?
- What do you do in your spare time?
- In five years what would you like to have achieved?

Candidates were asked to write their name and also their signature. In the following week delineation of English reading competency was obtained when candidates completed a Burt Test (reading age), and a TORCH Test (Test of Reading CompreHension).

Instruction is given at the ALERT centre or the Nhulunbuy TAFE. The ALERT centre is on a 0.6 hectare site, bounded with security fencing and within is four main blocks of buildings. One block has washrooms, toilets, and adjoining lockable units for industrial washers and dryers for the PPE. A second block has a series of individual rooms for housing different categories of industrial equipment. The remaining two blocks of buildings each have a large teaching

room equipped with computers and an array of modern teaching equipment, accommodation for instructors and administrative staff, and business related furnishings (i.e., cupboards, printers). At the Nhulunbuy TAFE there are fully equipped teaching rooms and large industrial workshops, and at this site the ALERT trainees receive instruction in the trade skills of carpentry, painting, sheet metal working, and welding. The delivery of the curriculum is by the primary RTO, which is the Charles Darwin University (CDU). Other RTOs were engaged to deliver instruction in units (e.g., working at heights, first aid, fork lift operating) that could not be given by CDU. The knowledge and skill sets taught at the ALERT premises and the TAFE facility were practiced under supervision at the mine site and the refinery, or at job sites within the town precincts. Candidates are transported from their homes to the ALERT and TAFE centres, then to the job sites and at the end of the day are returned home by the mining company bus. A work week was for five days.

Following the selection procedure the successful ALERT applicants were contracted in two main generic streams – *Work Ready* and *Work Starts*. These two streams provided flexibility and adaptability for meeting the needs of the Indigenous trainees. Work Ready was the destination of ALERT trainees with lesser educational and vocational competencies. The important objectives of Work Ready are to instil habits of attendance and punctuality, to encourage the trainees to listen and acquire technical skills as well as industrial knowledge so they can work in the Nhulunbuy mining operations or in sustainable jobs in the wider community. Work Starts provides an early point of departure for an array of vocational and further educational opportunities such a secondment, traineeships, apprenticeships or operator positions at the refinery. Initially, Work Starts enables Indigenous people to have casual employment and eventually, like Work Ready participants, to transition into full time employment.

For the first two years the ALERT participants came from Indigenous communities within a 15 km radius of Nhulunbuy. The communities were Galupa, Galaru (now closed), Gunyangara, and Yirrkala. In 2009 there were two significant events that were to onset a shift in the ALERT programme. First, the ALERT programme was judged by the NT Department of Education and Training as the winner of the 2009 Training Initiative Award, and this resulted in a flurry of applications from across northern Australia to participate in the programme. Second, at this time some of the accommodation that had been required for the upgrading project was still on site and this enabled the mining corporation to provide single person fully messed facilities. The net effect was the recruitment catchment could be extended beyond the surrounds of Nhulunbuy. Today, ALERT participants come from all Australian states, but mainly from northern Australia (i.e., NT, Queensland, Western Australia).

The Ralpa and Goyurr Schemes

The ALERT programme was created in a period of working a mining lease that was tenured within a framework from the colonial era. From the 1960s a partnership between the resident mining corporation at Nhulunbuy and the Indigenous community had been developed with greater control lying with the government sector and less with the Aboriginal community. Recently, there was a shift in the focus of control. On the 8th June 2011 there was a reconfiguration of control when on that day, at Yirrkala, the Prime Minister of Australia, Julia Gillard signed the historic Land Use Agreement (LUA) for a period of 42 years. The Traditional Land Owners of the Gumatj, Rirratjingu, and Galpu Clans, The Northern Land Council, and the mining corporation Rio Tinto Alcan had set in place new patterns of Indigenous VET programmes, and by the 7th of November 2011 the leaders of the Traditional Land Owners had agreed to the formation of a Working Group whose primary responsibility would be to develop a Regional Employment Strategy.

An urgency to employ Yolngu people in local jobs provided a distinctive stream for ALERT. The aptly chosen title was *Ralpa* for when translated from the mother tongue it means to get things done quickly. This action would be a response to the short term priority. Nevertheless, it was recognised the longer term issue of getting younger people to learn the value of going to school to get an education in order to get off welfare by working would not be neglected. Consequently, this worthwhile notion would be processed by making a continual investment in building educational partnerships with the local and homeland schools. By September 2013 stronger linkages were being established with the homeland communities at both the youth and adult levels. The short term objective was realised by the commencement of the first Ralpa programme on the 30th January 2012 with an intake of 15 Yolngu men.

Before the first Ralpa scheme was completed a number of Yolngu women were agitating for an opportunity to participate in a VET programme. The second Ralpa programme was in fact a male and a female programme run conjointly, but the morning and afternoon sessions alternated weekly. On one week the men had a morning education session and an afternoon vocation activity, while the women had their education session in the afternoon and their vocation period in the morning. The following week the sessions were reversed. While there are cultural reasons for sometimes separating Indigenous male and females (e.g., poison cousins, men's business and women's business) the main considerations for the Ralpa programme were pragmatic. For example, the capacity of the class rooms, and that most of the women could only communicate in their mother tongue while most of the men had a rudimentary competency in English as well

as the fact targeted jobs were quite different encouraged separate venues and curriculum intensity variations. Much of the course work for the women was aligned with culinary, business and horticulture as their jobs (and now are) were to be in a coffee shop, a general store, and a nursery at Gunyangara, while the men were more likely to be working in timber production, cattle station work, or as Rangers or building trade assistants. To differentiate the two streams the programme for the women was labelled *Goyurr*, which translates as a journey.

Installing the Ralpa and Goyurr Programmes. Recruitment and selection of participants for the Ralpa and Goyurr programmes was compatible with the ALERT scheme. Involvement of the local Indigenous community strengthened connection with the parents who preferred to keep their children (young adults to adults) at home, while lessening the reluctance of potential trainees. Many of the populous had not been able to manage learning at the Nhulunbuy secondary school; some had experimented with the Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) scheme that allows Indigenous people to work on an ad hoc basis; and most obtained financial support from welfare leaving them educationally and vocationally disadvantaged. However, a number of local Indigenous and non Indigenous organisations (Bunuwal, Dhimurru, Giovenco, Marngarr) advanced the names of potential candidates who were interviewed by ALERT personnel. Family contracts and an orientation period helped to ease candidates into the programme. All applicants were invited to complete a Discovery Session 1, but those people who were obviously English linguistic and numerically disadvantaged were not asked to do the full selection procedures. English reading tests were seldom employed.

The ALERT VET scheme and the Ralpa/Goyurr programmes had substantially different purposes. Entrance to the Nhulunbuy refinery or mine site is conditional on the acquisition of induction certification, which has underpinnings in general knowledge, literacy and numeracy skills. Furthermore, to work at these places obliges the possession of knowledge and skill competencies that can take a relatively long time to acquire. Depending on their previous vocational and formal educational skill sets ALERT trainees could take up to a year before they could work in mainline jobs in the Nhulunbuy operations. Understandably, the Working Group did not nominate mining related jobs, but rather green type jobs that require lesser education/skill requirements than those competencies required in the Australian mining sector.

The decision by the Working Group to choose green type jobs is attractive on two grounds. First, the identified jobs had relatively fewer knowledge/technical competencies than sustainable mainstream jobs in the wider community. Hence,

the knowledge and skills for the nominated jobs are likely to be learned more quickly enabling quicker participation in the labour workforce. But second, there is also a cultural facet in green type jobs. Green jobs do not attract the forces of conciliation that are a magnet for mineral extraction activity on Indigenous lands, as the mining impinges on the *Dreaming* for Australian Indigenous people.

Indigenous Australian people have a heritage in a very different set of culture and economic circumstances to the dominant Australian society. The links Australian Aboriginal people have with the land was voiced by Stanner (1979) when he emphatically revealed the connection in his book *White Man Got No Dreaming.* Nearly 30 years later the point is reiterated by Galarrwuy Yunupingu when it was reported he claimed Indigenous Australians value their land far beyond the imposed economic potential.

> For Aboriginal people there is literally no life without the land. The land is where our ancestor came from in the *Dreamtime*, and it is where we shall return. The land binds our fathers, ourselves, and our children together. If we lose our land we have lost our lives and our spirits, and no amount of social welfare can ever make it up to us. (Resource Indigenous Perspectives 2007, p. 1).

The relationship between green jobs and the Australian extraction sector was recently given by David Collard. A coordinator of Indigenous employment for the National Resource Management Programme Mr Collard was reported to have said "Indigenous people would rather have green-friendly jobs that would heal the land, not mining jobs that involve tearing it up." (Macdonald 2012, p. 1).

While Australian Indigenous people may have shown a reluctance to be employed in the mining industry living tradition is based on ritual practices. Over time these traditions and practices merge with economic and ecological responsibilities accrued by the Indigenous custodians of the respective land and seas. Expectedly, the "... low-foot print industries that maximise wealth and job creation while sustaining ecological processes ..." (Blanch 2008, p.112) have resonated with the local Yolngu people, and some of the ALERT graduates who have returned to non mining jobs on their homelands. An audit of the achievements of the ALERT and derivative VET programmes that have been sponsored by the mining company in learning partnerships is presented.

ATTAINMENTS OF THE VET PROGRAMMES

Figure 2 shows the relevant vocational pathways of the ALERT programme. It is revealed by Figure 2 that from 456 registered applicants 80 Indigenous

people transitioned into full time sustainable well paid jobs. Leakages from the final vocational destiny were mainly attributable to a gap in expectations. From exit interviews it was observed many of the 137 who registered to join the scheme and did not proceed had believed ALERT was another government welfare scheme, they expected their inadequate and unsuitable previous school endeavours would enable them to pathway into ALERT, or their Aboriginality would command a place in ALERT. The 45 who withdrew at the selection stage finally came to a realisation they would have to make considerable investment and that there were 'softer' options elsewhere. During the ALERT programme there were a further 95 departures. The majority (65) left because the gap between a traditional life style and the regime of the industrial workplace was a 'step too far', while dismissals were a feature of a failure to prepare for work. Prior to being accepted into ALERT 52 applicants had been excluded on medical grounds, mostly for substance abuse, and this was the core reason for some of the dismissals. A number of 80 (15% women) Indigenous people from 175 ALERT participants might be considered a remarkable achievement. Almost all the finalists claimed they had never previously worked or at best had been employed in low skilled casual work.

The impersonal information of Figure 2 fails to display the personal dimensions. At graduation ceremonies outbursts from parents who for the first time have experienced their offspring achieving a milestone of substantive worth in the dominant national culture can be an unexpected emotive event. For the non Indigenous audience accustomed to graduates adorned in academic regalia to view award recipients dressed in traditional ornaments and marked with symbolic clay reinforces the cultural journey being undertaken. Less explainable for the non Indigenous observer is the handful of graduates who discontinued their new found career, deciding to return to their homeland style of living after completing the ALERT programme. The obverse is graduates who have continued their educational vocational progression and are employed at the

FIGURE 2
Job relevant outcome of ALERT programme May 2007 to July 2012

Applications ———	Selection ———	ALERT ———	Fulltime work	
456	248	175	Mining	Community
			47	33
│	│	│		
Did not proceed	Leakages	Losses		
137 Disinterested	45 Withdrew	65 Withdrew	34 Minestie	17 Home lands
43 Literacy	24 Medical	26 Dismissals	Refinery	11 Shire
28 Medical	4 Literacy	4 Custodial	9 Secondments	2 Healthcare
208	73	95	4 Apprentices	3 Cattle station

Nhulunbuy refinery completing Certificate IV units, or those who are fly in fly out operators of heavy machinery at the mine site. There are also the Indigenous graduates who have chosen to reside in their communities and now work in a vibrant timber industry including furniture production, or eco tourism, on the Garrathiya cattle station and abattoir with connection to colleagues who are engaged in meat processing or creating wholesome meals in the industrial kitchens at Gunyangara. A salient spin off of the ALERT programme has been the emergence of an educated and skilled Indigenous labour force that has spawned a host of new Aboriginal businesses on the Gove Peninsula.

The objective data of the ALERT applicants were evaluated. Of the 248 Indigenous people who entertained the selection process 244 of them provide the following detail.

- A Discovery Session 1 score.
- Their reading age in years.

Within this group there were 125 local Yolngu people and 119 other Indigenous people who came from a variety of Australian states. The former has been categorised as locals and latter as externals to differentiate them in a two tailed T Test analysis of their responses. The external group had more favourable results.

- The local Yolngu had a mean Discovery Score 1 of 599.6 while the external group had a mean of 678.9 and these scores were significantly different at the $p < 0.0001$ level.

- The mean English reading age of the Yolngu sample was 7.88 years while the externals had a mean reading age of 13.29 years, and these scores were significantly different at the $p < 0.0001$ level.

The results of the T Tests provide a plausible explanation why 41 of the 47 ALERT graduates (see Figure 2), who were employed in mainline work at Nhulunbuy, were externals.

Figure 3 shows the job relevant outcomes for the Ralpa and Goyurr programmes. The evidence is in a relatively short time of 18 months 46 Yolngu Indigenous people transitioned into mainline jobs, yet prior to their participation in the VET most of them were on welfare. Today a majority of them are working in a recently created local job market. A small number of the graduates have returned to their previous employer (e.g., Bunuwal, Dhimmuru, Marngarr) with extended vocational skill sets, but most are employed in newly created Indigenous projects. Notable is a hardwood timber industry that provides planks and slabs of high quality material for the maintenance and building of houses as well as furniture making. Another team of Yolngu men are contracted by the

FIGURE 3
Vocational career paths of Ralpa and Goyurr Programmes
from January 2012 to July 2013

```
Applications ———— Selection ———————— Fulltime work
    78                 63                        46
    |                  |
Did not proceed     Leakages           10  Timber and furniture
    15              15  Dismissal       10  Town landscaping
                     1  Withdrew         8  Indigenous organisations
                     1  Custodial        1  Government
                                         4  Education
                                         9  Private sector
```
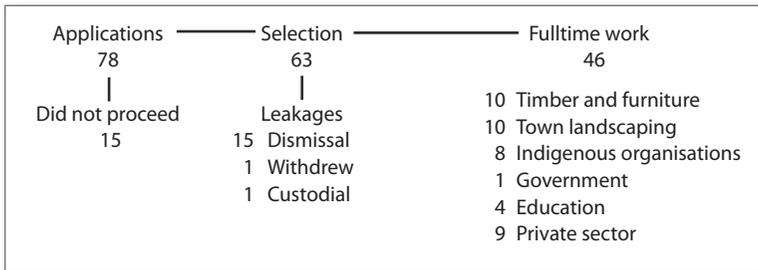
resident mining corporation to maintain the gardens and grasslands of selected Nhulunbuy houses and the town flats, while women graduates are employed in the recently opened general store, coffee shop and the expanded horticulture nursery at Gunyangara. Collectively, the availability of skilled and willing workers has provided impetus for an explosion in green jobs within the developing Gove Peninsula Yolngu industry.

An enormous range of jobs has arisen from the ALERT, Ralpa and Goyurr programmes. As there are many distinctly different jobs preventing individual description here, a representative sample is presented as a collage of 12 photographs labelled 1 to 12 in Figure 4. A better appreciation of the 12 photographs shown in Figure 4 can be obtained by reference to the following legend.

1. Operating a Lucas mill in the savannah forest
2. Operating a Lucas mill in the savannah forest
3. Building material ready for transport to a building site
4. Constructing the house at Dhanaya
5. Slabbing a log with a Lucas mill
6. Product of slabbed timber
7. Preparing house footings
8. Culinary training at ALERT
9. Working in the Gunyangara furniture shop
10. Maintaining town flats gardens
11. Gunyangara coffee shop in the fore ground and general store to the rear
12. Preparing for a shift driving a 100 tonne haul truck

The evidence of Figure 4 reveals a variety of different jobs have flowed from the Indigenous VET programme undertaken at Nhulunbuy. Previous endeavours by Australian governments to rebuild fragmented remote communities with

FIGURE 4
A collage of Indigenous educational and vocational settings
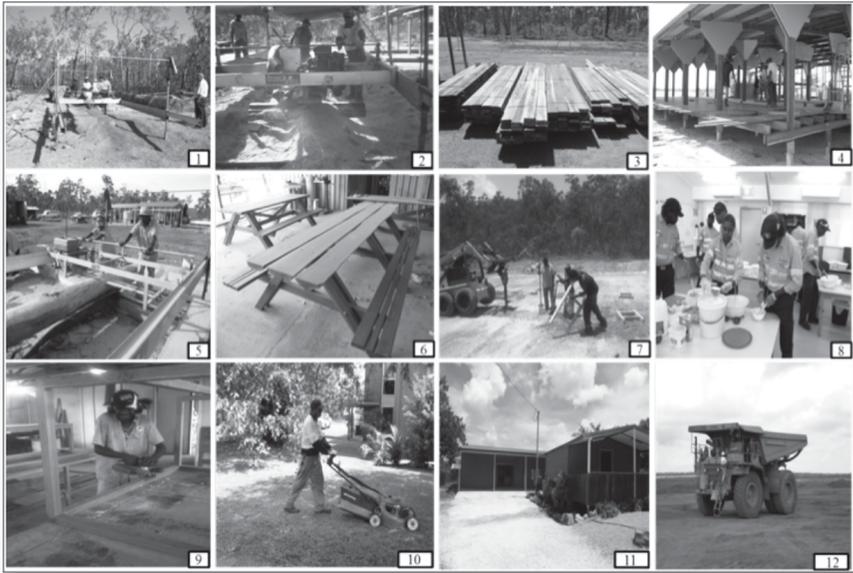
notions of communal land ownership have been relatively unsuccessful. The VET programme on the Gove Peninsula is the fore runner of a new deal with potential to lessen deprivation from welfare dependence.

CONCLUSION

In spite of considerable public debate, a stream of government policies and interventions the Australian Indigenous society continues to be among the most socially and economically disadvantaged in the nation. The earliest approaches to remedy the inequities were designed to isolate the 'problem' by the dispossession and segregation of Aboriginal people, but under mounting pressure from the international and national communities the 1967 constitutional referendum led to the recognition of Aboriginal people as Australian citizens. A decade later the CDEP scheme was introduced in a response to unemployment benefits being paid in remote communities where there was no work. This experiment was curtailed in 2013. An offset of the 1993 Native Title legislation has not led to a substantial transition of unemployed Indigenous people into mainline jobs in the Australian mining sector. Since the 1970s the introduced socialist experiment of universalism (in Australian remote communities), which alludes to equal and fair administration of the law, confronts difficulty in recognising different people, and particularly

those in remote regions, who have very different cultural and economic circumstances to the dominant values of the wider Australian community.

While the complexities of Australian Aboriginal culture can compound difficulties in facilitating Indigenous VET programmes the lack of reporting achievements is neglectful. Undoubtedly learning partnerships with Indigenous communities have been undertaken in Australia, but seldom have the outcomes been articulated with robust description. Much of the material is anecdotal, regularly founded in secondary data, and usually the micro level information is obtuse by the employment of percentages that hide missing data. The delineation of accreditation extent of the training and development together with direct ties to graduate entry to mainline jobs is scant. Even the job positions are ill defined by categories as low skills or blue collar. Often the material being presented to the public is not voiced by the Indigenous people, and although well meaning is often from observation and study in convenient suburban domains where some 75% of the Australian Indigenous people reside. Hence, the reported material may be biased to the level of suggesting the existence of a homogenous Indigenous culture. Yet there are discernible differences in language, and art as well as fundamentally different lifestyles between urban and regional Australian Aboriginal people. This chapter casts a new mould in the literature by rebuilding the research methodology.

Indigenous authority has a central role in best practice learning. Prior to the historic 2011 Land Use Agreement Indigenous authority was latent, a likely outcome of the stakeholders nurturing learning partnerships. Within a remarkable short time of defining the ownership role of the Clans of the Traditional Land Owners that were respectful and sensitive to the development of community interests new frameworks were created. Within a period of months the flow of graduates was to provide a renaissance in labour force participation enabling the growth of local Indigenous projects. Partnership between Indigenous organisations, the resident mining company, and government (Federal and Territory) departments has rapidly generated innovative and flexible work integrated learning approaches that are engaging the community while delivering regional employment opportunity.

Case Study Questions

A Western consortium has been invited by the national government of a developing country to install a Build Operate Transfer (BOT) arrangement in a remote region of the country. In spite of the positive promotional objectives of BOT schemes, that are employed as facilitators of national economic development and structures for the attenuation of grass roots

disadvantaged socio economic status of the residents (and as mechanisms for creating sustainable employment where few jobs exist), there have been a significant number of failures (Pearson, Entrekin & Safina 2004). Generally, the technical and economic pillars have been soundly formulated, but more often the social ethos has received inadequate scrutiny leading to operational activity being maintained by heavily armed security and eventual project abandonment. Recent examples have been reported in Australia and neighbouring countries.

1. Identify the challenges that attract forces of conciliation in networks exercising discursive values of cultural spiritualties and marketplace priorities.
2. Provide an overview of factors that can be barriers and challenges to well intentioned radical reform initiatives that would be installed to increase the wellbeing and quality of life of the regional Indigenous populations in dimensions of health, education and employment.
3. Nominate the processes for facilitating effective learning and engagement practices in cross cultural frameworks.
4. When framing the response separate the commercial aspirations from an interest in solving community problems in regimes where participative policy processes have not been embedded.

Selected Readings

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CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter you should be able to do the following:

1. **Appreciate there are substantial differences between Indigenous and non Indigenous learning pedagogies.**
2. **Understand that how people think and learn is strongly linked with their inherited culture.**
3. **Appreciate that there are a variety of Aboriginal pedagogies that managers might explore when undertaking social and political reconciliation between Indigenous and non Indigenous employees.**
4. **Develop an awareness recognising and catering to understand Indigenous pedagogy is likely to be heightened by ethnographic approaches.**

Abstract   Contemporary Australian mainstream educational frameworks engaging Indigenous people are confronted by pedagogical challenges. More revered Indigenous voiced learning methodologies tend to be pre colonised grounded in relational knowledge espousing creational and ancestral attributes in contrast to Western based individual knowledge acquired in structured repetitive systems. The irreconcilable nature of these two different streams promotes misunderstanding and resistance, particularly by the Indigenous participants, to the teaching method and content absorption. Discounting culturally appropriate education by deliverers from industrial society can ground social dilemmas that manifest as poorer living standards and lower labour force participation rates.

Key Words   Indigenous learning pedagogies, Noongar, Wiradjuri, Yolngu

Key Concepts Indigenous Australians are a marginalised group of people seldom sharing the benefits of the national economic prosperity. The extent of work insecurity or welfare dependence across Aboriginal society has conveniently been attributed to the non engagement with the Australian education network Central to this notion is the Indigenous Australian national education system articulates key differences in learning pedagogies and the competing foundations for enculturation.

INTRODUCTION

Strong links have been identified between learning processes and culture. In Western capitalist society the direction of education has always been aligned with personal wealth, the division of labour, class structure and educational credentials (Blenkhorn & Fleisher 2010; Reynolds 2005). In Australia Aboriginal society the important education elements are life related and inspired. Namely, hunter gatherer pursuits, knowledge of the seasons as well as responsibilities associated with relationships and kinship are central to learning (Altman 2002; Foley 2006; Nichol 2008). A wide body of research (Christie 1986; Harrison 2004; Hughes, More & Williams 2004) has demonstrated Western paradigms of learning have antithetical features to Aboriginal pedagogy.

The primary objective of mainstream Australian education is to prepare the educands for employability. Fundamentally, attached to this goal is an expectation there will be attainment of proficiency in numeracy and English literacy with an emphasis on raising the participant skills profile as well as the development of knowledge application and critical thinking competencies (Khan & Brunner 2010; Nilsson 2010). Delivery of these ideals is often undertaken within a pedagogy in relatively structured mass forums with learning occurring in linear acquisition of segmented elements of information (Duron, Limbach & Waugh 2006; Research Digest 2013).

In spite of the implementation of multiculturalism policies by the Australian governments there are cleavages within the prominent education system. Robin Ewing (2010) mapped connections between knowledge and compliance within the landscape of contemporary Australian civic education designed to prepare people for life circumstances. Contemporary secular education has a heavy focus on English literacy, numeracy and the sciences with some acknowledgement of the intrinsic value of art in regulated institutions. Across time it has

become apparent Indigenous Australians are not monolithic, and amongst a myriad of different groups there are a diversity of cultures and ways of learning (Dunn et al. 2010). Indeed, Tyson Yunkaporta (2009) specifically identified eight Australian Aboriginal pedagogies that can overlap across cultural groups, while Nichol (2008) identified similar as well as alternative methods of learning by Indigenous people. Harrison (2011) has been recorded as claiming there are competing logic systems between the Western learning model and the extra ordinarily complex Indigenous way of learning. An opportunity to appreciate the nuanced underpinnings of the "… delicate, important and sensitive issue[s] for Indigenous people …" (Browne 2010, p. 34) within "… the diversity and dynamic interplay between …" (Harrison 2011, p. 36) the opposite forces of these two systems attracts reflection and personal engagements.

This chapter explores the learning backgrounds of a number of Indigenous Elders. Personal observations, prior research endeavours and discussions with Indigenous people provide the background for the material presented in this chapter. The respondents reside in southern Western Australia (Noongar people), central New South Wales (Wiradjuri people), and east Arnhem Land (Yolngu people).

FIGURE 1
Respondent sites
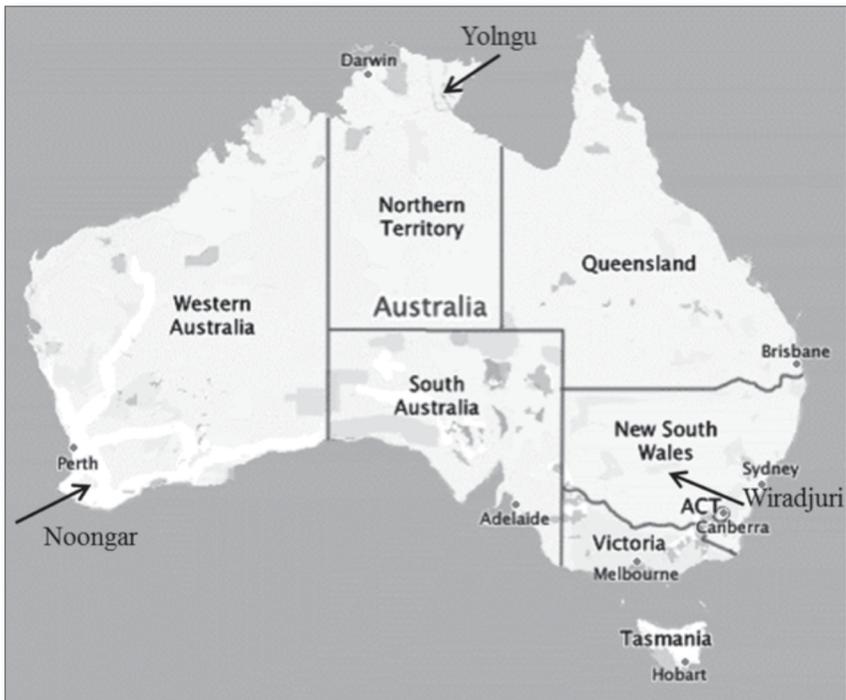
These Indigenous people openly expressed their sentiments about the processes that were used by their teachers, and the relevance of these practices for the 21st century. The respondents were separately interviewed in sessions of at least one hour duration. A salient dimension of this discourse was plausible argument why Australian Indigenous society, and particularly the youth, is disengaged and disillusioned by the provided schooling and why it has not articulated into widespread vocational opportunity. Figure 1 provides an overview of the traditional homeland landscapes of these three separate Aboriginal societies.

PATHWAYS TO SELF AWARENESS

The interviews had prominent similarities and dissimilarities. All the interviewees were Indigenous people, who had been relatively young children in the mid to late 1940s, making them an exception to the wider population of Australian Aboriginals that have a median age of 53 years (Korff 2011). An added feature was that some of the recollections were how grandparents and parents had been active participants of the Indigenous learning pedagogy. Many of the respondents had attended respectful Western educational institutions, both secular and non secular, and had acquired secondary, technical and tertiary academic awards. While some had retired from professional life most were in management or executive positions in leading institutions albeit many of them were Aboriginal corporations. Every one of the respondents expressed a profound continuity with the *Dreamtime* although there are different stories across the clans (e.g., the Wagilag Sisters told by the Yolngu clans, while the Wardman story depicts the Lightening Brothers) that provide foundation for the protocols of social behaviour and admonishments.

The sample was also flavoured by differences. An endeavour was made to have a gender balance. Of greater bias was that some of the respondents were in a category often referred to as the stolen generation (Johns 2011), as at a very young age they had been removed from their parents by compulsion, duress and undue influence. A notable few had been carefully mentored and authorised by their Elders to produce art expressing the sacred spiritual dimensions of their ancestral existence. While only a broad categorisation was feasible from the relatively small group of respondents it was observed the men held authority positions in the patriarchal structure while the women fulfilled functions that enhanced their long held gathering roles. Although the interviews were deliberately designed to be unstructured to ensure a pace that resonated with the values of the respondents (sometimes silence is a part of the process) the dialogue was probing, allowing a number of themes to emerge drawn together to obtain a consensus of how learning had been undertaken in the Indigenous way.

Imposition of Western Education

Although the interviews were not choreographed the respondents unanimously opened the discussion by announcing their education and vocation accomplishments. These responses were built on a variety of experiences in remote and rural regions with different facilities determining the life chances of the Aboriginal constituents. Nevertheless, an overwhelming feature of the discourse was that they had been able to reconcile the forms of Western and Indigenous education in a process of amalgamating their citizen rights (acquired in the late 1960s), and their expanding property rights that were accessed with the 1993 Native Title legislation. A revelation of their prowess in universalism, which Altman (2002) earlier considered to be problematic for Indigenous Australians, is achievable.

Schooling previously had considerable stratifications. Two Wiradjuri Elders recounted how in the 1950s they lived in different Aboriginal camps. One was at the foot of the Condobolin hill and the other on the summit with the school away from, but between the two settlements. Indigenous people were not allowed to get on the bus so when it rained the Aboriginal children stayed at home. The Noongar respondent lived in an Aboriginal community (reserve) over 10 km from the town school so attendance became spasmodic. Subsequently, seven (including herself) of the eight brothers and sisters were forcibly removed from the family and placed in care some 500 km away from the town. Schooling for the Yolngu people, who lived in bush camps near the Yirrkala Methodist Church Mission, was conservatively pragmatic. Established in 1935 this remote settlement gave religious and practical education as survival was dependent on how well the horticulture endeavours succeeded. A selected few, who showed outstanding promise, such as Galarrwuy Yunupingu AM, were sent for further educational development at advanced Church establishments in Brisbane (Pearson 2012).

Deeper questioning penetrated the motivational forces for pursuing the attainment of dominant mainstream Western education. A prisoner, who was on an early work release supervised (by wardens) programme at Gulkula, some 50 km south of Yirrkala, claimed he had never held a full time job. All of his technical training had been undertaken in prison and he was now qualified and proficient in a number of skills. Assessments with national tests revealed he was extremely articulate in English literacy (reading and writing), and upper secondary numeracy competencies. When questioned how and why he had attained these academic levels the answer was one word – grandmother. He went on to tell that his mother had been unable to guide him as she was seldom at home, and when there she was usually intoxicated. "It was my grandmother who told

me I had to learn English and numbers, and she taught me. Grandmothers have a lot of power so I did what I was told." Similar stories were given by the other respondents to detail how their grandmothers had influenced their development.

A better understanding of why grandmothers undertake these tasks is to be found in the ancestral cultural understanding of Indigenous society. Within the Indigenous literature (Brody 2011; Browne, Theobold & Weston 2006; Trudgen 2000) are accounts where senior family females have encouraged younger children, who show promise, to develop their interests including formal education capacity. This action is particularly evident where senior men (due to incarceration or early death) are absent from the family network. Hence, the women become elevated "… within kinship obligations …" (Foley 2006, p. 14) to become providers and guiders of siblings and extended family. These familial forces can have implications for vocational destiny.

The Indigenous community night patrol in the Nhulunbuy region was born out of female cultural kinship obligations. During the early 2000s Yolngu women were concerned with the number of Indigenous men who were nightly venturing intoxicated onto the Nhulunbuy streets and engaging in violent social disorder. In the early hour of the morning these inebriated men were returning to their settlements at Galaru, Galupa, Gunyangara and Yirrkala bringing risk to family members as well as self harm and in some instances culminating in suicide. Senior Indigenous women agitated for a service to break the cycle of events, but intervention by the management of the Walkabout Hotel and the local police was unable to give a suitable resolution. Consequently, Mike Hindle the Town Administrator organised a two day seminar for senior representatives of principal Nhulunbuy organisations to formulate a culturally relevant non coercive strategy to prevent the anti social and destructive behaviours. Resulting action was the creation of a local organisation named Harmony to administer arrangements for Elder Indigenous women with two motor vehicles to collect and relocate the intoxicated men to a safe sobering up shelter. But within a short time Indigenous men confiscated the vehicles for personal use (e.g., fishing, hunting, travel).

Today the Nhulunbuy night patrol is one of 72 Northern Territory (NT) operating frameworks. The Nhulunbuy service is funded by the Federal Attorney General's Department, administered by the East Arnhem Shire, and managed by an Indigenous lady within that organisation (Night Patrol Services 2010). Since early 2004 Indigenous Yolngu females have operated three yellow vans from mid afternoon to the early hours of the next day providing a culturally sensitive service to improve safety for Indigenous individuals, families and communities

of the Nhulunbuy region. These women stable the vehicles at their houses where the vans can be cleaned and serviced. Accompanied by an Indigenous male (for muscle) and within the vehicle is a Hoffman tool (a sharp knife) for cutting the rope by intending suiciders.

The paradox for Indigenous women is obligation to engage Western knowledge and learning styles to espouse caring cultural behaviours constructed around blood line connection. All of the night patrol operators are compelled to complete annual training to gain competency in health of self and patient, use of equipment, possession of skills and certification for operation of a motor vehicle as well as being able to fulfil all documentation procedures and reporting requirements. Collectively, these features necessitate superior English literacy and numeracy talent despite these women being from a multilingual heritage. Collected individuals are delivered to the Nhulunbuy Special Care Centre, which is a safe sobering up and residential rehabilitation establishment that is funded by the NT government, the Australian Federal Government, and the mining corporation.

When interviewing Janet Gurruwiwi and Margaret Marika, the Indigenous Yolngu females who inaugurated the Nhulunbuy night patrol, why they were motivated to have the scheme installed they seemed surprised by the question. Almost immediately and independently they replied as Yolngu women their traditional role has been the gatherers of various types of material sustenance. They extended this function to become the gatherers of the young men who were at risk in the community. Today these two foundation members have retired from the night patrol. After they 'handed the baton' to a younger more energetic brigade of senior Yolngu women Janet and Margaret have become prominent artists telling the *Dreaming* stories for future generations.

The career paths of the respondents were quite different to the contemporary Australian dominant urban lifestyle. Some of those interviewed said they had been born at the Aboriginal settlement, and at least one believed entry to the world was in the back of an ambulance, while a few claimed their mother had given birth in a hospital. These events were to give later life problems when endeavouring to acquire vital documentation (e.g., passport, driving licence, taxation file number). Poorer housing was evident with claims the first time they lived in a house with electricity 'was a shock'. After emerging from basic schooling it became apparent to them the better jobs were for qualified people, which in turn encouraged the pursuit of formal education qualifications. But the pathway was ill defined resulting in further barriers. Throughout early adulthood the respondents claimed they 'scrambled' their educational advancement while

job hopping in order to survive. It was not uncommon to have worked in 10 or more different types of jobs prior to their current job incumbency.

In spite of the difficulties facing the respondents their job related context was favourable. Information technology and industrialisation was escalating and there was a variety of jobs coupled with limited labour resources. The availability of jobs, a desire to progress despite all the barriers as well as family support during educational development are features that will be revisited later in the chapter when accounting the disengagement of Australian Indigenous youth from the imposed education system.

PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

During the interviews eight pedagogical streams of learning emerged. This observation is somewhat consistent with eight Aboriginal learning pedagogies specified by Yunkaporta (2009), as there were some semantical variations and extensions to his categories. While each respondent did not identify with each stream collectively they all were a part of the framework. Nevertheless, there was a general consensus Indigenous learning was holistic, was community supported, was linked to the *Dreamtime* (land, animals and people), and was narrative. Each of the emergent eight streams will be announced and linked to the comments of the respondents.

Holistic

Australian Aboriginal learning is anchored in a holistic pedagogy. Christie (1986), Harris (1984), and later Robinson and Nichol (1998) considered Aboriginal pedagogy to have many facets such as observational, imitation, trial and error, which can also be found in Western learning frameworks that seldom contain the essential element of the Indigenous approach to learning wholes, rather than parts. A salient example is given by the making of a traditional dugout canoe. The visual evidence (Dunlop 1980) is that long before the tree is cut down to give the log for shaping an ocean venturing canoe there is much discussion among the Elder men about what trees will be cut, the organisation of compensation, how to do the work as the trees are on sacred land, and future arrangements (e.g., who will have the caught fish). After these lengthy negotiations the building is done in totality, not in a series of sequential steps as in the hot climate the timber is prone to splitting. The team members work quickly on the various parts of the log. After hollowing the log the relatively thin walls have to be held in place by steaming them. The canoe is partially filled with water and the vessel is placed on a fire and the sides are configured by hammering spacer bars (inside the canoe against the side walls) prior to placing two or three

horizontal seats in the completed hull. Observing the project it is clear that the younger members of the construction team may not have fully understood all of the processes to be undertaken as there were no drawings to follow, but at the beginning the experienced builders were aware of the whole project as the ideas were in their minds.

Traditional Aboriginal learning concentrates on the overall concept. The details are added through wisdom, skills, and knowledge, and these are acquired after observing a craft specialist over a period of time. For instance, novice artists under instruction of Elders paint the rough outline of the features onto the bark or canvas. The rich detail of the painting including the thin hatched lines, usually of white clay, is finally added. During the process the Elder master artist mentors the novice, tells the *Dreamtime* story, and demonstrates, allowing the learner to imitate. In this arrangement the learner is entrusted with preserving that sector of the clan culture. Learning is not left to chance as the younger people are groomed by the Elders in a framework of organic multidisciplinary and complimentary education (Nichol 2008).

Non Verbal and Verbal

A lack of language in Aboriginal learning can be erroneously constructed as not knowing or language reduction. In fact, silence, lack of eye contact, and long pauses before responding are features of effective Indigenous communication. Indeed, endeavouring to hurry a response for instant gratification of the listener is considered to be discourteous and lacking acceptable protocols. Hence, understanding body language is important. Non verbal Indigenous acquisition is demonstrated by observation, listening and imitation, which are acknowledged even in Western frameworks as effective modes of communication. Yunkaporta (2009) claims Indigenous learners can become critical thinkers by employing non verbal mechanisms of experience, introspection and practice in their learning development.

Verbal mechanisms in Indigenous society are formal and organised systems of learning. Normally the instruction is given by powerful learned Elders who are repositories and controllers of Indigenous knowledge. Both women and men give day to day activity instruction as there is women's business and men's business that must be separately articulated (Johns 2011; Trudgen 2000). Gender specific information is sacred and it is culturally taboo and offensive for it to be publically disseminated. Indigenous Australians are from an oral culture and clan members were obligated to become fluent in neighbouring dialects to enable communication with other clans in common interests of bartering, security and social relationships (Ivory 1999; Worsley 1955). In the absence of

refrigeration and storage facilities there was benefit in creating kinship relativity to distribute surplus or perishable goods and in these circumstances verbal dialogue would have been helpful.

Story Telling

The high use of an oral learning pedagogy ensured story telling was important in Indigenous lifestyle. Personal narratives in knowledge transmission are employed in Western society, but the exchange of wider narration is the foundation of Australian Indigenous culture. *Dreaming* stories (Arthur & Morphy 2005; Breeden & Wright 1989) give the important knowledge, cultural values and belief systems for Australian Aboriginal society. The tangible format is presented in song, dance, and artwork enabling the strong heritage links to be preserved for current and future generations. When Yunkaporta (2009) conducted a number of trials with different learning activities he found the narrative pedagogy was the second most accessible way for teachers to embed Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum.

Learning Maps

The results of the 40 trial study enabled Yunkaporta to report learning maps were an effective pedagogy for Indigenous recipients. By employing visualisations the pathways for learning can be more clearly identified. These maps or diagrams provide valuable insights that can be employed to retard the 'strolling away' by Indigenous people, who are potentially losing their traditional knowledge, skills and ancestral heritage. In practice structural arrangements can be used to foster paradigm shifts in behaviours as exemplified in the Ralpa and Goyurr programmes. The pivotal focus of these schemes is to nominate the range of jobs, which are pseudo maps, and then tailoring the learning environment so the participants are skilled and knowledge proficient incumbents.

Community

Community involvement is a central element of Indigenous learning. In the Indigenous community parents, extended family and other members observe the interests and preferences of children and younger people and then proffer opportunities to encourage the development of emergent curiosity or inquisitiveness. For instance, those interested in dance would be mentored by a skilled Elder, others giving attention to art will be guided by master artists and so forth to progress beyond the interest stage. These notions were outlined by a respondent.

> "Community sits with the children. Want to see people go up. Elders. Community identifies people and their choice of job they want to do. Important to find the interest of the people to be trained. Parents never

> ask the children what is their interest. The community watches to see
> what the children, teenager have in their heart."

Later, there may be another stream of interest attracting further community
support. Earlier, Christie (1986) described this community inclusive pedagogy
as localised group orientated and linked to pragmatic life events and contexts.
Recently, Pearson and Chatterjee (2010) reported how community involvement
is a core function of important family decision making.

Indigenous community engagement can deliver learning partnerships for indi-
viduals and families. Developing a talented workforce by reconciling Indigenous
priorities and contradictions to incorporate or relate to traditional knowledge,
language or skills (Pearson & Daff 2011; Wallace et al. 2009) can generate social
capital to serve as a resource allowing people to cooperate and achieve describ-
able targets (Kilpatrick, Field & Falk 2003). This group orientated pedagogy
has been extensively used as an alternative way of working with Indigenous
society. Specifically, community links were employed for the recruitment of
local Indigenous people for the ALERT, Ralpa and Goyurr VET programmes.
Additionally, negotiated new ways were incorporated into the training courses
that contributed to workforce development.

Symbols and Images

Reframing visual learning to use concrete and abstract imagery is a strategy for
symbolic learning. In practice, local knowledge is blended with the presented
topic content to bridge the two discrete elements of information. One respond-
ent told how he used monopoly money, which the children had used in playing
the game, to help them understand the principals of the goods and services
tax. Another respondent explained how animal tracks in the sand, that showed
the forward travel path of the lizard, were used to help Aboriginal children
understand the concept of a linear argument in literature. An artist gave an
example of using traditional Aboriginal art depicting birds, fish and crocodiles
to teach natural history in terms of relationships between flora and fauna. By
using existing Aboriginal knowledge, and particularly as stories and pictures,
new concepts can be reframed and mastered.

Land Links

Many countries retain strong Indigenous links with the land and seas establish-
ing a pedagogy relating learning to country. Aboriginal spiritual energies for
natural resources are affirmed in the contemporary literature (Muir 2011; Suter
2003), and profoundly connected to the *Dreaming*. These stories that describe
the travels of the spiritual ancestors are strongly enmeshed with Aboriginal land

based pedagogies. One respondent explained how the Indigenous non secular education is interwoven in the life of a remote community.

> "Today we have created a timber based industry to build houses, the Gunyangara school, a community store and coffee shop to provide jobs for our people. These achievements have been undertaken by employing local plant knowledge formed in the sacred processes of learning, managing and caring for country."

These intensely ecological and place based Aboriginal pedagogies are central to primacy forms of economic development in remote areas of northern Australia (Blanch 2008).

Non Linear

Non sequential continuously recurring multiple processes of learning has been identified as an Indigenous pedagogy. Avoidance of task responsibility by walking off the work site, failing to advise of intention not to attend an appointment, indirect eye contact during dialogue or non verbal response to questioning are common examples of non linear, indirect orientations of learning. The clash of this pedagogy with the linear Western perspective leads to irreconcilable situations in educational and vocation contexts. Response absence, manifested by constraints to think in a serial and sequential order has led to Indigenous people being treated unequally. Consequently, Australian Indigenous society has been marginalised from the dominant mainstream population.

RECONCILING ABORIGINAL AND NON ABORIGINAL PEDAGOGIES

There is an expectation Indigenous people will benefit from a Western based education system. Since the late 1960s Australian government policy toward Aboriginal people has been to foster universalism of opportunity regardless of social identity or background (Altman 2002; Anderson 2007). Johns (2011) writes, "The challenge in Aboriginal policy is to change behaviour, to have Aboriginal children attend school, find a job and make a life independent of government." (p. 71). In spite of equal opportunities in the workplace, in law, and the same circumstances for education as other sectors of the nation, participation in the labour market and living standards, Aboriginal people have remained relatively marginalised. Hughes and Warin (2005), and Nichol (2008) contend at the core of the lack of transition of Indigenous society to the vision of equality is the culturally inappropriate education for those of Aboriginal descent. A lack of relevance for the content and methodology of Indigenous pedagogy has

attracted contemporary issues of reconciliation between Indigenous and non Indigenous backgrounds.

Despite considerable investment by Australian governments to enhance the educational opportunities of Aboriginal people many are unable to read and write English. Over 15 years ago Tsey (1997) identified the autonomous freedom enjoyed by Aboriginal children enabling them not to attend school was a barrier to educational attainment. A further reason why Aboriginal parents are reluctant to make their children go to school is Western education is considered to be another form of assimilation and compatible with accelerating the destruction of Indigenous culture (Reynolds 2005). The tendency to devalue the dominant education system was summarised by a respondent who stated, "What Aboriginal people want to have is their way of learning". In the absence of a sound formal secular education Australian Aboriginal communities endeavouring to integrate into the mainstream society will face a bleak socio economic future.

Indigenous pluralist society has largely determined the educational vocational accomplishments of community members. Traditionally, survival has been hosted by family support and going to a Western type school to obtain a contemporary education has not been appealing as it does not provide the skills and knowledge for a cultural valued lifestyle. The point was well made by a respondent who said, "Those [Indigenous] who have achieved in a big way have been helped by family and learned in the traditional way." Other respondents separately stated education is a consequence of the family being able to help their children, a factor that has 'broken down' in the early 21st century. Respondents claimed in their early years of development they were mentored by family members, but now parents, who do not have computer age skills are not able to assist children with electronic learning. Moreover, in the 1950s and 1960s there were many available jobs, but today seldom do Aboriginal people have the competencies for available sustainable technical and industrial jobs. Thus, the employment prospects of the Indigenous work age population are pessimistic.

CONCLUSION

The discernable differences in Indigenous and non Indigenous education pedagogies is confronting. Across Australia and particularly in urban fringe ghettos, regional and remote national settings there are many dysfunctional communities. A feature of these locations is the extent of formal education achievement that deny the inhabitants the same opportunities as members of the wider Australian population.

A preference to live in isolation from the dominant Australian community is often accompanied by the subjugation of English and numeracy. Emphasising traditional culture and the absence of formal education condemns individuals in cosmopolitan settings to a lower quality lifestyle, deprivation of social inclusion, and dependence on welfare. Enjoying vocations and living standards of the broader Australian community is connected with formal education curriculums of English literacy, numeracy as well as application of the humanities, social studies and natural sciences. The challenge for both the Indigenous and non Indigenous stakeholders is to find pathways for culturally appropriate education programmes to be generally embraced by the constituents.

Case Study Questions

A legacy of more than 200 years is the marginalisation of the first Australian and a yawning gulf between Indigenous and non Indigenous constituents. Numerous studies demonstrate under representation of Aboriginal people with formal education qualifications and low labour force participation. Recognition non integration of Aboriginal society into the mainstream value system is correlated with detrimental consequences Australian governments have installed a plethora of relevant programmes and initiatives. These reforms continue against a backdrop of criticisms the policies and measures have generally been simplistic, ambiguous, and hold little regard for meaningful engagement or consultation with Aboriginal society. Working from this framework address the following questions.

1. What key features are likely to be found during the implementation of a best practice industrial based vocational and education programme at a remote Australian Indigenous community?
2. Identify strategies that deliverers of educational and vocational programmes might use with Indigenous communities to facilitate effective approaches in Australian workforce development.
3. How can managers use the knowledge and strength of Australian Indigenous people to install alternative ways in community development programmes in remote and rural regions?
4. When examining a series of recent successful community work integrated learning projects in an urban region with an Aboriginal population, what are the likely common elements that were used by the stakeholders?

Selected Readings

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MINING AS THE CATALYST FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN SOCIAL VENTURES

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter you should be able to do the following:

1. **Appreciate communal land ownership in remote regions of Australia can underpin special arrangements of social capital development.**
2. **To understand the fundamental differences between Indigenous social entrepreneurship and the alternative formats of Indigenous entrepreneurship or traditional enterprise activity.**
3. **Appreciate that the capacity of Indigenous social entrepreneurship is linked with the generation of outcomes that have defied extensive government resource investment.**
4. **Understand that the concept of social capital is a resource based on relationships among individuals that unleashes powerful motivational forces to overcome identified barriers to Indigenous entrepreneurship.**

Abstract   Commitment by the Australian Government to develop employment and business opportunities for Indigenous Australians extends a backdrop of ideological government policies to recreate an Aboriginal society. From 1788 when Captain Phillip sailed into Botany Bay and acquisitioned the continent, Australian's colonial history has spawned continuous debate how to deal with the Aboriginal problem. Some authors (often Indigenous) claim Aboriginal law was disregarded through murder, vilification and defilement of the Indigenous people by the colonisers, who installed the government policy of *terra nullius* (vacant land belonging to no one), but subjected to the values, culture

and ontology of the incoming invaders. Specifically, in Arnhem Land from the mid 1800s until 1908 Indigenous Yolngu clans were shot out of existence by the pastoralists who had driven their herds of cattle from the southern colonies, and Yolngu people, in the vicinity of the Roper River, were shot if not wearing an inscribed tin plate disc slung around their neck. Over half a century later, during 1951, the official Australian policy of assimilation, enabling those Aboriginals who adopted the same manner of living as the dominant Anglo Celtic Australian society could participate in the political and civic processes of the State, was installed. But segregation of Aboriginal people continued (e.g., denied medical care, barred from hospitals, put on reserves or in isolation camps) until forces of change culminated in a national referendum on citizenship in 1967. Under mounting pressure from international and national lobbyists, a referendum aimed to amend the Australian Constitution that led to the policy construct of self determination being formally introduced in 1973.

This new arrangement affirmed the right of Indigenous Australians to have a more active role in decision making, and encouraged the incorporation of Indigenous community organisations. Later reforms such as the creation of the CDEP scheme, the replacement of ATSIC with a National Indigenous Council, and reframing of Indigenous policy to provide specific services to Aboriginal communities has not led to spectacular improvements in Australian Indigenous socio economic indicators. While the existence of such reforms and other initiatives guarantee to some extent the ideals of Aboriginal decision making, these government partnerships are fundamentally ignorant and prejudicial to the cultural interests of Australian Aboriginals. These shortcomings are embedded in the recent significant shift away from self determination to the discursive regime of integration that adopts the ideals Indigenous people will become skilled and employed in the offered opportunities given by the market economy. Within the framework of integration the Australian government has targeted two areas for job creation in Australian Indigenous remote communities – mining industry jobs and small business.

Readers are encouraged to analyse these more recent government assumptions. The concept of self determination is latently flavoured by collective opportunities with the value of equity

articulated in sharing within a framework of cultural and group rights. In contrast, integration is embedded in both social and economic processes to strengthen the pursuit of opportunities. The evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates in the investigated remote region of the Gove Peninsula that the local Indigenous people are functioning within the mainstream economy and are being challenged to become economically independent. What innovative ways are available to them to adhere to the governance constraints of the dominant society while embracing the traditions and values of their heritage?

Key Words Indigenous social entrepreneurship, Social capital, Business partnerships

Key Concepts Approaching the alleviation of extreme Indigenous disadvantage with universal vocational norms is problematic. Residing in remote regions of the nation Indigenous people are engaged in a fundamentally different customary economy to mainstream Australia. Encouraging these people to work in the Australian mining industry or in traditional entrepreneurship has not led to promising outcomes in terms of improved health and wellbeing. This chapter demonstrates sustainable enterprise development can be implemented when there is an alignment with the objectives of the market economy and strong cultural continuities.

INTRODUCTION

The economic and social disadvantage of Indigenous Australians in remote regions has attracted considerable government investment. For many decades Federal and State institutions have endeavoured to broker better lifestyles for Aboriginals, who have been widely acknowledged to experience lower life expectancy (Korff 2011), higher birth death rates (Katijin 2011), unhygienic housing (Mercer 2009; Remote Housing NT 2013), greater family violence and incarceration rates (Jonas 2003; McGuirk, 2011), extensive volatile inhalant use (sniffing glue, paint and petrol) and substance abuse (alcohol and recreational drugs) (Midford et al. 2010), and more intense chronic health problems (Closing the Gap 2010; McDonald et al. 2008; Rowley et al. 2000) than any other group within Australia. In spite of a plethora of government policies, programmes and interventions there remains a discernible gap in the socio economic circumstances between Australian Indigenous and non Indigenous societies.

A great deal of investigation and inquiring has led to a position the adverse social circumstances of Indigenous people stem from poor employment prospects. Accordingly, successive Federal governments have implemented a number of work reforms (Brown 2009) and institutional programmes [e.g., Indigenous Business Australia (IBA), Home Ownership Plan (HOP), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), Community Development Employment Programme (CDEP)] (Australian Government 2007) to strengthen the incentive for welfare recipients to move from income support systems into paid work (Biddle, Taylor & Yap 2009, Gray & Hunter 2011). Despite the government demonstration for commitment to develop business and employment opportunity for Indigenous people (i.e., establishing an Indigenous bank, providing grants and loans, promoting joint ventures, melding welfare benefits entitlement with community defined work) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are underrepresented in workforce participation rates (Giddy, Lopez & Redman 2009; Prime Minister's Report 2010).

More direct endeavours to secure employment prospects of Indigenous people in remote regions of Australia have been in two streams – mining and entrepreneurship. Mining has been at the forefront of the economic, social and political development of Australia since gold was discovered at Ballarat in the 1850s, from which stemmed the violent rebellion of the Eureka Stockade in 1854 (Toscano 2001), that underpinned the eventual federation of the Australian colonies in 1901. During this 50 year period gold mining was the catalyst for events that penetrated deeply into the Australian political landscape when non Indigenous men and women acquired their voting franchise, but Indigenous Australians did not acquire this status until 1967. Even after the 1993 Native Title legislation antipathy to Indigenous communities persisted as mining corporations began to take a more proactive approach for community engagement practices (Coronado & Fallon 2010; Crawley & Sinclair 2003; Harvey & Brereton 2005). While there has been a shift in formal recognition of Indigenous land rights the scarce documentation reveals Indigenous representation in Australian mainstream mining workforces remains relatively low (Barker 2006; Brereton & Parmenter, 2008; Pearson & Daff 2013a). Clearly, the espoused assumptions of politicians and representatives of the minerals extraction industry, that establishing mining operations in remote regions of Australia will lead to greater employability and wellbeing of the local Indigenous community, attracts revisitation.

Acknowledging Indigenous Australians are particularly disadvantages in the labour market government mechanism have been installed to assist Aboriginal people to establish their own businesses. Although there has been a geographic and sector spread of successful Indigenous enterprises (Foley 2003; Open for

Business 2008; Pearson & Helms 2012a), there are other reports of a variety of government sponsored Indigenous small ventures that have been more problematic (Australian Government 2009, Furneaux & Brown 2008; Russell-Mundine 2007). These results suggest the concept of Indigenous small business in remote regions of Australia has been narrowly interpreted.

A prominent feature of Indigenous community small business is the connectivity with an array of family members whose primary focus is on cultural and environmental sustainability (Foley 2006; Hindle & Moroz 2009; Peredo & Chrisman 2006). The pursuit of economic goals and the maximisation of profits, which are the tenets of traditional theoretical frameworks of one dimensional entrepreneurs, are secondary to indigenous ventures in remote communities. Yet the focus on evaluating Indigenous business undertakings continues to be driven purely in economic terms by assessments of appropriate governance mechanisms and application of prudential financial management skills (Foley 2003; Report 2007; Russell-Mundine 2007). For instance, in 2003 the Indigenous Business Review report highlighted that in Aboriginal community based business social demands overrode governance and compliance with regulatory requirements. Within a year the statutory authority of ATSIC, which was created in 1990 to manage a significant number of commonwealth Aboriginal programmes, was abolished for non compliance with legal and accounting requirements (Anderson 2007). Over time, the rate of Indigenous entrepreneurship in Australia has remained relatively low (Furneaux & Brown 2008), and if this promising avenue for employment in remote communities is to be enhanced a better understanding of their business perspectives is warranted.

The purpose of this chapter is to reveal how mining operations on the remote Gove Peninsula have unexpectedly been the catalyst of a burgeoning Indigenous social entrepreneurial industry. Expectedly, the nationally accredited ALERT scheme was to prepare local Indigenous Yolngu people for working in sustainable mainline jobs, but the evidence is most of the eventual job incumbents came from Australian urban regions. Nevertheless, the mining operations have profoundly spawned an unique form of entrepreneurship that evolved after the Prime Minister ratified the Land Use Agreement in mid 2011. The following pages provide some insights into the underpinning for these events.

MINING EMPLOYMENT AND CULTURAL ATTACHMENTS

Mining on the Gove Peninsula has profoundly impacted the life of many Indigenous people. Initial involvement of the Yolngu people was revealed as strong resistance to the mining operations. First, was the Bark Petition to Canberra in

1963; second, was the legal application to the Darwin Supreme Court in 1970/71 aggrieving the land occupancy; and third, the endeavour to revoke the liquor license of the Nhulunbuy Walkabout Hotel. During the construction of Nhulunbuy and the mining infrastructure a few Yolngu men and women worked in unskilled jobs for the mining corporation, but most returned to their homelands in the early 1970s. Within a decade only non Indigenous people were working in mainline jobs in the Nhulunbuy mining operations. After the ALERT scheme was installed in 2007 a handful of Indigenous people have worked in sustainable mining jobs on the Gove Peninsula.

Indigenous employment in the Nhulunbuy mining operations was found to be a function of remoteness. This conclusion was established on the collated objective and perceptual data provided by the 175 participants of the ALERT programme reported in chapter 2. The administration employment records reveal that of the 47 graduates who joined the Gove Peninsula mining operations only six were local Yolngu people. In contrast, the other 41 ALERT graduates had been recruited from urban settings in other Australian states. To understand these findings discussions were held with some of these employees.

Interviews were conducted with ALERT graduates who had joined the mining workforce at Nhulunbuy. One unique group of four men and one women, who had been assessed in a stringent professional external selection process and then chosen for an extensive training programme to become highly paid refinery operators (Pearson & Daff 2013b), attracted scrutiny. From independent interviews (sometimes face to face, sometimes by phone) a consensus of opinion evolved. In turn each one of the interviewees stated they had previously intermittently worked in low skilled jobs, often as itinerant employees, but now had an opportunity to be in full time, well paid, interesting and challenging work. Each of the group members claimed they were doing useful work, and this gave respect to their Indigenous family, who they were able to visit regularly as fly in and fly out employees. The theme of the responses given by this group of five was somewhat replicated by other ALERT graduates who worked at the Nhulunbuy mine or refinery. These employees also worked long shifts (12 hours) often in physically demanding and testing patterns (day or night shift, 14 days on 7 days off). In these jobs a number of the incumbents availed the opportunity to increase their levels of certification by enrolling in nationally accredited VET programmes or completing the mining corporation on the job training programmes.

A number of ALERT participants chose non vocation options. Some of these people attended irregularly and then left or were dismissed from the programme. Others left involuntarily after attending unfit for work on three occasions while

a handful were removed to serve custodial sentences for community social disorders. Where possible the departers were interviewed to reveal a range of reasons for withdrawing from the ALERT programme.

1. Did not like being in the classroom.
2. Restricted personal time to go hunting or fishing.
3. Had clan responsibilities and was obliged to attend cultural ceremonies.
4. Some women left to fulfil roles of child minding for other senior women who went to ceremonies.
5. Alternative non work financial funding was welfare, mining royalties, or humbugging.
6. Left because was being humbugged.
7. Had a preference for intermittent work offered by the CDEP.
8. Did not like having to get up every morning to catch the bus to go to training/work.
9. Unable to drink. There is zero tolerance at Australian mine sites and refineries for substance abuse, alcohol and recreational drugs.

A particular novel departure was undertaken by a 56 year old Elder Yolngu man. During selection Djali stated a desire to complete the ALERT programme, but he also wanted to be able to tell the stories of his clan. Both objectives were achieved. After graduation he did not join the mining workforce, but retained his PPE (minus gloves and goggles), and resplendent in yellow coloured uniform travels the Gove Peninsula as an unpaid ALERT ambassador. From his position of authority his preached message to the young Yolngu men and women is they should complete the ALERT VET programme.

One of the greatest obstacles to increasing Indigenous workforce participation in the Australian mining sector is poor education levels. Many Indigenous people in remote regions of Australia and particularly in the NT have become marginalised from mainstream social and economic institutions as a result on continuing to have basic literacy and numeracy skills (ABS 2011; Bradley et al. 2006; Hughes & Warin 2005). Hughes (2008) claimed the educational disadvantage of Indigenous minority groups in the NT stems from remote schools being poorly resourced (including non qualified, competent teachers), having lesser quality curriculums, unsuitable pedagogies and other teaching problems. In spite of the mining industry funding educational programmes (e.g., Barrick Cowal at West Wyalong) without adequate literacy and numeracy competencies Australian Aboriginals cannot be employed at the mine sites or refineries.

A further reason why English is not advanced in remote Australian schools is the attention given to language revival. McConvell and Thieberger (2001) wrote "There has been a decrease of 90% in the number of Indigenous languages

spoken fluently and regularly by all age groups in Australia since 1800." (p. 2). In response to their Indigenous languages being threatened with extinction campaigns have been undertaken and the NT Ministry of Education (for one major authority) has installed in many homelands schools bilingual programmes, and in these arrangements English is not introduced until the later years of primary school. Consequently, literacy and numeracy benchmarking tests indicate the NT continues to have the highest illiteracy rate in Australia, and a high proportion of the Indigenous people are unemployed and remain wedded to welfare (Kral 2009).

Cultural differences can create barriers to Indigenous employment at mining/ refinery sites. Non Indigenous work colleagues, supervisors and managers who are unfamiliar with Indigenous cultural communication (e.g., oral tradition, avoidance of eye contact, silence in communication) can result in "… tensions in interpersonal relationships, misunderstanding, or conflict." (Arbeláez-Ruiz 2010, p. 21). Frustration within work settings can lead to erratic attendance, that can be misinterpreted as a lack of interest or a poor work ethic when in fact these behaviours reflect different communication norms (Tiplady & Barclay 2007). These circumstances attract forces of conciliation as the clash of Indigenous and non Indigenous culturally related values can be a substantial barrier to employment in the Australian minerals industry. More progressive Australian mining corporations endeavour to reduce racist attitudes and develop greater respect for understanding cultural differences by providing cultural awareness training for all hierarchical levels of the company as well as with contractors, who interface with Indigenous employees.

The cultural and linguistic diversity across Australian Aboriginal society substantially contributes to a segmented labour market. Stephens (2010) noted Indigenous people in non remote areas are likely to have access to a primary labour market, while in remote areas there are fewer mainline jobs. Assumptions by advocates for the Australian mining industry (Brereton & Parmenter 2008) or politicians (Collins 2012) that establishing a minerals extraction operation will provide mining jobs for the local Indigenous people, and hence, improve their wellbeing, arrogantly discounts the cultural dimensions, that shape attitudes and preferences for working in these environments. Cultural attachment to work type is demonstrated by the 33 ALERT graduates (all were local Yolngu people), and even those who withdrew before graduation, who chose not to work in the mining industry. This observation is supported by the 10 Wiradjuri people (2% of the workforce) who work as cleaners at the Barrick Cowal gold mine in NSW. Clearly, cultural attachment is more prevalent in remote regions. Nevertheless, mining has been a catalyst for the creation of a range of Indigenous social entrepreneurship endeavours, and this unexpected development attracts attention.

AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CONSTRAINTS

Since the 1960s the Australian government has advocated entrepreneurship as a promising avenue for improving the economic development of Indigenous society. Smith (2006) reminds us in 1968 the Commonwealth created the capital fund for Aboriginal Business Enterprises that was to be "… a principal source of finance for Aboriginal business ventures." (p. 4). Over time the scale and scope of Indigenous business has increased with the successive installation of further Indigenous business specific programmes, but so have the conflicts and confusion. Audits and investigation reveal the operations have not always been a profitable commercial resource by allowing revenue to become a largess among the community and particularly family members (Arthur 1994). An assumption by well meaning non Indigenous politicians and academics (Australian Government 2009; Herron 1998; Peredo et al. 2004; Report 2007), that Indigenous engagement in small business will provide an escape from poverty is worthy of reexamination. Across Australia Indigenous small business varies substantially from broad collective endeavours to more conventional individual venturing with primacy for economic goals.

Across time there has been much debate about the virtues of Australian Indigenous entrepreneurship. Many assumptions and frameworks, often not voiced by the Indigenous community, have been advanced leading to an inescapable conclusion the disadvantages experienced by Aboriginal society could be reconciled by encouraging Indigenous entrepreneurship. While it is recognised there is genuine widespread interest in improving the wellbeing of marginalised communities it is inexcusable to propose an universal framework for Indigenous venturing, overly focussed on economic issues, will fit all circumstances. Both authors have 'felt' the resentment of Indigenous people on the Gove Peninsula when they have been targeted for government venture funding. Frequently, their conversations are flavoured with comments from one Elder Yolngu interviewee.

> "They [the bureaucrats, academics, politicians] come here and tell us how to run a business, in their way, not acknowledging our concerns, on our land. We tell them to go away because they do not understand our needs and family obligations."

Foley (2006) succinctly states the core issues. He writes "There are major differing characteristics between community – based businesses and stand-alone ventures …" (p. 3). Moreover, nearly 75% of Australian Indigenous people, who reside in urban environments, have discernible variances in language, art and binding energy of kinship obligations compared with remote Indigenous communities. These features belie the consciously created appearance of a homog-

enous Indigenous culture. Balancing these social and economic priorities is at the heart of sustainable Indigenous entrepreneurship.

Resolution of some of the misconceptions and shortcomings reported in the Australian Indigenous literature has appeal. A better understanding of some of the imbalances in conventional wisdom and the core elements of robust Indigenous small business has potential to improve government policy as well as being vital if Aboriginal venturing is to provide an escape avenue for some of this disadvantaged group. The remainder of this chapter examines some of the indicated relevant issues and delineates the unexpected emergence of a vibrant Indigenous small business that has stemmed from the Gove Peninsula mining operations.

Tourism

Although tourism is actively promoted as a pathway for advancing the wellbeing of Australian Indigenous communities this type of activity can be constrained by the absence of several types of capital (e.g., social, economic). Consequently, Indigenous tourism in Australia is fragmentary, evolving and yet to articulate the rhetoric, that this form of small business is an instrument for sustaining Indigenous communities (Australian Government 2009; Brereton et al. 2006; Whitford & Ruhanen 2010). A range of barriers to Indigenous tourism have been identified and endeavours have been made to coalesce them into understandable and meaningful groups. For instance, Russell-Mundine (2007) partitioned a number of barriers as economic (land, monetary capital, profit distribution), resources (management/business acumen, reluctance to work), industry (continuity of product/service, linkage), and culture (land access to tourists). Other researchers (Australian Government 2009; Browne, Theobald & Weston 2006; Foley 2003; 2006; Furneaux & Brown 2008; Whitford & Ruhanen 2010) have found similar and different obstacles to Indigenous entrepreneurship that have been categorised into elegant frameworks. These findings are to be expected as remote Indigenous communities are impoverished and lack a range of competencies vital for business continuance.

In spite of the availability of government programmes and resources a coherent Aboriginal tourism industry has not emerged in east Arnhem Land. There are, nevertheless, promotions of Aboriginal regional tourism sites (e.g., Lirrwi Yolngu Aboriginal Corporation, Gululu Bukmak, Gilkala near Dhanaya), but they are remote, seasonably accessible, climatically challenging and with limited infrastructure. A number of international visitors are attracted to visit these places during the week of the International Garma Festival (August) and there is both preparation and enthusiasm to cater and provide suitable services

at the tourist facilities for the short duration. The reality is since the refinery expansion (from 2004 to 2007) there is no longer a continuity of momentum of non Indigenous people. In short, the visitor market has shrunk. Sustaining the industry, albeit intermittently, is realised by financial support from the Federal agency of Tourism Australia.

There are many unique challenges to maintaining an Indigenous tourism industry on the Gove Peninsula. Seasonally related detrimental health issues are considerable. Not only are many of the remote accommodation sites inaccessible in the 'wet' (November to April), but they are unattractively hot and unpleasant in the 'dry' season. In addition, there are many flora and fauna associated dangers. Major attributes include buffalo, salt water crocodiles, marine stingers (irukandji, box jelly fish), mosquitos (viral diseases and encephalitis) red ants, snakes and melioidosis (soil borne bacteria) in addition to heat stress and dehydration, that are ever present in the tropics.

Tourism is about eco adventuring, which suffers diminution when land access is constrained. This relationship is the paradox of tourism in the NT where much of the land is native titled, and tourists are likely to be regulated to where they can travel. For instance, on the Gove Peninsula permits to visit an area have to be purchased from the Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation, which rations the land sites. Restricting land occupancy to tourists may be a function of operational practices (i.e., over use of land, transportation, accommodation) or what Haynes (2010) referred to as the reluctance of Australian Indigenous people to share their land with outsiders. These stringent conditions provide a platform for wilderness retreats in the NT to provide services for small exclusive groups (3 to 8 people) of tourists.

Indigenous Small Family Business

The viability of Indigenous entrepreneurship can be strengthened through networking with partners, who can attenuate business barriers. Laura Egan, the Director of Enterprise Learning Projects (ELP) highlights how a number of Indigenous micro enterprises (e.g., soap making, photo printing, healthy takeaway food) in the NT have been able to transform their aspirations into reality (Bourke 2011). She nominated three renown Indigenous small businesses, that have been inspired to create relevant and culturally appropriate community enterprises. These ventures emerged when ELP facilitated business training to ensure conformity with compliance and regulatory requirements.

1. Tjanpi Desert Weavers – The women in 18 central desert communities are sculpturing and weaving baskets from locally collected grasses.

2. Aboriginal Bush Traders – Indigenous people in the Darwin area are involved in bush harvest activities, tourism and art work.
3. Djilpin Arts – Artists from the Wugularr community are creating a range of products that include paintings, woven sculptures from native grasses and recently have opened a café.

This heartening information demonstrates when the support mechanisms are tailored to the common good of the community, and primacy is not given to economic issues sustainable (individual and group) benefits are attainable.

Notable on the Gove Peninsula, within 200 km of Yirrkala, is the Indigenous cottage industry. The underpinning for these family businesses, which are conducted in remote communities, is the foresight of the master painter Narritjin Maymura of the Djarrakpi community. During the late 1960s, when the mining infrastructure and the town of Nhulunbuy was being built, by a large non Indigenous workforce, Narritjin established a rudimentary studio at Yirrkala. In this building he housed a number of Indigenous women, who worked to paint, sculpture, make jewellery and weave for an ever increasing market. All the works were sold under the name of the male artist, who held the responsibility to express the clan designs that mark the spiritual identity linking the relationships between people and place. Narritjin returned to his Djarrakpi homeland in 1974 as part of the outstations movement (Altman 2003). On their ancestral lands Narritjin and his family (nuclear and extended) produced art work that was sold to the Yirrkala Buku Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre (Dunlop 1980).

Within the passage of time a new generation of artists has emerged. Although Indigenous women have always been carefully mentored in the uniquely Yolngu system of painting by their family for many centuries only males were entrusted to produce the highly expressive clan designs on which they would encode their name. However, after the 1970s and by the 1990s the senior male artists had passed the height of their careers (Brody 2011), and younger artists, particularly women, began to gain prominence. During an interview with Gayili Yunupingu-Marika, a Yolngu artist, who has the authority to paint three different clan designs, the emergence of contemporary female Yolngu artists was explained.

> "We [women] began to step up. Yolngu women were becoming conspicuous in many different roles and it was natural that women could transition to become leading artists. The women's voice can pass on the clan stories to our children and grandchildren."

The essence of Gayili's comments and the timeliness of formulation of contemporary female Yolngu artists were corroborated. When interviewed the two male

curators of the Yirrkala Buka Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre confirmed Narritjin was the founder of the movement by female Yolngu artists in the 1960 and 1970s, and today the Gove Peninsula cottage industry is mainly underpinned by women artists. Further agreement was given by other leading women Yolngu artists. Independently, conversations were held with male Yolngu artists who today had 'put down their brushes' to undertake leading roles in the affairs of their communities. The general message given by these men was they were pleased some of the women had become high profile artists and were now able to tell the stories of their clans, some of which were near extinction. Some of the men said these women, as statespersons of their clans, had been instructed by their fathers to paint the sacred designs, that were previously the domain of high ranking men. A salient reflection is alluvial bauxite mining on the Gove Peninsula was the catalyst for the unfolding of the contemporary female Yolngu artists.

Emergence of Indigenous Social Entrepreneurship

The mining operations on the Gove Peninsula onset a resurgence in Indigenous small business. Centuries before the acquired knowledge of the rich bauxite ore deposits there was a variety of ongoing business interactions among the Yolngu people and with northern seafarers (Ivory 1999). Berndt and Berndt (1999) claim bartering centres were used by the Yolngu people to trade the excesses of their hunter gatherer pursuits, and there is also suggestion the Chinese may have visited the northern shores of Australia (China Heritage 2005) considerably earlier than the first European visitors of the 1600s (Worsley 1955). In 1803 Matthew Flinders encountered large fleets of paus at Melville Bay (Cawte 1996; Flinders 1814). These sailors came annually (from the early 1700s) for the extensive natural products (pearls, turtle shell, trepan) and in return the Yolngu people acquired material cloth, tobacco, axes and steel for spear heads (Macknight 1972; Russell 2004). The written records reveal the Indigenous Yolngu people worked for the Macassans, and temporary shelters were erected for processing the trepan. The trepan (sea cucumber) had to be thoroughly washed to remove the contained poison and then dried for transporting to Macassar. But in 1907, when the South Australian government, then responsible for administration of the NT, cancelled the fishing licenses the 300 years of trading ceased.

An influx of a non Indigenous workforce in the late 1960s provided underpinning for Aboriginal small business in the Nhulunbuy region. Electronic visual records (Dunlop 1995) reveal Daymbalipu Munungurr and his family conducting (in 1971) a modest seafood industry from the waters of Daliwuy Bay 10 km from Yirrkala. This family group harvested oysters from the mangrove roots at low tide and collected crabs and caught fish, that were sold to the kitchens at the mission, the tent city next to the airport or the new H building accommo-

dation adjacent to the refinery. The art studio at Yirrkala sold products to the growing non Indigenous population of Nhulunbuy. Today the flourishing home craft industry is mainly the enterprise of women and their immediate family (children, grandchildren), and their output is sold to the Yirrkala Buka Larrnggay Mulka Arts Centre enabling these women to purchase food and clothing from the Nhulunbuy stories for family members. These endeavours fit nicely with the contribution of Dana (1995) who advanced that this type of entrepreneurship should be viewed as a cultural function of opportunity.

A changing Indigenous business model began to emerge in the first decade of the 2000s. Networking between Galarrwuy Yunupingu and Jack Thompson (the iconic Australian actor) was to foster the birth of a hard wood timber industry on the Gove Peninsula. The process began when John Moffin, of the Jack Thompon Foundation, went to Garrathiya and instructed Yolngu men how to mill NT stringy bark (*Eucalyptus tetrodonta*). Since these endeavours of the early 2000s Indigenous Yolngu people on the Gove Peninsula have been working collectively employing their traditional values and contributing to community needs without engaging in competition. These frameworks challenge traditional assumptions of entrepreneurship as they are centred on community building for the common good. This dynamically evolving phenomenon labelled Indigenous social entrepreneurship transcends academic disciplines to encourage a wider interpretation of capitalism.

The pathway to creating a regime of social ventures began with a vision. And while the exact time the vision was formulated is lost the existence was confirmed in an interview with Galarwuy Yunupingu in late 2013 when he stated.

> "I had to make things better than they were and I had the resources to establish the cattle station. When it was operating there would be jobs and fresh meat for my people. The journey would begin by making timber."

Deconstructing this statement identifies the core elements as a critical mass of cattle, accommodation for workers, holding yards for the cattle, an abattoir, refrigerated road transport and qualified staff, but none of these elements were available to the Yolngu people in the early 2000s.

Distinctions have been identified between traditional notions of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurial venturing. Conventional entrepreneurship has individualistic and economic dimensions while the strength of social entrepreneurs is providing sustainable resolutions to critical social problems that have not been resolved by government interventions (Dacin, Dacin & Matear 2010; Jones 2007; Tapsell & Woods 2008). Further delineation has been given by Nicholls (2006)

who states social entrepreneurship creates a new kind of capital, social, to provide new opportunities and bring about community regeneration. These notions fit appropriately with the construct of social capital, which is a community resource based on relationships among people (Kilpatrick, Field & Falk 2003) in networks containing norms that guide interactions. Adopting the connectedness of community values, social capital and cultural values, rooted in Australian Indigenous society, has enabled the Yolng Gumatj Clan to move away from previously failed business specific experiences of other marginalised groups.

YOLNGU SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP LEGACY

Written records reveal the Yolngu people have a rich heritage in entrepreneurial activity. Anthropologists suggest early in the habitation of northern Australia the Indigenous clans engaged in bartering to ensure their survival. Evidence that has survived from the journals of seafarers show the coastal Yolngu clans increased their survivability by developing entrepreneurial engagements with the northern visitors. When the Methodist missionaries came to Milingimbi and Elcho Island, during the 1920s, it was the Yolngu people, who for 50 years (Shepherdson 1981) provided the labour for a soft wood industry (Pearson & Helms 2012a) that underpinned the construction industry of northern Australia. Not unlike the mythical phoenix some 300 years later a prominent clan of the Yolngu has revitalised business acumen displayed by their forebears. The journey began on the 1st January 2007 when the Gumatj Corporation was established.

Contemporary Community Based Enterprise

Aspirations of the Yolngu Gumatj Corporation quickly escalated as tangible achievements. Initially, an arrangement was made by Galarrwuy Yunupingu with the Jack Thompson Foundation (JTF) to fell NT stringy bark trees, mill the logs to structural timber for decking of tank stands, house verandas, minor bridge structures on the property and ancillary structural building material. These activities preceded the building of a 12 person accommodation unit with a separate kitchen and adjoining toilet/shower facility at Garrathiya. This project was a precursor to being able to supply fresh beef products for the local Indigenous communities on the Gove Peninsula. The structure, built by Yolngu men and supervised by an employee of the JTF, was a combination of traditional and contemporary building techniques (Pearson & Helms 2010a; 2010b). Building columns were debarked logs placed in concrete footings while the girts and purlins were structural timbers produced from milled logs selectively cut from the savannah forest. Electrical and plumbing works were completed by licensed non Indigenous tradespeople from Nhulunbuy. Notably, this building was an early stage in preparing for the community good.

Within a few months of completing the 12 person accommodation complex new social entrepreneurial endeavours were commenced. Although the not for profit Gumatj Corporation was resource rich (i.e., land, timber, social capital) there was a lack of building infrastructure knowledge. This deficit was abated when Galarrwuy Yunupingu formed alliances with Forestry Tasmania (milling supervision), Tasmania University (architectural division), and Fairbrother Builders (construction supervision). During May 2009 timber milling began in earnest in the savannah forest within 20 km of Garrathiya. The timber was used to build a five person accommodation bunkhouse in mid 2009 (Pearson & Helms 2010a; Robison 2009) as well as commencing the construction of a large house at Dhanaya on the shore of Port Bradshaw (Pearson & Helms 2010b) in late 2009.

Prior to the 2013 Yolngu female Goyurr programme a range of community projects were completed by men who had been graduates of the ALERT and Ralpa programmes. In early 2010 the Dhanaya house was completed and during that year a number of social based activities were undertaken at the Gunyangara homeland. A one metre high galvanised steel post mesh fence was erected on the boundary of each of the 39 houses, a low timber rail and post fence (painted white) was built on the perimeter of the football oval to prevent motor vehicle access, and timber deck verandas were added to three houses at Gunyangara. In the furniture shop five boardroom tables (3 metres × 1.5 metres) were made (Pearson & Helms 2011), a number of timber beds were built for a community project to eradicate scabies in a home, and a range of house hold timber furniture (i.e., boxes, cupboards, stools, tables) was made as plastic and chip board made items were less durable in overcrowded houses. By mid 2012 three steel containers (12 × 40 × 40 feet), that were donated by the mining corporation had been gutted and converted to school rooms (Pearson, Helms & Daff 2014) where children of the Goyurr ladies could be left in day care.

When the Goyurr women graduated in November 2012 work premises for them had been built by the men of the ALERT and Ralpa programmes. A coffee shop and a community store had been built at Gunyangara for the women who chose to work in these jobs (Pearson & Helms 2012b). From the beginning of 2012 work began on building an abattoir at Garrathiya, under the supervision of the NT Department of Resources, so cryovaced beef could be sold at the Gunyangara community store when it opened on the 5th July 2013. Also a display studio was built adjacent to the furniture shop for timber products. The timber for these several community based enterprises has been felled on the new mining lease and milled at the Dhumpua industrial site (prepared during 2011/2012) by ALERT and Ralpa graduates. Other community orientated activities not yet completed are being progressed in the pursuit of the common good (Pearson & Helms 2013).

CONCLUSION

Historians and anthropologists have observed the behaviours and holistic thinkings of Indigenous people are distinctly correlated with their geographical residence. In Australia Indigenous people from cosmopolitan settings are more likely to pursue labour market segments and hold views about economic attributes substantially different to Aboriginals in remote regions of the nation. These variances are expressed in wealth acquisition, collective orientation, cultural maintenance, art, language and *Dreamtime* stories that attract forces of conciliation. As Indigenous disadvantages are complex and multi dimensional unitary policies within the lens of assimilation and broad based modernisation programmes have been criticised as newer forms of colonialisation, detrimental to Australian Aboriginal people. Indeed, prevailing employment opportunities generated by contemporary government and private sector initiatives have not realised greater labour participation rates across remote Indigenous communities in the mining sector or in small business.

The numerical status of Indigenous employment in the Australian minerals industry has seldom been precise. Information has usually been sourced from historical census data revealing the participation rate is about 2.5%. There have also been reports, solicited by mining companies and prepared by reputable institutions, but independence has been questioned by the favourability of the industry's performance given the overall population of Indigenous people in the region of the mining operations. Much of the presented material is aggregated statistics, seldom is mine specific information available, the reported job types are across broad categories, the described training programmes are ad hoc with curricula and educational vocational results implicit as well as lacking national accreditation. Recent political statements of Australian mining employment levels that have translated from policy and land use agreements are more rhetorical than reality reliable. In contrast, the training and vocational attainments detailed in chapter 2 demonstrate the Australian Indigenous workforce on the Gove Peninsula operates in two distinct streams – remote inhabitants and urban dwellers. The disparity in employment numbers between the two streams is a feature of cultural attachment. A major challenge for Australian governments and mining corporations operating in remote regions of the country is how to ensure meaningful sustainable employment in the communities of their operations.

Advocating Indigenous entrepreneurship with primacy for economic issues lacks rigor and depth. Espousing the virtues of sustainable small business predicated on conventional wisdom aligned with successful principles of Western frameworks of entrepreneurship is devoid of the importance of local Indigenous diversity. Often the government policy masquerades as social and capacity development, but inherent is the demand for greater attention to compliance and

a capital based view. Reported in this chapter is success was more a measure of value creation and innovation fostered for the community good. The evidence demonstrates the Indigenous social enterprises were able to deliver community products and services, that previous and current governments were unable to provide while conventional aligned economic entrepreneurship has been found to be unviable in remote Australian Indigenous communities.

Social enterprise development on the Gove Peninsula has been facilitated by business partnerships. Key stakeholders have been the mining corporations, government institutions and remote Indigenous communities that have combined their existing strengths to improve wellbeing outcomes. The mining companies have provided sustainable and rewarding job opportunities that have attracted a handful of Indigenous people, mainly from cosmopolitan settings, but more importantly has contributed resources for training Yolngu people for jobs in local small business. Government contribution has mainly been funding for the vocational educational programmes designed to embed the pedagogy, diverse knowledge systems as well as the cultural and social dimensions vital to provide for the family. Improving opportunities for Indigenous people on the Gove Peninsula was linked to sustainable and nurturing partnerships with non government organisations, government agencies, and local Indigenous communities.

Case Study Questions

Success in small business is usually considered to be monetary profit. Although money is recognised as a measurement of status in mainstream entrepreneurship, accumulated tangible monetary related assets are seldom viewed as important by Indigenous Australians, particularly in remote regions. Indigenous entrepreneurs are at the risk of losing links to their community and culture through a clash of heritage norms and primacy for monetary achievement. These features attract reconciliation in three regimes.

1. Explain why government sponsored enthusiasm for Indigenous entrepreneurship in Australia has realised a geographic and sector spread, but often has been unsustainable.
2. What are the underlying factors that are conceived as pathways to being successful across Australian Indigenous society?
3. What social values are dominant to the Australian Indigenous entrepreneurs, and what dimensions reflect the priorities that influence business decisions of non Indigenous entrepreneurs?
4. Identify barriers and obstacles that are likely to impede Australian Indigenous entrepreneurship. Separate general entrepreneurship from tourism activity.

Selected Readings

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MAINTAINING CORE BUSINESS AND KEY DRIVERS IN MINING INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS

RELEASING VALUE THROUGH RECOGNISING DIFFERENCE

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter you should be able to do the following:

1. **Have a better understanding of how mutual partnership based around shared interest in environment, culture and knowledge can lead to Indigenous employment.**
2. **Understand how corporate social responsibility initiatives can lead to development outcomes.**
3. **Develop an understanding of the concept of 'third space' and explore its role in bringing together opposing views towards mutual understanding.**

Abstract   This chapter presents an Australian case study example of how several mining companies (initially Newmont Mining Corporation and later, Northern Star Resources Limited) and a Native Title Claim Group (the Wiluna Martu), represented through Central Desert Native Title Service, came together through a mutual partnership based around the acknowledgement of a shared interest in environmental land management, traditional ecological knowledge and meaningful Martu employment. This case study example is bedded within the emerging literature of resource sector corporate social responsibility (CSR) and shared value partnership models. The authors argue that a key aspect of a successful partnership is the understanding that a 'third space' exists between organisations. Value is created through collaboration, flexibility and sharing resources in ways that enable each organisational culture to maintain its core business and key drivers. Within this paradigm, common value is created

and shared, paradoxically, through the recognition that each partner brings fundamentally different resources and capacities to the partnership, which add implicit value to the attainment of respective partner goals.

Key Words   Corporate social responsibility, Partnership, Shared value

Key Concepts Due to the legacy created from many years of evidently contested resource industry and Aboriginal land rights interactions, present day ontological assumptions of respective parties can be fuelled by conflicting interests, lack of trust, reservations, or hostility which limits the potential for reciprocal outcomes to be achieved outside of an agreement made through the perceived compromise of each group's fundamental core objectives. This paper presents a framework for evolving outside the current paradigm through drawing upon mining industry CSR, shared value partnership models and the concept of the 'third space'.

INTRODUCTION

Within the last decade, the resource sector has substantially evolved the way it interacts, negotiates and supports its stakeholder groups. Within an Australian context, the largely emergent nature of CSR has now firmly established its roots into the practical day to day management of resource sector companies and indeed corporate culture more generally. At a broader level CSR has undergone substantial evolution since its beginnings in the 1950s (see Carroll 1999; Lee 2008). At the mining/Aboriginal interface, this shift was largely catalysed through the introduction of common law recognition of native title in 1993 (Limerick et al. 2012).

Evolutions in CSR and Aboriginal Engagement

There are many definitions of CSR (see Blowfield & Frynas 2005; McDonald & Schloeffel nd; Mining Facts nd). Jenkins (2004, p. 24) describes CSR as a framework for "… balancing the diverse demands of communities, and the imperative to protect the environment, with the ever present need to make a profit.". The Australian Government Department of Industry describes CSR as the responsibility for which the organisation is liable for the impacts of its decisions and activities both on society and the environment. Impacts of CSR are demonstrated through transparent and ethical behaviour such as level of contributions to sustainable development, output from stakeholders, compliance and consistency with international norms of behaviours, and organisational

relationship (McDonald & Schloeffel nd). Mining Facts (nd) adds another dimension – a voluntary one, in that CSR are voluntary actions primarily undertaken to improve the social, economic and environmental conditions of local communities or decrease the adverse impacts of mining projects. Being voluntary, CSR is not necessarily bound by legal obligations, contracts, and licence agreements.

Numerous mining companies have adopted a CSR strategy to varying degrees (Adey et al. 2011; Kapelus 2002). In Australia, the mining/Aboriginal interface was largely catalysed through the introduction of common law recognition of native title in 1993 (Limerick et al. 2012). The adoption of CSR within mining companies' activities has many advantages both from the community and the company's perspective. The CSR programmes provide a mechanism through which mining companies can provide feedback to the community and compensate the social and environmental costs associated with mining, including costs on environment, food and housing due to the changes resulting from an increment of workers in the mining area (Busacca 2013; Jenkins 2004). Mining companies also benefit from CSR programmes as they can build better relations with local communities and avoid significant delays in a mining project. There have, however, been criticisms of CSR (Blowfield & Frynas 2005; Levitt 1958; McMahon 2010). For instance, according to McMahon (2010), although the stated objective of a mining company's CSR policy is to build the local community, sometimes the driving force is to bolster the company's image rather than benefit the local community. According to Hamann and Kapelus (2004) gaps are still noticeable between CSR activities of mining companies and their accountability and fairness, the two criteria, which they argue are important in assessing the authenticity of a company's CSR policy.

Nonetheless, CSR is rapidly evolving. Current initiatives through CSR policies in the mining industry in Australia include employment initiatives; procurement of local materials and services; payment of taxes and royalties; capacity building of Indigenous people to open pathways to employment in the mining sector; developing partnerships with regional organisations to ensure decisions remain within the local communities and that economic growth occur in the area; enhancing sustainability of communities by contributing to local community development funds, providing donations and sponsorships to communities as well as partnering with stakeholder communities; engaging in open communication and adopting an open and honest policy to address community concerns so that required strategies can be placed to solve issues; building responsible economic development to fulfil business objectives lawfully, ethically and with due respect to employees, host communities and the environment through appropriate sustainable development strategies; building effective environmental

growth through proper exploration, development and production activities, ongoing risk assessment and discussion with stakeholders to take necessary initiatives; and maintaining commitment to employees for providing safe and healthy work environment with fair compensation (Kapelus 2002; McDonald & Schloeffel nd).

As Kemp (2003) notes, community groups and non government organisations have increasingly been paying attention to how the mining industry interacts with vulnerable and marginalised host communities. At a global level this is influenced by recent and considerable industry investment and exploration trends, coupled with 'unprecedented' flows of foreign direct investment abroad and into developing countries (Kemp 2003). The net result is the resource sector entering previously inaccessible or unhospitable business and socio political environments within unstable developing countries (or areas with greater stakeholder legal agency such as Australia), thus CSR has become a vital tool to managing business risk. However, CSR should not be singularly seen as a risk management tool, but also a platform to leverage bottom line corporate advantage, and efficiency enhancement.

Despite being a highly developed nation with a stable business environment that is well supported by state and federal government policy (Chaudhri & Samson 2000), Australia has the unenviable record of the highest level of Indigenous peoples disadvantage within any developed country (Altman 2009a; Dodson & Smith 2003; Pink & Allbon 2008; SCRGSP 2009). Indeed, Indigenous people in Australia suffer grossly disproportionate rates of disadvantage against all measures of mainstream socio economic status (Pink & Allbon 2008; SCRGSP 2009). The perceived wealth creation of the resource industry juxtaposed with this level of polarised disadvantage highlights the significant role of CSR and its evolution within the interface of resource companies and Indigenous Australians.

One of the more recent evolutions within the CSR field has been the defined distinction between its human rights foundations, to that of a competitive advantage linked to the business imperative, of which this paper identifies as bottom line performance and production. Hence, while CSR first evolved through the necessity of industry being accountable for its social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts on stakeholders within host communities (Carroll 1999; Lee 2008), there is now an emerging sub field of CSR that recognises the business case, shared value and competitive advantage that can be generated through CSR. This in turn prompts resource companies to be meaningfully investing in resilient CSR programmes with its key stakeholder groups, as a means to directly improve business performance, develop social currency and

offset stakeholder impacts. The concept of 'shared value' is presented as a way forward for corporations (especially resource) to bring social responsibility from a cost of compliance at the periphery, to a competitive advantage at the core. Adopting a shared value mindset reframes this interface with the notion that it is not just conventional economic needs, but also societal needs, which define markets, and that social harms frequently generate internal costs for companies as well. By engaging in shared interest partnerships with mutual stakeholders, both the costs and management requirements can be spread across a wider collective, allowing companies to do more with less. This becomes invaluable during periods of industry downturns, as social programmes are viewed as core to business and not 'added costs' secondary to what is ultimately required to function profitably.

At the remote Aboriginal/mining interface there exists good opportunity for the meaningful engagement of Aboriginal groups around natural resource management service contracting. However, this shared interest is rarely recognised and often poorly managed through inappropriate employment and engagement models. What is often needed is a shift in thinking that identifies local drivers, skills and assets and finds appropriate models for harnessing their value.

THE MUTUAL PARTNERSHIP CASE STUDY

Throughout 2012 Central Desert Native Title Services, through its Land and Community programme, partnered with Newmont Mining's Jundee Operations Environment and Social Responsibility Department (ESR) to establish a fee for service agreement based around the department's environmental compliance obligations. The partnership was envisaged as a way of creating mutual benefit through a shared interest in working as partners in environmental management of natural assets. Voluntary negotiations between staff at the Jundee Mine and Central Desert Native Title Services began in late 2010, with the programme formally rolled out in early 2012. The long lead in time was largely due to the initial difficulty in finding a way to harness each other's skills and resources. While the parties agreed to identify and to focus on areas of mutual benefit and to build a relationship through reciprocity, it took some time to work out what this would actually look like. Central Desert Native Title Services (CDNTS) is a native title service provider for the native title claimants and holders of the Central Desert Region of Western Australia. CDNTS includes a Land and Community unit that work with the local community to deliver natural and cultural resource management services to Federal, State and Industry bodies in the Wiluna region through its 'ranger' programme. Land and Community projects are funded through a mix of fee for service and grant based contracts

that harness specialised Indigenous NRM skill sets to deliver rehabilitation, conservation, and natural resource management outcomes on traditional land.

The value proposition of Central Desert's Land and Community unit is based in the ability to deliver efficient, local based NRM services in remote environments, build employment pathways for Indigenous people, create positive social impacts through employment and enable long term partnerships that deliver cost effective social investment strategies around employment targets, environmental management and community capacity building. The core of this engagement framework is that the Martu participants have self identified and evaluated it as a preferred livelihood pathway over normalised and mainstreamed employment models.

One of the key principles of the employment model is that it harnesses Martu skill sets and recognises that Martu social and cultural drivers are real and create the need for alternate employment models. One of the fundamentals of this model is that it is based on what Altman (2001) calls a 'hybrid economy'. Altman argues that economic participation in remote communities needs to be conceptualised through participation in three inter linked sectors: the market, the state and customary economies. A good example of this, as Altman identified is the art 'market'. Art is produced in state supported art centres, sold in the private market with creative productivity being driven by local cultural 'milieus', kinship and knowledge systems (Altman 2006). The Wiluna Martu ranger environmental service contract is successful because rangers are directly participating and being supported by these three market sectors. The Wiluna Martu rangers are directly participating in the market economy through wage labour, in the state economy through the social and capacity building support systems facilitated by Central Desert staff and funded through separate state and federal grant funded programmes and in the customary economy through building Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and working in work teams that fit Martu kinship and social systems. Altman describes the 'bliss point' of the hybrid economy as the place where all three economic sectors converge: the ranger contract hits that 'bliss point' (Altman 2010).

PILOTING AND THEN GROWING THE MODEL

The ESR department at the Jundee Mine has a primary objective of mitigating any risks and potential impacts the mining operation may have on the surrounding natural environment and its stakeholder groups. These obligations are formalised through government regulators including the Department of Environment and Regulation (DER) Jundee Operating License, a number of

related voluntary commitments and its need to generate social currency with all stakeholder groups to feed its social licence to operate. It is these obligations that bridge the gap between bottom line corporate performance, and the reasoned agency (hybrid economy) of the Martu people which allow both stakeholders to enter the third space of shared interest and mutual outcomes.

In late 2011, a pilot programme was held at the Jundee Mine site involving CDNTS staff, a mix of senior and young Martu men, and members of the Jundee site leadership team. The group came together out of mutual interest, rather than a legal imperative, to identify points of engagement. The point of engagement between the Jundee Mine, Central Desert Native Title Services and Wiluna Martu rangers first arose in 2010 through a recommendation by the members of the Wiluna Regional Partnership Agreement (WRPA) after sustained lobbying by Central Desert to codevelop a Martu ranger environmental compliance contracting service. The WRPA is the outcome of an MoU between the Minerals Council of Australia and the Commonwealth Government to enhance employment and enterprise development outcomes for Indigenous Australians within the resource sector.

From this pilot, the group agreed that a number of pre existing work areas currently overseen by the Environment Department would be practically suitable for the Martu rangers. The Martu participants agreed these tasks would be both culturally appropriate and of interest to them.

The work areas were identified as,

• Physical rehabilitation of historical surface drilling sites.

• Non endemic flora and fauna population monitoring and control.

• Threatened species identification and mapping.

• Sustainable work practices (recycling).

• International Cyanide Code Compliance monitoring.

The verbal agreement also included a training package in Certificate II Conservation and Land Management delivered through Durack Institute of Technology.

This programme was formally put into practice in early 2012. The Martu rangers would spend one week per month for 10 months per year working with the site's ESR Department on the identified work areas. The working team consisted of up to five young Martu men accompanied by a coordinator employed by CDNTS. The relationship was structured in a similar vein to any formal contractor, in that they would be responsible for all costs, meet a pre determined works schedule, and undergo standard performance monitoring.

FIGURE 1
Wayne Quilliam (courtesy of Reconciliation Australia)

The programme was monitored and evaluated by all three stakeholders (Jundee ESR staff, CDNTS and the Martu). Based on this review (which concluded it a success), in early 2013, the partnership was formalised through the joint signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Jundee Mine and the Martu people (through CDNTS). The MoU was signed for Newmont by the General Manager Operations, and Newmont's Denver based CEO (a measure of commitment on the company's part and not the normal practice). The programme was further developed to encompass the management of a Newmont owned pastoral lease, which broadened the level of engagement Martu had with their traditional lands, and diversified the programme to include women's and youth Ranger teams to demonstrate their commitment to gender and age equity.

## IDENTIFYING VALUE THROUGH THE 'THIRD SPACE'

Communities and businesses have different utility functions and both parties need to identify where the combination of these utility functions yields maximum value for both. As such, while the partnership may seem a simple trade of service for fee, a complex shift was needed in order to understand how the partnership could create value for each partner. This was largely due to two reasons. Firstly, relations between native title claimants/holders and resource companies tend to be conflicted. This conflict is created by the adversarial nature of the Native Title Act that tends to promote strategic opposition between native title holders and resource companies. This is largely because the Native Title

Act provides a "… statuary right to negotiate but no requirement for Indigenous consent to mine" (Altman 2009b, p. 18), and, therefore, the only way for native title holders to maintain negotiation power and to secure the best agreement is through maintaining the negotiation process through opposition. If a benefit sharing agreement is able to be struck then the formally adversarial parties are required to quickly switch from opposition to beneficial cooperation as if there was no political conflict. In terms of this case study, considerable conceptual shifts were necessary for both partners in order to move from relations of conflict to those of developing a partnership (Altman 2009a). Secondly, the partnership that resulted from the agreement was based on a form of inter cultural relationship where the motivations, drivers and expectations of all parties were not always clear. The concept of the 'third space' provided a useful way to understand how value could be identified and captured for each partner.

The concept of the 'third space' was first developed by Homi Bhabha, a literary and post colonial theorist to move beyond universalist understandings of cultural difference (Bhabha 1990). The 'third space' was a strategy to overcome liberal humanist paradigms of 'cultural diversity', 'multiculturalism' and 'racial tolerance' which assume "… at some level, all forms of cultural diversity may be understood on the basis of a particular universal concept." (Bhabha 1990, p. 209). The issue here, as Bhabha explains, is that "… a transparent norm is constituted, a norm given by the host society or dominant culture, which says that 'these other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our own grid." (Bhabha 1990, p. 209). Bhabha sees this as a 'containment of cultural difference' rather than an authentic engagement with it. Put simply, respecting

FIGURE 2
The concept of 'third space'
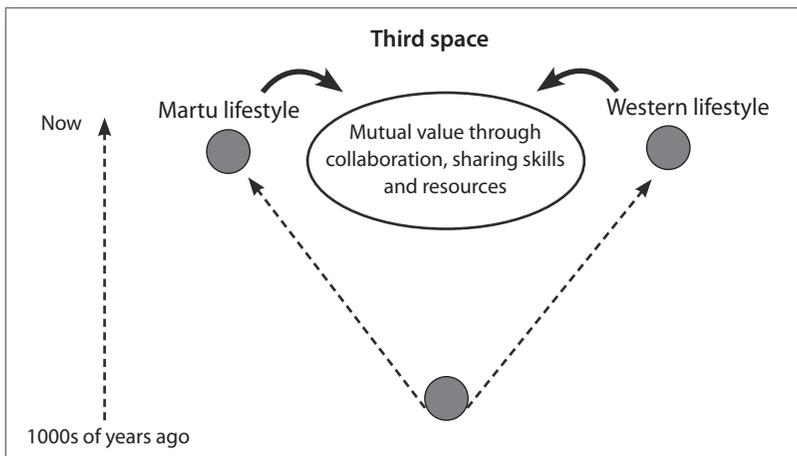
the absolute difference of other cultures in cross cultural situations enables authentic and open dialogue precisely because different values, behaviours and skills are different and respected as such. In order to value that difference and relate authentically, we need to move into the third space, a hybrid space that is a negotiated and 'translated' space between. The point of this in terms of our argument is that recognising a 'third space' creates common value through a paradoxical recognition of the fundamentally different values, resources, assets and skills that each partner brings. In the context of this case study, the concept of 'third space' is explained diagrammatically in Figure 2.

Over a vast period of time, Martu lifestyles and Western lifestyles have developed in vastly different ways and are now poorly integrated. But each has knowledge, perspectives, resources and values that the other needs. Value is created through collaboration, flexibility and sharing resources in ways that enable each organizational culture to maintain its 'core business' and 'key drivers'. For the Jundee Mine, CSR, complying with environmental and heritage regulations, reducing risk and partnering with local people and organisations to create meaningful development opportunities. Martu 'core business' is framed around: an employment model that allows Martu to work within a kincentric network and to existing tradition ecological knowledge skill sets (Berkes & Folke 1998), on country and to a roster that accommodates their cultural obligations of environmental custodianship, the opportunity to maintain intergenerational knowledge transmission, and work programs that are hands on, outside and team based. Again, these elements combine to form a hybrid economy (Altman 2006).

By accepting that each partner has key functional drivers, core business and compliance structures that are real and forceful shows how each party needs to move into a 'third space' in order to release the value the other partner brings. Arguably this third space is the segment of the hybrid economy that suits Martu and is also valued by the mining company. Common value is created, paradoxically, through the recognition of the fundamentally different values, resources, and capacities that each partner brings. This recognition of difference is what underwrites the value of the partnership. To put this in practical terms, for Martu Rangers, this means upholding Jundee's work and safety practices, drug and alcohol policy, worksite culture and environmental compliance obligations (i.e., by upholding the value of this for Jundee, the Rangers create value for their own key drivers and operational structures). For Jundee, recognising the value that Martu skills sets, knowledge and resources bring to the mining company's operational efficiency and corporate social responsibility programme enables them to understand the need for flexible work models that fit with Martu social realities. In short by maintaining the integrity of the other's operational structure one enables the true value of a collaboration to be realised.

The shift is around maintaining the legitimacy and effective functioning of each organisational structure rather than imposing common values or universal structures. To put this simply, one has to let Jundee be Jundee and let Martu be Martu, (and to recognise that there is nothing wrong with this): this is how you enable secure, robust and dynamic skill and resource sharing.

CONCLUSION

This ideological shift is evident through the transference of how staff at the Jundee Mine interpreted their relationship (and subsequent opportunities) with CDNTS and the Wiluna Martu. While the Ranger programme was initiated as a social investment, its success unearthed greater opportunities for both parties. Over time, it has become a vital source of human capital for the site Environment Department, which due to recent commodity price declines has undergone severe staffing reductions. The core business alignment of the Ranger programmes has seen them survive this period and become further embedded within the Jundee operation. Further to this, the programmes have been nominated as finalists in the Western Australian Government's top environmental excellence award - The Golden Gecko award, which is not normally considered the domain of CSR. Additionally the Ranger programmes were cited at Newmont Mining's Global Investor Day held at the New York Stock Exchange on the 1st of August as a flagship model of stakeholder engagement. Finally, the shared value partnership was recognised by the United nations - Global Compact Network Australia and the Minerals Council of Australia as an outstanding example of developing partnerships that are socially and economically sustainable in remote communities.

In July 2014, the Jundee Mine was sold by Newmont Mining to Northern Star Resources. While the new owner was relatively young, and much smaller than the previous owner ($1.1b vs. $12.5b market cap in 2014), it instantly recognised the implicit and explicit business value in maintaining the MoU with Central Desert and the Martu. Subsequently, Northern Star Resources signed a MoU in September 2014, and agreed to support and grow the partnership and programme into the future. This hand over is noteworthy as it shows how CSR programmes generating core business outcomes can better survive the asset sale process, a common occurrence within the resource sector.

From a mining company perspective, what was initially seen as an added cost social investment strategy has now been reframed through the third space into core environmental compliance labour source that has increased local labour hire, competitive advantage through state government recognition for envi-

ronmental excellence, as well as exemplifying social responsibility to investors. This can only be described as a set of programmes that deliver comprehensive shared value for both the mining company and Martu.

Given the reality that Indigenous people in Australia are highly disadvantaged in terms of all measures of socio economic status, this 'proper social responsibility' seems nowhere more essential than in places like Wiluna. While the partnership between the Jundee Mine and Central Desert Native Title Services is very much at an emergent stage, early indications suggest that solving such 'wicked problems' as Indigenous disadvantage require innovative thinking that turns 'problems' into 'opportunities', costs into benefits, difference into mutual value. Using such concepts as the 'third space' enables these shifts to be made because it identifies that each partner brings different skills, resources, capacities and obligations to the table. By recognising and valuing different core values and drivers, the collaboration has been able to create value for both parties that fulfil each partner's business practicalities while upholding organisational rationality.

Problems such as Indigenous unemployment are often obvious and easily identified, but innovation and change making will only begin when the right questions are asked. By beginning with the question 'what are the local skills, assets and drivers and what is the model that best harnesses their value', the partnership between Central Desert Native Title Services, the Jundee Mine and the Martu people has been able to innovate and develop sustainable ways to turn a core problem into a valuable and productive partnership.

Case Study Questions

1. Identify and discuss the key factors that enabled the partnership between the Jundee Mine, Central Desert Native Title Services and the Martu people to go ahead.
2. Demonstrate how the mining company operationalised the principles of corporate social responsibility to have a genuine outcome that is mutually beneficial for all parties concerned.
3. What is the role of corporate social responsibility in the broader development process?
4. If you are a Manager of Stakeholder Engagement in a resource company, describe how you will go about the creation of a 'third space'? Design a Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

Selected Readings

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INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP IN PRACTICE
CONTEXT AND CULTURE

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter you should be able to do the following:
1. **Explore the need for a balance between short term business imperatives and long term sustainability.**
2. **Examine the critical leadership functions and processes in guiding strategic and cultural change.**
3. **Employ contextual and cultural perspectives to assess the mechanisms employed in leading an organisation.**

Abstract   This chapter comprises of three sections. Firstly, a review of Indigenous Leadership in an Australian context, which includes both Aboriginal People and Torres Strait Islanders, where the wording 'Aboriginal People' is used, reference is made only to Aboriginal people. Secondly the chapter includes an overview of Indigenous Women in Leadership in different settings and the enablers and barriers to women's leadership. Thirdly, Mayi Harvest, a wholly Aboriginal owned small business located in the Kimberley region which produces by products made from locally grown fruits is detailed. Each of the three components highlight the cultural relevance in both leadership and business management, challenges and barriers in leadership and business development as well as the factors that contribute to a sustainable and successful leadership framework.

Key Words   Indigenous, leadership development, Context, Culture, Women in leadership

Key Concepts This chapter explores the cultural relevance needed in leading and managing organisations. Recognition and an understanding of the context and challenges experienced by diverse groups, including Indigenous women are central to addressing a holistic leadership structure. This chapter employs both a theoretical background and empirical evidence to highlight the need for context, cultural relevance, practice and available opportunities to create a sustainable leadership development framework.

INTRODUCTION

"In traditional Aboriginal societies, leadership and governance were embedded in *The Dreaming*, a spiritual framework which determined complex kinship systems, social, economic and political structures. Authority and decision making were exercised according to the role, age and skill, with particular regard for the wisdom of the Elders." (White 2010, p. 9). Indigenous scholars argue that leadership models which are currently being adopted in Indigenous communities are a result of colonial experiences and life in reserves. However, to authentically empower Aboriginal relationships and a leadership vision, there is a need to embrace Aboriginal values and beliefs, knowledge systems, unique ways of finding and distributing information and include Indigenous women's leadership (Pearson 2000; White 2010).

INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

"Prior to European occupation, Aboriginal women were economically secure and played important roles within traditional Aboriginal society." (White 2010, p. 6). Important strengths of pre colonised Indigenous women included: food gathering skills; child care and rearing; practicing health therapy and contributing to the spiritual wellbeing of the communities, and taking care of their kin. Indigenous women have also been considered as the keepers of knowledge within families and communities (Marchetti 2007). In today's Australia, Indigenous women are already playing a pivotal role on various fronts, including the family, community and the workplace. There are Indigenous women who, having completed their doctoral degrees (West, Geia & Power 2013) are better positioned to contribute to Indigenous health and well being. For instance, Behrendt (2006) acknowledges that her doctoral degree completion openedup a huge window of opportunities for her. She attributes her educational success to a strong support network of friends, the supportive attitude of professors and family support.

West et al. (2013) present success stories of three Indigenous women performing leadership roles in nursing and midwifery. Roianne (the first of the three Indigenous women leaders) acknowledges that her ancestors' resistance to colonisation in Australia has given her enough strength to face the challenges of being an Indigenous nurse leader. Other factors that have contributed to transforming her to an Indigenous leader include a strong connection to Country and People, guidance from Ancestors' spirits to find the right way to go, and a solid belief in the notion "… what doesn't kill you only makes you stronger" (West et al. 2013, p. 4). Lynore, (the second Indigenous women leader recasts the 1939 story of her mother, who along with her grandmother were sent to Palm Island at the age of three years, under the Order of Removal of Aboriginals. Lynore believes that she inherited the leadership skills as her parents, grandfather and great grandfather were all leaders of their times, and she specifically quotes the example of her father's leadership, which she believes has contributed in transforming her from an ordinary Indigenous woman to a leader in nursing. Finally, the third Indigenous leader (Tamara) attributes her strength to the guidance and support she received from her aunts. Tamara hopes that her contribution as a PhD university lecturer and role modelling educational aspiration will inspire other Indigenous community members to realise their leadership goals. Tamara expresses her concerns of the serious underrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the academic world. Currently, Indigenous leaders occupy positions in a number of fields including education, nursing, and midwifery and in the creative industries.

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

Indigenous culture dates back to thousands of years, with its very unique characteristics (Graham 2012). In particular, Indigenous population's political and social structure does not follow any hierarchical and/or bureaucratic principles. For instance, Graham (2012) argues that elderly Indigenous people are given respect and ample authority to decide on important matters. Importantly, the other members of the community, including women are also respected and heard during the decision making process (Graham 2012; Warren & Quine 2013). This perspective suggests that power is diffused within the broader Indigenous society instead of being concentrated in the hands of 'privileged elites'.

The collective consciousness of Indigenous people is further informed through their spiritual belief that everyone and everything is associated and interconnected (Graham 2012). Warren and Quine (2013) note that Indigenous community members show respect to alternative viewpoints, which makes collective decision making, which is a further prominent feature of Indigenous culture. Storytelling has been another vital trait of the Indigenous culture, where con-

versation is used as a means to manage various community issues (White 2010). Maintaining of reciprocal relationships between the community members is central to Indigenous leadership (Warren & Quine 2013). Indigenous leaders possess an inner strength and resilience, especially having overcome past economic, social and political disadvantages (White 2010). This is resonated in the contribution of Tim (2002) findings, when he acknowledges exceptional performance of Aboriginal leaders on the face of a great variety of obstacles in their path, including poverty, poor health, unfavourable workplace environments and institutionalised racism.

FACILITATING LEADERSHIP

Warren and Quine (2013) note that sharing of authority and responsibilities between the Indigenous and non Indigenous members of the community gives rise to an inclusive style of leadership that incorporates Indigenous culture. In particular, their study finds that treating community and organisation (school, in this particular case) as two interrelated and interconnected entities is mandatory to enhance students' performance and to build the leadership capacities of Indigenous staff. In 2009, the British Council and the University of Melbourne initiated a group programme (ACCELERATE: Indigenous Australian Creative Leadership Programme) to build Indigenous population's leadership capacity in the industries. Since then Indigenous Australians have been nominated through a competitive selection process each year. Talented Indigenous people are offered the opportunity to develop their career through the leadership development programme in the United Kingdom (UK) and in Australia. This programme is successful to the extent that it has helped many Indigenous people to enhance their leadership skills. A few prominent "ACCELERATE" alumni include: Ron Bradfield (Manager Regional and Indigenous Development Programme at Art source); Kyle Morrison (Artistic Director of Yirra Yaarkin Theatre Company); Barbara Bynder (Deputy Curatorial Director at the Berndt Museum at The University of Western Australia); Alisa Duff, Head of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programme at the National Museum of Australian in Canberra; and Gina Williams (singer songwriter, independent Indigenous arts and media consultant).

CHALLENGES

Despite the fact that Indigenous communities have been the most researched population group, the positive outcomes for the Indigenous population remain low (Fredericks 2008). Warren and Quine (2013) note that the top down management and communication practices advocated by Western leadership principles

are less inclusive of Indigenous culture. The study, however, acknowledges that Western bureaucracy principles are not fully avoidable. However, equipping Indigenous community members with the knowledge and skills to effectively negotiate Western bureaucratic structures can potentially help empower them. Institutional Leadership Programme (ILP), a project of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council suggests developing the leadership capacity of institutions to facilitate the development and delivery of more culturally informed and relevant Indigenous programmes (Frawley & White 2010).

Clarke (2013) highlights the need for inspirational Indigenous leaders who can contribute to improving the health and general wellbeing indicators of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Commenting on the nature of the problems Indigenous nurses face, Clarke (2013) stresses the need to remove several hindrances both in the educational setting and in the job market, and believes the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses (CATSIN),h is working on removing such barriers to facilitate the development of Indigenous leaders.

Advocating the importance of Indigenous culture. Pearson (2000) argues that the restoration of Indigenous values and relationships are significant challenges facing the recovery and empowerment of Indigenous community. Tim (2002) believes that overcoming the internalized racism is the greatest challenge, which has done massive damage to the Indigenous community. Commenting on the nature and extent of the damage done by the racism, Tim (2002) stresses the need to understand the problem and to take necessary actions so as to help Indigenous communities recover from the damage.

Of the many barriers Indigenous female leaders experienced, some of the more prevalent barriers were racism, sexism, and socio economic and educational disadvantage (White 2010). Not having access to education, female leaders highlight the importance of education and how possessing tertiary qualifications enabled them to obtain employment, and subsequently further their career trajectories (White 2010). As has been noted in West, Geia and Power (2013), with regard to higher education attainment rates, only 8.7 percent of urban Indigenous people possessed Bachelor degree qualifications or above, in 2011. White (2010) highlights that a further disadvantage has been the lack of sisterhood with white women, who were seen as contributing to Indigenous women's historical oppression. She also notes in her study that having other Indigenous role models and work life balance impacted women's leadership development. Research with Indigenous female leaders; have highlighted their need for having mentors, and being able to network.

The Indigenous population's poorer health, lower life expectancy at birth, high unemployment and incarceration rates have also been considered as potential barriers to Indigenous women's empowerment (White 2010). In line with the findings of White's 2010 study, Behrendt (2006) stresses the importance of understanding and addressing the wide range of Indigenous social issues pertaining to their health, schooling, accommodation, cultural heritage, welfare and self determination. An ample volume of indigenous leadership literature reports sexual assault of Indigenous woman as a significant barrier to their empowerment. Expressing feelings about her teenage sexual assault, Behrendt (2006) notes that such an unpleasant experience contributed to her experiencing many emotional problems including poor self image and the lack of confidence. Interestingly, Indigenous women believe that male dominance within the Indigenous communities is also an important obstacle to progressing their leadership development.

LEADERSHIP IN PRACTICE

Case: Mayi Harvest

Extracts for the case on Mayi Harvest, an agricultural producing small business, are based on an interview conducted with Pat Torres by Rola-Rubzen et al. (2011). The business is located in one of the remote locations in Australia, namely, the Kimberley.

The Kimberley is one of Australia's large and multifaceted terrains and is located in the northern most part of Western Australia (WA) covering some 421,451 square kilometres (approximately 261,000 miles) (The Kimberley 2014). The Kimberley's wonderful landscape comprises approximately 16 percent of Western Australia's landmass (Kimberley Development Commission 2014). This region is culturally rich with "… approximately half the population comprising Indigenous people, and more than 30 traditional Aboriginal language groups were located in the area." (Kimberley Development Commission 2014). According to the Kimberley Development Commission (2014) an increasing number of Indigenous people are engaged in employment and business activities in the Kimberley region. It is also a region where business and cultural knowledge is integrated in a meaningful way so as to provide outcomes for both Aboriginal people and the wider regional community.

The land has special meaning and value to Indigenous People and is associated with the *Dreamtime*. According to the Australian Aboriginal mythology framework, the *Dreaming* is 'a sacred era', and often used to refer to an individual's or group's set of beliefs or spirituality (Aboriginal Art Online 2014). "The knowl-

edge of early peoples, the *Dreaming*, Ancestors and the interrelated connections through individual rayi spirit child, its jalnga or power, and boogarri - its Dreaming - is what makes unique beings of Indigenous people." (Kinsella 2012, p. 212).

Mayi Harvests is an Aboriginal Australian native produce business and one of a few fully Indigenous owned and operated businesses. The business is owned and managed by Pat Mamanyjun Torres. She comes from a family of Traditional Owners around Broome and the Kimberley. Pat has a deep knowledge of Indigenous culture, ancient beliefs and its relationship to the 'sacred earth' and she notes that such beliefs have relevance to the present day (Kinsella 2012, p. 212). Being an active member of the Milari community, "Pat is a Ngarrangu Jarndu (Indigenous woman) and connected to the Jugan, Yawuru and Jabirr-Jabirr peoples of the West Kimberley region around Broome and beyond. Pat is passionate about language, oral histories, culture and education. She is committed to her family being successful in their lives and in their personal relationships." (Department of Social Services 2007, p. 1). Pat holds a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Diploma in Education and has partially completed a Masters in Education. Her business acumen extends from running a consultancy business to having 30 years work experience in the Arts and Literary industry. To help her with operating a small business, she also completed a Certificate in Business Management, and undertook training in the use of technology and horticulture.

The name Mayi is derived from the Yawuru language group spoken in the West Kimberley. It translates to 'plant foods derived from parts of plants, including seeds, fruits, nuts, breads and cakes' (Dynamic Small Business Network 2012). The business employs local knowledge of several 'bush' fruits to produce jams, chutneys relish, cordial, freshly blended juice, chilli sauce and sweet sauce. The main source of fruit is the Kakadu plum or Kullari plum (*Terminalia ferdinandiana*), which is locally known as *gabiny (*Rola-Rubzen et al. 2011). Other local fruits include the sandpaper fig, which is renowned for its 'nutty flavour'. According to its owner, Pat, it is the use of local fruits and its natural nutritional value that motivated her to pursue a business in the agricultural sector (Rola-Rubzen et al. 2011). She notes that producing nutritional products are of paramount importance, particularly to help with Aboriginal people's health and well being. Other reasons for pursuing her business interests include the provision of employment and training skills to employees and the removal of welfare dependency (Rola-Rubzen et al., 2011). The idea of starting her own business occurred when Pat noted that the Indigenous Harvest Australia Cooperative Limited (IHA) focused their attention on dried and frozen *gabiny* and did not concentrate on the processing aspects of the fruits. She used the latter as a business opportunity to align her local knowledge of food processing such

as making jams and chutneys and with links from her small business to other larger businesses operating under IHA. Mayi Harvests would first supply the required tonnage of *gabiny* fruits to the cooperative and the excess fruits would be used to create the processed by products such as *guwarl chutney*, mango and *gabiny* jam, *blachan*, cedar bay cherry chutney as well as tropical cherry jam. Pat notes that these products contain high nutritional value and are appealing to the palate (Rola-Rubzen et al. 2011).

History of Mayi Harvest

Pat recalls her family's involvement with the Indigenous Harvest Australia Cooperative Limited (IHA) back in 2006, and how this association evolved (Rola-Rubzen et al. 2011). It initially comprised of seven Indigenous family groups in the West Kimberley (Slow Food Perth 2012) and was registered with the support of the local Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) provider, Kullari Regional CDEP Inc. (KRCI). IHA is a cooperative for the local *Kullari* plum. Pat is one of the directors and her family supplies the local 'bush tucker food', [meaning food from the region] (Rola-Rubzen et al. 2011), namely the wild harvested *gabiny* fruit to IHA. Various other families supply a range of different 'bush tucker foods'.

The CDEP is seen as a supporting structure for Indigenous employment and encourages viable small business opportunities such as Mayi Harvests to be established. The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) views the CDEP as a sustainable organisation that is capable of being economically autonomous (Hudson 2008).

Apart from harvesting the wild *gabiny* fruit, Mayi Harvests produce fruits such as *guwarl* or snowball bush currant (*Flueggea virosa*), *gunariay* or cluster pea (*Ficus racemosa*), *ngaminajina* or sandpaper fig (*Ficus opposita*), *yarlmang ngurr* or pindan quandong (*Terminalia cunninghamii*), red ilarrd or coastal bush apple (*Syzygium suborbiculare*), and white ilarrd (*Syzygium eucalyptoides*) (Rola-Rubzen et al. 2011).

Mayi Harvests prides itself in terms of producing unique locally grown fruit that captures the natural flavours and contains high nutritional value. As well as considering the ethics of food production, Pat believes that these critical aspects will allow the business to flourish in the long term. Other considerations include improving the economic and employment outcomes of Aboriginal Australians. It also aims to provide social and cultural outcomes for families on traditional lands, and build the capacity of individuals and communities whilst ensuring that Aboriginal Australians occupy key leadership roles in the creation of native food businesses.

People

As kinship is core to Aboriginal culture, Mayi Harvests employs family members such as Pat's spouse, her children and their spouses. The family participates in the various operational activities of the business including harvesting, packing, weighing, processing, setting up market stalls, making posters, labelling products and marketing (Rola-Rubzen et al. 2011). Pat is the manager and includes the family members in developing strategies relating to the financial and marketing aspects of the business. The employees are paid for the labour from the business; in addition they receive a living wage from the CDEP scheme. Both Pat and her family members finance operational requirements. Apart from working at Mayi Harvests, Pat holds externally paid jobs on a part time basis. Local events such as the food and wine festivals and the Northwest Exposition that sees people coming from the North West (Darwin and Karratha) are used for marketing Mayi Harvests products.

Pat is passionate about preserving her culture and acting as a mentor to family and the community. She has a deep insight into local produce from the West Kimberley area and is keen to share her knowledge with others. Pat combines the quality and authenticity of production to meet the requirements of a western market, whilst simultaneously being cognisant of employing her knowledge of Indigenous stories. She employs her expertise in managing Mayi Harvests in such a way that its produce is authentic, native to the Kimberley region and also high in quality and value. Mayi Harvests prides itself as a producer of the types of products that can be showcased as representing a successful Indigenous business culture. Pat expresses her business aspirations and the desire to remove state welfare dependency. She believes that through training and skills development, family and community members will be able to improve their economic and social quality of life (Williams 2009).

Pat is conscious of the stereo typing of Indigenous people in Australia, and sees the creation and maintenance of Mayi Harvests as a way to demonstrate that she is a hardworking Indigenous woman. She is motivated to ensure that the business grows and succeeds and that she can be a role model to her community. Pat also considers that it is important not only for the community to have successful Indigenous business owners, but also for her family members to have a mentor. Mayi Harvest's vision is to have its products established in mainstream markets in the next 10 to 15 years (Rola-Rubzen et al. 2011). Pat has been working to utilise her knowledge to create opportunities for doing business and providing leadership in her community. Indeed, through IHA, Indigenous people in WA were interested in speaking with other Indigenous people in Australia, especially in the Northern Territory. For instance, Indigenous people from IHA discussed the importance of forming partnerships to be a cooperative, and such an initia-

tive led to an ongoing sharing of ideas relating to plant products (Williams 2009).

The business is approximately five years old and is continuing to broaden its product line. Some of its intended goals such as increasing the capacity and contribution of family members have been achieved. Pat's dream of building a business that is relevant in meeting the needs of its customers whilst maintaining cultural values have been achieved. She considers that the business operations in an environment that is safe and which provides conducive working conditions for family members are of paramount importance.

Marketing and Value Chain

Mayi Harvest undertakes all aspects of the supply chain. It can be categorised as a primary producer since the family owns the orchard and harvests the wild fruits. Measures to ensure that planting is conducive to sustaining the environment in a safe way are undertaken. The business also engages in the processing of by products. The business has its own logo and has intentions to register its trademark. Other initiatives include the creation of labels that provide nutritional information contained in each of the products. The customer base comprises of cafés, restaurants, tourist outlets and fresh food health shops. Whilst approximately 40 percent of customers are local, a large majority of customers are tourists, thereby allowing for potential expansion into the tourism and hospitality industries (Rola-Rubzen et al. 2011).

Mayi Harvests is currently the only Indigenous owned business, operating in The Kimberley region (Rola-Rubzen et al. 2011). Pat sees opportunities for growth and to include wine products in the long term. Preparations are underway to obtain the legal requirements such as a certificate of authenticity being attached to the wine products and including a seal of Aboriginal authenticity from the traditional owners of the land. It is envisaged that the inclusion of a diverse range of products could capture local, national and international markets. Nationally outlets such as airports, tourist resorts are potential places for the products to be marketed. There are also avenues to extend the products to be used as ingredients in the preparation of different cuisines (Rola-Rubzen et al. 2011).

Further research is required as current marketing and sales promotions are undertaken through its website and Facebook link. The importance of employing information and communication technology is acknowledged (Kramer, Jenkins & Katz 2007). With regard to pricing and costing, the enterprise has undertaken some market research to ensure that its prices are comparable to similar kinds of products, such as fruit and vegetable juices, offered in the eastern states and the central coast of Australia.

Pat is keen to use her business and its products as a way to educate people about Indigenous culture. She believes that customers are not just purchasing a product; they are also being given an insight into Indigenous culture. With the purchase of each product, customers are given a leaflet that provides a story behind each product and its association to Aboriginal culture. Aboriginal culture is not homogenous, for instance, different Indigenous groups or clans live and manifest their distinctive cultures with varying mother tongues and ceremonies, as well as relationship rules that have been guiding them for thousands of years (Department of Health and Community Services 2002). Nonetheless, there are common values and beliefs across Aboriginal cultural groups within Australia.

Culture, for Indigenous people, places an importance emphasis on enhancing a deep sense of belonging, a need to be part of the group or clan. In particular, it involves a spiritual and emotional relationship to the Land, which is unique to their beliefs (Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2008). "Culture is a protective factor against colonisation and the imposition of an alien dominant culture on all aspects of Aboriginal peoples' lives." (Bamblett, Harrison & Lewis 2010, p. 3). It is not just about the surface level of culture that is usually viewed through language, art, music, dress and food, instead it is argued that at the centre of Aboriginal culture, is the relationship to the Land (Victorian Government Department of Human Services 2008). This notion has been particularly practiced at Mayi Harvests. According to Pat, there is a great attachment to the ancestral lands. Mayi Harvests is an example that demonstrates that social networks such as the IHA, which was formed with other family groups in the West Kimberley, can serve as a marketing cooperative.

Support and Challenges

During the interview, Pat discussed a number of factors that contributed to the organisation's development and its success. In part, she acknowledges that the success of a business extends beyond the financial framework and includes organisational learning, at an individual and team level. The support from structures such as KRCI, and its subsidies have helped with the business. Social capital that extends from family members to the community contributes to the business's viability. Pat's personal commitment and dedication, has earned her the respect and admiration of the Kimberley community. Pat's associations as director of the IHA cooperative, Milari Aboriginal Corporation, and Djugun Aboriginal Corporation and membership in the Food Industry Association and the Broome Chamber of Commerce have enabled her to keep abreast with contemporary thinking and business trends. It is acknowledged that as with any organisation, challenges also remain, particularly for a business operating in a remote region in a geographically dispersed country. Figure 1 illustrates pictures of the Kullari

FIGURE 1
Green Gabiny Plum (left) Red Ilard

Source: Rola-Rubzen, et al (2011) Growing businesses in the desert; and http://www.mayiharvests.com/

plum (*Terminaliaferdinandiana*), which is locally known as the green *gabiny* fruit and the red ilarrd or coastal bush apple (*Syzygiumsuborbiculare*).

Acknowledgments

Photos were abstracted from Mayi Harvests' website: http://mayiharvestsbroome.vpweb. Com.au/default.html

Leadership in practice is adapted from the Mayi Case Study conducted by Rola-Rubzen et al. (2011) as part of a Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre research project.

Case Study Questions

1. Analyse whether there are similarities and differences in leadership styles, practices, approaches and values between Indigenous and non Indigenous owned businesses.

2. Identify and discuss the key factors that enabled Pat Torres's success as well as the challenges that a business such as Mayi Harvest might experience.

3. If you were engaging in business with an Indigenous owned and operated organisation, explain some of the considerations you would need to be mindful consider.

4. Being mindful of the cultural context of the business, as a potential mentor to the business, provide Mayi Harvests with a strategy and set of recommendations for future growth and expansion beyond the Kimberley region.

Selected Readings

White, N 2010, 'Indigenous Australian women's leadership: stayin' strong against the post-colonial tide', *International Journal of Leadership in Education: Theory and Practice*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 7–25.

Mayi Harvests 2013. Sustainable ethical Australian wild foods, viewed 12 October 2013, http://www.mayiharvests.com/index.html

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ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ART AND ITS PLACE IN THE GLOBAL ART MARKET

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After reading this chapter you should be able to do the following:
1. **Appreciate the complex, competing cultural and commercial terrain opened up by the advent of an 'industry' for the production and sale of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art.**
2. **Understand the significant challenges and constraints in marketing and selling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art into global markets.**

Abstract   Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is a distinctive feature of Australia's cultural and creative landscape and a sizeable component of Australian identity. While the political dimensions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art remain much contested, the aesthetic and economic aspects are well established. Reflecting the prominent place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in Australian society, there have – for over 40 years – been numerous attempts to place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art into the global art market, both as a cultural experience and a commercial opportunity. This paper surveys the uneven history of these attempts and the often contradictory motivations at work. These attempts are given some context through statistical information and the paper concludes with a summary of the current challenges and opportunities.

There are profound levels of economic and social marginalisation for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly in remote areas. In response, there have been numerous

policy initiatives and funding programmes, implemented over many years – with limited success. One of the only long term economic successes for remote communities has been the creative industries, through a national network of artist cooperatives, or art centres. While the art produced by remote area Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists has grown to prominence in the Australian cultural landscape, these domestic successes have not been replicated internationally.

Key Words   Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Indigenous, Art, Creative industries, Marketing

Key Concepts   This chapter tracks the development of international markets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art particularly that produced in the art businesses of remote Australia. While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art has been a prominent feature of Australia's cultural and creative landscape since the 1970s, there have been mixed fortunes in the attempts to create international interest in this art over that same time. Balancing the successful development of a number of collectors and galleries in the USA and Europe, as well as some 'blockbuster' exhibitions, has been the uneven and limited performance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art internationally; this performance is often characterised by a sense of lost opportunity (Newstead 2010). However, as this chapter reports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art has had a long and complex engagement with global audiences. Understanding this history can contribute to better gearing any future plans for international exhibitions and promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art.

INTRODUCTION

There are two entangled stories that characterise much of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art sector: economics and creativity (Altman 2005; Myers 2002). The economic story is a (relatively) straightforward one – that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are excluded (for a complex set of historical, geographic, social and political reasons) from most economic opportunities, whether as employees or entrepreneurs. The sale of art is a means to reclaim some of this shortfall. The creative story is both more encompassing, as well as more intangible – that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is, variously, Australia's cultural gift to the world (Price 2005), and "… the last great art movement of the 20th century." (Hughes cited in Henly 2005). Extravagant claims aside, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art claims both a prominent part

of Australian cultural identity and an enduring role in the social, cultural and economic life of remote communities, built on one of "... the longest running traditions of art in the world, dating back at least fifty millennia." (Caruana 2003, p. 7). Until at least the 1970s the art of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was largely of ethnographic interest, bartered and sold on Australia's frontiers, consigned to museums and defined by discussions of the 'primitive arts' (Morphy 2005, Myers 2002). It was the tide of social changes of the 1970s that triggered the beginnings of a commercial art market (Altman 2005). Central to this was the Whitlam Government's establishment of the Australia Council for the Arts and within it the Aboriginal Arts Board (AAB) in 1973. One of the AAB's functions was the promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, with "... the view that their role was to stimulate audiences in the broadest of contexts, engaging the international community as well as the wider Australian population." (Berrell 2009, p. 14). The AAB was instrumental in developing audiences – particularly international audiences – for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art; and this is discussed in more detail later. The AAB extended earlier work of Aboriginal Arts and Crafts (AAC) Pty Ltd. This Federal Government agency was established in 1971 and established a network of retail galleries in Australia's main cities, with the aim of contributing to the "... economic development of geographically remote Aboriginal communities...and generate an income for Indigenous artists and craftsmen." (Berrell 2009, p. 14).

The overlapping work of AAB and AAC coincided with the 1972 opening of Australia's first artists cooperative, Papunya Tula Artists in the western desert region (Myers 2002). This led the way for other remote art enterprises in places such as Mornington Island, Arnhem Land, and other desert communities. "The professionalization of mediation between artists and the market was underway." (Altman 2005, p. 6).

In the four decades since those first desert paintings were made and sold, the commercial terrain for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art has grown into a complex, multilayered phenomenon, with artists and art businesses operating in every state, including many of Australia's most remote places. It is also an enduring success – one of the few good news stories from remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia (Acker, Stefanoff & Woodhead 2013; Altman 2005,). Reflecting the sector's complexity, the scale of production, promotion and sale of art from remote Australia is also increasingly difficult to assess, with a fluid mix of transactions undertaken by a diverse array of individuals and businesses, often operating in remote locations or with minimal resources (Commonwealth of Australia 2007a). There are, however, some broad definitions that help understand the production and distribution channels. Artists – whether working independently or through a community enterprise – produce a wide range of works (paintings

on canvas dominate); the first, or primary sale, is customarily through an agent (art centre, gallery, dealer, operating on a commission basis). All subsequent sales are secondary sales, an arena in which auction houses feature prominently. While artworks move freely between private sellers and buyers, it is the auction market that attracts interest and where important benchmarks are set for an artists' price and collectability (Coate 2009; Taylor & Coleman 2011; Wilson-Anastasios 2011). There is also an important, but unpredictable link between the primary and secondary markets, as "… collectors are less likely to spend significant amounts of money on artists' work (in the primary market) if he or she does not have an established auction market." (Wilson-Anastasios 2010, p. 2). Additional factors that contribute to an artists' market aura are the number and profile of the collections that have acquired works, the number and status of the exhibitions the artist has participated in and whether the artist is deceased.

While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is now a recognised part of the wider art market there remains key areas of contention. One of these is the role and purpose of government involvement in the sector, particularly in recent years when new – and, to many, over engineered (Rothwell 2013; Wilson 2011) – legislation coincided with the GFC to see a sustained fall in the art market (Commonwealth of Australia 2012). However, there remain numerous supporters of the government's role in the sector, including those advocating for support to access international markets (Newstead 2010; Interview 3).

The long term, wide ranging support from government (and, in a few cases, non government) arts and cultural agencies has contributed to significant growth in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art sector. There are now around 90 art centres in all states and territories, a well established network of commercial galleries and dealers, significant public and private collections (both in Australia and overseas) and an educated audience. This commercial architecture is built on the sustained creative excellence and cultural diversity found in remote Australia. The interplay of these two elements – commerce and creativity – continues to frame the development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry, with its well established supply chain of artists, agents and audiences. It is against this complex and unstable backdrop that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art's place in the global art market has developed. This notion is examined in the following sections.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art: International Context

Any analysis of the international trajectory of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is limited by the virtual absence of data (Commonwealth of Australia 2007b). While small amounts of generalised information is collected by

the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the places where actual art transactions happen do not collate or readily share information; few art centres log the necessary details, commercial agents keep sales information confidential and auction sales are often to anonymous or third party buyers. Further, there is no way to track the volume and value of artworks that are sold privately.

Outside of the data collated through the auction market there is only anecdotal information on the volume and value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art sold internationally. In this case study, much of the contemporary information is, therefore, drawn from interviews with and feedback from those involved in selling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in the international market. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (Commonwealth of Australia 1997; 2003; 2007b; 2011) tracks some broad measures of Australia's trade in culture. Table 1 shows the total exports of 'cultural goods' and, within that, the exports of the category that includes visual art.

TABLE 1
Australia's exports of cultural goods and the proportion
of artistic works within that (ABS)

	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10
Total cultural goods	333	296	330	384	385	483	544	576	611	633	596	603	628	584	540
Artistic works	70	45	50	66	64	99	95	100	103	79	117	90	133	95	82

Note: The category 'artistic works' includes exposed photographic and cinemato-graphic media and artistic works. All values in $ millions.

ABS data show that of Australia's total exports, cultural goods average around 0.3%. Further, Australia has imported more artistic works than exported them in 14 of 15 years from 1995 to 2010, and on average, artistic imports have been 1.6 times higher than exports. While the destination countries for Australia's exports of artistic works are diverse, the US, UK and New Zealand dominate, totalling between 50% and 70% annually.

This summary information can be given some further context. For instance, the total global art market in 2011 was estimated to be worth around AUD $62 billion, shared equally between auction sales and gallery sales (McAndrew 2012). The Australia Council for the Arts' *artfacts* website (Australia Council 2013) estimates that Australian auction sales were 0.6% of global total auction sales (approximately $186 million). However, Figure 1 shows detailed auction statistics compiled by the Australian Art Sales Digest. These values show both a lower estimate of sales and the relatively small proportion of the national art market for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

FIGURE 1

Total art auction sales and the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander works
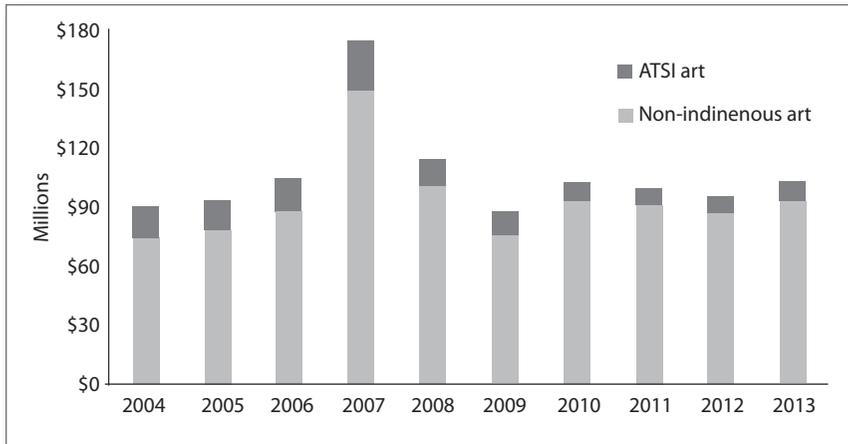
Source: Australian Art Market Directory 2014

For the decade to 2013, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists have averaged 13%, or $13.8 million of total annual auction sales. The success of large auction houses, particularly Sotheby's (who, importantly, toured auction lots to key US cities), in promoting and selling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in the global market has seen "… over $50 million worth of Aboriginal art sold (between 1997 and 2007), between 50% and 70% by volume has gone to buyers outside Australia, with that figure split roughly down the middle between the US and Canada and Europe." (Genocchio 2008, p. 10). Using that (admittedly rough) estimate of the percentage of art going overseas would have seen an average of $8.3 million worth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art being exported per year through all art auctions. This, in a market for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art estimated to be worth between $150 and $250 million annually (Commonwealth of Australia 2007a) equates to between 5.5% and 3.3% of art heading offshore. While it is impossible to present precise figures, it is clear that by whatever estimate is used, the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in international markets is tiny.

A recent survey (Woodhead 2014) of 126 Australian and international art businesses provides detailed information about the markets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, from national and international perspectives. From this survey, Australian based art businesses report that in the last five years, Europe has provided 65% of sales, with France, Germany and the UK accounting for about 75% of this market. The USA represented a further 23% of art sales; Asian markets were 9%. Over the same period, for overseas based

art businesses 49% of their sales were in Europe, 29% to the USA and 11% back to Australian customers.

The Australian and international art businesses that trade in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art surveyed also provided predictions on future market opportunities. Overall, the sales profile for both Australian and international art businesses indicated only minimal change is expected. Australian based art businesses predicted a small decline in European markets to 58% of total international sales, a small increase in the US market to 26% and modest growth in Asia to 13%. International art businesses saw increased opportunity in Europe (up to 57% of total sales), a static market in the US, with only minor changes to other markets. For both Australian based and international art businesses, Europe and US sales dominate, both over the last five years and for anticipated sales over the next five years. For Australian based art businesses, the US/European markets represent 88% of total international sales for the last five years, and 84% of predicted international sales over the coming five years; for international art businesses, the corresponding proportion of total sales to Europe/US is 78% (past years) and 81% (predicted). This stability in past and future markets is perhaps best illustrated through the experience of a leading Australian gallery, who held a commercial exhibition in Tokyo in parallel with a very high profile non commercial exhibition of one of the few Aboriginal artists of international stature, Emily Kngwarreye, where:

> …more than 100,000 visitors attended the exhibition during its three months in Japan. To coincide with the exhibition my own Coo-ee Gallery, with assistance from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Austrade, curated and staged the commercial exhibition *Emily Kngwarreye and her Legacy*. The selling exhibition sought to capitalise on the interest generated by a museum event that was promoted widely by its sponsors through newspaper articles and advertising in the media, on street hoardings and on public transport. It comprised 60 individual works worth $AUD2 million but generated just $350,000 in sales. Despite all of the publicity, not one single artwork sold to a Japanese client. The buyers were US hedge fund managers, European bankers and the CEO of an international recruitment agency. Quite clearly the international interest in purchasing Aboriginal art is not in Asia! (Newstead 2010, p. 31).

Going Global – Looking Back

There have long been claims by industry participants as to the importance of cultivating and sustaining international market interest in the art (and culture)

of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. "The fortunes of Aboriginal art have always been tied to international collector interest." (Newstead 2012, p. 32) is characteristic of claims from the commercial sector; such sentiment has fuelled the inbound and outbound trade missions supported by Austrade and the Northern Territory Government that have "… two-fold benefits – the initial economic gain for artists and helping to open up markets for Aboriginal arts in the United States." (Commonwealth of Australia 2008, p. 26).

History provides some insight into the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and global art markets. The AAB was the first agency to negotiate the (at times contradictory) aesthetic and commercial forces of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. When the government agency implemented an ambitious international exhibition programme. As Chicka Dixon, AAB Board member, said in 1974: "Australian people were generally ignorant and there were some advantages in gaining international acceptance to demonstrate Aboriginal art was world class." (Dixon cited in Berrell 2009, p. 19). The first major exhibition toured 13 venues in Canada, between 1974 and 1976, at the end of which the AAB Board "… donated many of the works to those venues … they believed it would adversely affect the local market if the collection came back." (Berrell 2009, p. 21). From 1974 to the early 80s, the AAB brokered 19 exhibitions in 14 countries as diverse as the USA, Nigeria and Papua New Guinea. The exhibitions were large and well received, with high attendance and widespread media coverage, totalling over 10 million visitors between 1973 and 1979 – though "… this achievement was little reported in the Australian press." (Berrell 2009, p. 22). An important strategy by the AAB was the inclusion of educational and contextual information about the artists and their cultural universes. The overall strategy for the AAB was to lift the "… paintings from the storerooms and offices throughout Australia and display them in metropolitan galleries and museums overseas." (Berrell 2009, p. 24).

The AAB's overseas exhibition programme finished in the early 1980s, with the new decade bringing a focus on economic imperatives (Myers 2002), coinciding with critics who "… observed the programme had limited commercial benefits." (Berrell 2009, p. 26). While official efforts largely moved to developing domestic markets and audiences, a small number of landmark exhibitions continued to be held. In 1988, *Dreamings: the Art of Aboriginal Australia* opened in New York, in 1993 *Aratjara: Art of the First Australians* showed in Germany, England and Denmark, in 1989, *Magiciens de la Terre* opened at the Georges Pompidou Centre in Paris, in 1990 Aboriginal art was shown at the world's premiere art event, the Venice Biennale and, again recently, at *Documenta13* in Germany. These events generated considerable interest and, crucially, established the first generation of serious, international collectors (Newstead 2010; Wright 1998).

Following the closure of the AAB the great majority of international exhibitions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art were organised by leading commercial galleries and Australian and international collectors. For example, between 1988 and 1998, " … more than 100 Australian Indigenous visual arts exhibitions were staged around the world, from Finland to Tahiti, from Cuba to China and from New Zealand to Denmark." (Wright 1998, p. 27). The late 1990s through to the GFC saw sizeable growth in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art market, with high end overseas interest and boom times in local markets (Genocchio 2008). Specialist dealers opened commercial galleries in the US and Europe and leading works were sold at auction to international collectors (Van den Bosch 2005).

The GFC shifted the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and the contemporary international art market. This fast moving global art market now has different drivers, while simultaneously, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector itself has undergone momentous change since those first commercial forays in the 1970s (Myers 2002). The next section examines the obstacles and opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and artists to engage with this reconfigured international art market.

Going Global – Looking Forward

Despite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art being part of the international art market for over 40 years, there remain a range of barriers, including structural, financial, aesthetic and regulatory hurdles. While these barriers exist along a (deeply entangled) spectrum, and not all of them apply to all situations, they do set out the diverse challenges that any art business faces when taking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art to global audiences.

Ethnography versus Art. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art has had a fluid place within the art market, having, over the years, been pushed between categories of ethnographic or tribal art and fine or contemporary art (Belk & Groves 1999; McLean 1998; Myers 2002). While this debate is ongoing and often ideological, it has implications for the way the art is presented and how audiences view, understand and consume it, and also on the prices this art can attain. At its simplest, "… ethnographic art is made by a 'people'; contemporary art is made by a 'person'." (Wilson-Anastasios 2011, p. 23). This translates, for example, into how auction houses present Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. While Sotheby's allocates "… contemporary Australian art to its 'Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture' department, Aboriginal art is classified as one of the 'Ancient and Ethnographic Arts' alongside Pre-Columbian Art and Egyptian Antiquities." (Wilson-Anastasios 2011, p. 22).

The prices achievable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art internationally are closely linked to these presentation approaches. The contemporary art market has opened ended pricing potential; "… once you break into the more general contemporary art market the sky is the limit on prices – contemporary art buyers are willing to pay a lot more for good work." (Genocchio 2008, p. 177). This has seen many market participants present the works as being "… beyond Aboriginality." (Myers 2002, p. 223), with agents selling a painting, not Aboriginal culture (Interview 3). In contrast, there remain many proponents for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture, identity and politics being indivisible.

A parallel situation further illustrates the competing values at work in this sector. While the art world is often fixated on the abilities and successes of individual artists, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and art centres regularly market the collective, characterised by group exhibitions. This "… collective/customary nature of art production cements the idea of the art as tribal/ethnographic. More needs to be done to highlight and promote individual talents. The main conduits are dealers rather than institutions, but the financial costs are exorbitant." (Interview 1).

Financial and Capacity Limitations. The only known examination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in the international market was undertaken as part of a 2007 Senate Inquiry (Commonwealth of Australia 2007b). The report itself, and many submissions to it, promote the importance and potential of the international market, though the supporting evidence is more emotive than detailed. The report also identifies key barriers. These barriers are recognised by Austrade, who have supported a number of inbound and outbound trade missions, despite a lack of data and possible "… inconsistencies in production, supply capacity and quality control." (Commonwealth of Australia 2007a, p. 194). Austrade notes that the remoteness of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists as well as art businesses and their limited business knowledge restricts development of the long term strategies required for succeeding in international art markets.

The financial burden of going international is often underestimated. Reported in a Commonwealth document is the statement "… there is not enough profit being made overall to actually allow those businesses to go back to those art fairs regularly." (Commonwealth of Australia 2007a, p. 195). As one German gallery noted, " … successful international business needs strong local partners in the target countries." (Interview 2). The small number of international galleries selling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is a sobering reminder of the limited reach of such collaborations. Even for major institutions to present

international exhibitions, the financial hurdle can be too high. This point was raised by Perkins "… there is just not the funds required to mount these major exhibitions overseas and to reach those very high art audiences that are really the taste makers for the consumers of art all around the world." (Perkins cited in Commonwealth of Australia 2007a, p. 201).

Provenance and Politics. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art market is a polarised one, with a long history of tension and disagreement on issues ranging from regulation to trade practices and ongoing cross cultural debates (Myers 2002; Rothwell 2010). Provenance is perhaps the most pointed of these issues. While there have been considerable efforts in Australia to create industry standards, such as establishing a Code of Conduct in part to give greater confidence to consumers, the free range art market undermines these efforts, as noted by a German gallerist: "Exhibitions in Europe – more often than not, supported by Australian Embassies – present mediocre artworks, of doubtful provenance. Sales are negligible and these exhibitions confuse people that are potentially interested in Aboriginal art." (Interview 2). These industry issues have, at times, spilled over into the international press, with detrimental effects, as UK based dealer Rebecca Hossack states; "Each time articles like this appear in the national and international press it kills the market in London stone dead." (Newstead 2010, p. 32).

While there are important interdependencies between commercial galleries and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned remote community art centres, there are also ongoing tensions, exacerbated by post GFC financial pressures and entangled issues of representation, authorship and supply and demand. In this environment, selecting, pricing, marketing and presenting artworks is a significant challenge.

Aesthetic and Curatorial. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art occupies, at best, a minute niche in the international art market. In an interview for this study, an internationally-based gallery owner stated "We hear our own feedback too loudly – we can be lulled into a false sense of growth. The number of people – in Europe/US – who can recognise Aboriginal art is minimal." (Interview 3). However, to fulfil at least some of the aspirations that industry participants have for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, the development of audiences and key 'taste-makers', is crucial. To do so, two parallel strategies are needed – artistic quality of the highest level, complemented by educational information. These dimensions combine to build up the number and confidence of the collectors necessary for sustained international interest (Commonwealth of Australia 2007a; Interview 4). The internet presents challenges to such activities; the

unmediated online space, where some of the sector's unresolved issues play out (e.g., particularly pricing and provenance of artworks), undermine efforts to educate audiences and present art of quality and integrity (Interview 4).

Given the often competing views in the sector, the unanimity of views on the importance of a coherent international strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander is notable. This condition is characterised by comments such as "The international market is absolutely critical for the sustainability of the art centre model and Aboriginal art in general; the collector base in Australia is stagnating and the secondary market is in trouble, through a combination of auction house behaviour and government regulation." (Interview 1). Unusually for the polarised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art market, there appears wide agreement among art businesses that a key – and largely unfulfilled – role of government is to coherently support initiatives promoting and presenting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art globally (Commonwealth of Australia 2007b; Interview 3; Interview 4; Newstead 2012). It is suggested that any such initiatives synchronise commercial and non commercial exhibitions in relevant (Europe and US) markets, focus on quality and be supported by a well planned body of educational material (Commonwealth of Australia 2007a:200). As highlighted elsewhere, the education of audiences about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is crucial – and cannot be left to chance: "The German market needs a lot of background information to understand the artworks." (Interview 2) and "It is much easier to market the ethno-mystical aspects of Aboriginal art as a drawcard than to try to break through barriers and reach out to new audiences." (Interview 1).

Cultural Diplomacy or Commercial Drivers. A consistent thread throughout the global forays of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is the interchangeable concepts of art as cultural diplomacy and/or as a commercial opportunity in the global art market (Commonwealth of Australia 2007a; Myers 2002; Newstead 2010). At each end of the spectrum they are easy to recognise. Indeed, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art (and culture) presented as emblematic of Australia and Australian identity is at one end and fine art exhibitions at privately owned galleries at the other end. However, diplomacy and commerce are often blended – unhelpfully, given the distinctly different drivers at work.

Non selling exhibitions, which sit at the diplomacy end of the scale, can be important mechanisms in generating interest and cultivating audiences, but without "… an adequate density of events – exhibitions, cultural activities, political events – to sustain attention on Aboriginal art." (Myers 2002, p. 318) commercial ventures do not last. For any serious attempt at maximising the potential of the international market for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

art, clarity of purpose is crucial, "Whatever market is aimed for, go with a game plan – have thought through the reasons for what you're doing." (Interview 3).

Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage. The Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986 (PMCH) was established to regulate the export of cultural objects, including a restriction on objects of importance. The Act differentiates between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous paintings, with the former requiring export approval for all paintings older than 20 years and valued over $10,000; non Indigenous paintings require approval for all art older than 30 years and valued over $250,000. Unlike similar legislation in the UK, the Australian regulations are not able to recommend the Federal Government buy any works deemed too important to be exported – leaving these works in a form of limbo, unable to be exported but potentially unable to find a local buyer, or only at a lower price – with repercussions for both the artist and the stability of the market.

These anomalies of the PMCH Act have long been criticised; a prominent American collector stated "There is no reason for a sane and rational US collector to collect Australian Aboriginal art that falls within the purview of the cultural regulations. These well intentioned regulations are seriously out of date and in some instances they work against the best interests of the artists." (Raffan 2012, p. 8). In the highly competitive global art market – and the tiny and precarious place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art within it – the disincentives of the Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage are potentially significant.

Opportunities. While the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art market has seen a sustained downturn (Commonwealth of Australia 2012), art businesses remain optimistic, though with caveats about the realities of the international art market. This point is made by McCulloch (2014), who writes shows of Indigenous art in Paris, Holland and the US have helped lift the profile of that art to some degree. However our art and its market are largely still quite insular. New markets (e.g., China) continue to be overshadowed by the established markets of Europe and North America (Newstead 2010; Interview 4; Woodhead 2014). However, these market opportunities may be at odds with national political interest focussing on Australia's place in the region and our economic links to China.

Compared to other art in the international art market, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is competitively priced. This contention has been made on behalf of a Singapore based gallery. "Price points for good Aboriginal art are incredibly low; simultaneously, Aboriginal art is a fantastic product – there is an incredible variety of styles and works, there are so many ways to present

and understand Aboriginal art." (Interview 3). To capitalise on the opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art globally, advocates argue for a concerted, uncomplicated focus on presenting high quality art, in contemporary fine art settings, supported by educational material and framed by investment in non commercial exhibitions of art and culture (Interview 4; Interview 3,).

CONCLUSION

The art of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has generated important economic, political and social capital. The success of this art within Australia has seen a four decade long push for recognition by international art markets, a push that has met with, at best, mixed results. Significant barriers remain for any art business entering the international art market. The reality that only a small and specific niche for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art exists internationally is often at odds with commercial agendas or national interests. If, however, these international art market realities and limitations are acknowledged, there are genuine opportunities to present and sell the best of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and creativity to global audiences.

Case Study Questions

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry has a complicated and entangled supply chain, with a multitude of commercial relationships and numerous channels connecting 'suppliers' (remote-area artists) and 'buyers' (urban based audiences, collectors etc). This is also a market in which there are strongly contrasting values – cultural, commercial, creative – at work and the transition from art created within one worldview and consumed in a very different one, presents a wide range of constraints and challenges.

1. Identify what, if any, initiatives the network of Australian based art businesses might consider in designing and implementing a long term export strategy.
2. Consider whether the barriers may be too high and whether efforts should focus on domestic markets, or, at most, a limited international programme.
3. Are there any strengths or 'unique selling points' that might be better utilised in presenting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art to international audiences.
4. What, if any, role should government play in assisting exports and building a global profile?

Selected Readings

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BACKGROUND TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ART AND THE ART INDUSTRY

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter you should be able to do the following:

1. **Have a wider appreciation of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centres.**
2. **Have an appreciation of how Australian Government policy has shaped the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art industry.**
3. **Develop an initial understanding of the challenges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centres face in terms of their long term sustainability.**
4. **Develop an initial understanding of the factors which have enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to connect with the broader art market including the hybrid economy.**

Abstract   In contrast to the widely perceived failure of government to adequately address the many challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in post colonial Australia, the Aboriginal art movement has been a major national and international success. There have been four significant art sector reviews commissioned by government identifying a range of issues that continue to impact on the effective ongoing sustainable operations of remote Art Centres. These issues include business practices, governance, staff training, staff recruitment and retention, and infrastructure needs. Most Art Centres have seen falling sales, coinciding with a long term drop in profitability and increased dependency on funding. This affects financial and social resilience and sustainability of the individual artists and the community. Additionally, one of the more significant changes has seen a

doubling of Art Centre funding. However, this new funding is for employment activities, not for the practise of art. This funding issue is related to the changing role of some Art Centres from predominately concentrating on the production and sale of art to concentrating on more social and cultural concerns. Despite these significant inquiries and their associated recommendations, the policy and funding regimes for art centres have not resulted in improved stability or the anticipated increases in sales across the sector. Additionally, government policy making and at times radical changes in focus have also been determining factors.

Key Words   Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Art centres, Hybrid economy, Sustainability, Policy, Remote Australia.

Key Concepts This chapter identifies some of the challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centres and their long term sustainability. The communities in which these Art Centres are based, are characterised by their remoteness from mainstream services, and have, therefore, historically had few employment opportunities or avenues to engage with the commercial or market sector. As a result, they have been highly dependent on government funding. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centres have provided within their limited capacity employment and training for local artists and workers as well as an unsteady, but, nonetheless, highly valued stream of self generated income. They have also significantly operated as part of a 'hybrid economy' which has enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to connect with the broader art market while at the same time reinforcing and invigorating their cultural capital and customary practices.

INTRODUCTION

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is "… one of the longest continuous traditions of art in the world, dating back at least fifty millennia." (Caruana 2003, p. 7). It now incorporates paintings, weaving, fibre, carving, metal work, jewellery, glass and pottery and has become an important influence on, and in addition to, Australian art commerce (Acker, Stefanoff & Woodhead 2012; Brennan-Horley, Connell & Gibson 2007; Coate 2009; McLean 2011).

The term Aboriginal Art Centre generally refers to an Art Centre that is 100

percent artist owned and is generally located in an Aboriginal community. They are governed by an Aboriginal board, which is elected by the members of the Art Centre. Usually the Art Centre is the broker for the production and sale of art works for community members (Commonwealth of Australia 2007). Currently in Australia there are approximately 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centres that are owned and governed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is estimated that over 6500 artists are involved in the Commonwealth Government funded Art Centres, including over 3670 'core' artists, the majority (57%) of whom are women (Commonwealth of Australia 2013). A range of State, Territory and Commonwealth policies, initiatives and strategies aimed at the development of art practices, products and markets, support these Art Centres (Acker et al. 2012; Commonwealth of Australia 2013). There are disparate estimates as to the extent, scope and scale of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art sector. Over a 13 year period, the estimates have ranged in value from $2.5 million (Pascoe 1981) and from $100–300 million (Commonwealth of Australia 2007).

Historical Development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centres

Art centres in remote communities have their origins in art activities managed by mission and government staff in reserves spanning across northern and central Australia. These art activities were seen as a potential income stream for the missions and then later as an important and non divisive way of "… asserting the value of Aboriginal culture." (Morphy 1998). Creating employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the missions and reserves was considered a priority by both the missions and government (Perkins and Langton 2008). From a government perspective the emerging art centres had a utilitarian function from the beginning, quite apart from their political power as a platform for promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, which aligned with the assimilationist policies that predominated after WWII not just in Australia, but across the colonial world (Sullivan 2011).

It was only in the 1970s, with the emergence of self determination as a major policy determinant that public (government) patronage of the emerging art centres in remote communities became more systematic with the establishment of the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council (AAB) (Altman 1989). The AAB provided through its grants programme much of the funding for art centres throughout the 1970s and 1980s, during which time the number of art centres increased and a 'fine art' market for Aboriginal art emerged (Altman 1989). Significantly in 1971 the Office of Aboriginal Affairs funded Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Pty Ltd to wholesale and retail all the product produced by art centres (Myers 2002) and this company continued to hold a virtual monopoly

until it's demise. Other state and particularly federal agencies such as the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA), the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC) and the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) also made funding contributions to the emerging art centres.

Each agency had its own historically dynamic justifications and requirements for funding, with DEET "… using a standard labour market approach… the arts and crafts industry … being regarded as just another potential sector that can generate Aboriginal employment." (Altman 1989, p. 146). The ADC had a primarily commercial focus, and, therefore, concentrated its investments in funding the development of 'manufacturing enterprises' which resulted in grants being provided to art centres that focused on screen printing and clothing manufacture (Altman 1989). DAA provided grant funding as well as income support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander producers of art and craft through the Community Development Employment Programme (CDEP).

The review of the Aboriginal arts and crafts industry by DAA (Altman 1989) and led by Altman highlighted the lack of coordination between and within government departments as a major impediment to the future development of the sector. The establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission in 1990 was regarded as an opportunity to coordinate key government programmes including the funding of Aboriginal art and craft centres. The 1990s and early 2000s saw a huge expansion both in the number of government funded art centres and national and international art market interest in Aboriginal art. Direct funding to the Aboriginal art sector increased substantially and with the demise of ATSIC in 2004, responsibility was devolved to the Office for the Arts and the Australia Council.

Art centres have not been passive participants in this process. Their high public profile and perceived success has led them to be viewed by some sections of government as drivers of commercial, social and cultural benefits, and, therefore, legitimate avenues for public investment aimed at increasing economic participation and the general health of the community (Jones & Birdsall-Jones 2014). An unexpected off shoot of the long term investment in art centres was the development of business models that did not fit neatly into neoliberal definitions of a deregulated and market driven private sector and have been classified by Altman as the best documented examples of 'intercultural production' and the 'hybrid economy'.

The majority of art centres are poor economic performers if judged by sales alone and very few art centres have seen sustained market demand for their

product. In the case of art centres in particular, the nature and value of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1993) is under intense scrutiny and value is not solely calculated on the basis of markets or competitiveness, but also on cultural maintenance, social cohesion and political expression (Morphy 2000; 2008; 2009). While a critical issue for art centres is the generation of income for artists, it is also widely recognised by the sector that art gains part of its value in the eyes of fine art consumers from its cultural integrity and the international attention attracted by the high end art market has given artists a very high profile, but under utilised political platform from which to speak (Morphy 2008).

The Hybrid Economy

Since the beginning of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art movement in Papunya in 1971, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art has become a type of currency, whereby Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can obtain not only enhanced economic benefit, but social and cultural benefit as well (Borzaga & Defourny 2004; Dees & Anderson 2002; Mercer 1997; Morphy 2005). Given the widely perceived failure of government policy to deliver better outcomes for Indigenous Australians living in remote communities, researchers have looked to developing new frameworks that reject the neoliberal approach to managing the state (Sullivan 2010) and the primacy it gives to unregulated, but conservatively defined markets.

One such framework is the 'hybrid economy', which positions itself in opposition to the normalisation principles underpinning much government policy and direction. Rather than using one model to define the appropriate economic models for Aboriginal communities, the hybrid economy is defined as varied because of structural, cultural and economic factors. Accepting customary kin and land based practices as one of the foundations for the production of art in remote communities. The existence of the Indigenous art economy at the intersection between the spheres of the market, state and customary practices has led to it being described as a hybrid entity that resists government and market transformation. What this actually means for art centres has not been researched and requires some examination to test the validity of the concept and more importantly help art centres undertake the transformation and changes that may be necessary to meet the challenges of the future. The economic effect and influence of arts activity is viewed by some of those directly involved as entwined with the social health and fabric of the community (Brennan-Horley et al. 2007). Engagement in Art Centres contributes to social and cultural capital and provides the artist and their family with benefits through enhancing economic security, providing access to training and potential employment (Altman 2001).

Economic, Social and Cultural Functions of Remote Aboriginal Art Centres

Many factors contribute to the difficulty of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to engage in mainstream economy. Examples include exclusion from national and global market forces, absence of an economic foundation, lack of access to skills and education and tensions between social, cultural and economic factors (Altman 2001; Arthur 1999). There is a paucity of literature investigating the performance and functions of remote Aboriginal Art Centres. There are some studies that have looked at the social and cultural models of participation in community arts (McHenry 2009; 2011; Williams 1995), in particular, art in relation to its capacity to revive and revitalise traditional forms of culture (Guetzkow 2002; McHenry 2009; White 2009) and the establishment of attainable economic enterprises (Dunphy 2009).

The significant role of art in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is well documented as one way of transferring knowledge, culture and law (McLeod, Baker & Firebrace 2001). Other studies have found that Aboriginal art has an impact on self esteem and identity (Eakin 2003), health (Putland 2008), dignity, achievement, self respect, hope, social wellbeing (McHenry 2009) a means for income generation (Acker 2008) and employment (Altman 2001; Commonwealth of Australia 2007), and increased social capital and community cohesion (Cocklin & Dibden 2005; McCarthy et al. 2004; Macnaughton, White & Stacy 2005; Sobels, Curtis & Lockie 2001; Williams 1995). One of the critical issues investigate, noted by Healey (2002) was that, "… there appears to be contradictions and major stress points about how art centres are perceived by the art market and funding bodies and the actual requirements of the communities. These matters underline broader issues facing indigenous communities such as unemployment, isolation and social tension." (p. 2).

Over the past 20 years, Aboriginal Art Centres have had varying degrees of business success, with some centres no longer in operation because of unsound business practices and poor governance. The Art Centre model is virtually the same today as it was 20 years ago. However, the economic, social, cultural and political environments in which Art Centres operate have changed. Peak advocacy bodies such as Desart, are challenging its members to confront and change outdated and imbedded practices that impact on good business, while continuing to put culture first (Watkins 2013).

Policy Development and Implementation

The heavy reliance of remote based Aboriginal people and art centres on government funding makes them particularly susceptible to policy shifts. While many of the art centres are funded through a significant artist contribution, few

would be able to continue to deliver services without a government operational subsidy. Getting policy right in this area is, therefore, critical. Government has invested significantly in four art sector reviews (Altman 1989; Commonwealth of Australia 2007; Mercer 1997; Pascoe 1981) that have identified a range of issues that continue to impact on the effective ongoing sustainable operations of remote Art Centres. These issues include business practices, governance, staff training, staff recruitment and retention and infrastructure needs. Despite this intensive scrutiny, art centre funding is still primarily secured for short term periods, which leaves many unable to plan and invest in the long term.

Government policies are focused on a very broad range of activities in remote communities and their outcomes are not always predictable. Policies designed to increase employment and economic development are closely linked to other policy areas relating to community justice, health, education and social inclusion, without any overarching coordination of their development or implementation. How art centres and their needs are defined within the policy parameters is an indicator of how likely it is that government will be able to respond to all the stated needs and goals of artists and their art centres.

Historically how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been conceptualised as a identifiable unity has been both problematic and yet used as a foundational tool for developing and targeting policies and programmes within governments broader programme agenda (Rowse 2010). This hiving off of Indigenous policies and programmes has benefited Indigenous enterprises by securing targeted monies that would not otherwise have been available without competing with the mainstream funding recipients, but it has also been hugely problematic (Dillon & Westbury 2007; Sullivan 2011). There is a growing body of research that identifies under utilisation of Indigenous allocated funding because of the poorly informed bureaucratic maze of the public service, a lack of accountability, and a failure to recognise that the models of success underpinning policies are based on a dominant cultures perception of and aspirations for a socially constructed concept of Aboriginal Australia (Havnen 2012).

There is also a growing body of critique focused on examining what economic development models are being promoted within Indigenous policies and how their success or failure is to be evaluated (Altman 2011). The main paradigm articulated in Closing the Gap: The Indigenous Reform Agenda and its associated framework, The Indigenous Economic Development Strategy 2011 – 2018 (IEDS), of full time employment, career development, individual achievement, wealth acquirement and house and business ownership underpins most government policies in this area. This has led researchers to ask how well do these fit with the aspirations of people in remote communities (Altman 2011; Hunt 2011).

The IEDS makes direct reference to Indigenous art centres and their support agencies and commits to funding the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support programme, which is currently the primary source of federal funding for art centres. What is not clear is how the policy commitments as a whole are intended to benefit art centres and what pressures this model brings to bear on art centres. Equally significant has been the impact of the Northern Territory Emergency Response Act with the introduction of income management, Business Managers in communities, changed town leasing arrangements and a much higher level of health intervention and policing. This has coincided with the slow demise of the CDEP and its replacement with Work for the Dole and the National Jobs Package. For art centres this has meant that many artists have less control over their personal finances, their work is being overseen by Business Managers both directly and indirectly, some have lost their ownership of their premises / studios and their employment relationship with artists and arts workers have changed because of the phasing out of the CDEP.

Sustainability of Art Centres

Business sustainability is a goal for all Art Centres and the significance of businesses achieving sustainability has been documented by many authors. The history of remote area art centres has been a turbulent one and there are few predictable or well documented patterns with which to gauge the success or failure of these micro enterprises or map their future trajectories. This is in part due to the often volatile community environment (Austin-Broos 2011) and the uncomfortable fit with the equally unstable art market.

The concept of sustainability is commonly comprised of ecological, economic and social dimensions and is a term often associated with development (Throsby 2003). In 1987, the UN World Commission on Environment and Development defined sustainable development and in 1995, the World Commission on Culture and Development added a cultural dimension as well, expanding the definition to include cultural development. Hawkes (2001) advanced a model of sustainability, that recognises a community's energy, strength and quality of life is closely related to the energy, strength and quality of its cultural engagement, expression, dialogue, and celebration. He further postulates that the key to cultural sustainability is the development and fostering of partnerships. Throsby (2003) argues that the concept of cultural sustainability incorporates notions of intergenerational equity that encompasses the need for ensuring that future generations are "… not denied the cultural underpinnings of their economic, social and cultural life." (p. 184). He further argues that a single definition of cultural sustainability is not possible and has instead developed a set of six principles to assess the sustainable management of cultural capital. The

definition of cultural capital that Throsby (2003) has developed is "… an asset which embodies, stores or gives rise to cultural value in addition to whatever economic value it may possess." (p. 167). However, some definitions of cultural sustainability do exist, for example, "… the ability to retain cultural identity, and to allow change to be guided in ways that are consistent with the cultural values of a people." (Sustainable Development Research Institute 1998, p. 1). While it is important to support enterprise specific interventions for businesses to grow, it is equally important to look at the external environment in which they operate. This point is true of remote Art Centres, as one of the complex issues in relation to the sustainability of Art Centres is that they are predicated to a large degree on the sustainability of remote communities (Altman 2005). The likelihood of achieving successful and sustainable economic development in small rural communities with static or declining populations is greater where there is a strong community (Kenyon & Black 2001).

In reviewing the literature, there is no documentation on an agreed definition of strong Aboriginal communities. There are, however, definitions of community and what constitutes a strong community. Lawrence (2007) states that strong communities are, "… resourced, cohesive and inclusive." (p.2). In the Common-wealth, State and Territory Governments platforms, there has been a general progression towards promoting strong communities. Common ideas that have been promoted include strong leadership, capacity building, asset mapping and strong Indigenous governance (Commonwealth of Australia 2008). The Commonwealth Government, through the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support Programme, provides funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centres and allied industry support organisations to help build a stronger arts industry. Whilst Government support for Art Centres can be regarded as being commendable, there is a growing imperative to address not only fiscal sustainability of remote desert Aboriginal Art Centres, but social and cultural sustainability as well. It could be argued that the Commonwealth Government desires Art Centres to either fill the gap in Aboriginal peoples' income or to look to Art Centres to financially sustain remote communities. This view is evident in how the Commonwealth Government articulates the role of Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support Funding and the role of Art Centres in Closing the Gap (Commonwealth of Australia 2012). One critical sustainability issue that arises is whether Aboriginal Art Centres can sustain both individuals and communities now and/or in the future. However, the question that arises here is whether that is their role. Many authors note that in practice, sustainability is a problematic benchmark to agree on, as there may be notable distinctions of perspicacity over what practices are sustainable (Chambers 1995; Rennie & Singh 1996).

In order for Art Centres to enhance sustainability there are a range of business strategies that need to be addressed, particularly;

- Adjusting products to suit a changing market.

- Adapting to market competition.

- Developing new business models.

- Governance.

- Staff training.

- Human resources.

- Staff recruitment and retention.

- Infrastructure needs.

- Information technology.

Adjusting Business Products

The market for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is a dynamic one. This dynamism reflects the changing end evolving interests of art buyers as well as the experimentation and evolution of artists, particularly as new Art Centres open. This presents both challenges and opportunities for Art Centres; the challenges for remote area, culturally focussed businesses to adapt to shifts in market interest and respond to market signals are numerous. However, this is balanced by opportunities to work with new commercial partners, such as designers or manufacturers, adapt existing products or find new markets. The Production Report from the Art Economies Project highlights that this adaptation is underway. One of the most noticeable changes has been the increase in the production of smaller sized paintings and the dominance of these smaller and lower priced works.

Business Models

The remote Art Centre business model has changed little over time. However, the economic, social, cultural and political environments in which Art Centres operate have changed. There is a growing momentum to review and compare the range of economic, social and cultural issues impacting on the business practices of Art Centres.

Businesses assess financial performance by measures such as the cost of goods and services including raw materials, staffing costs, training, quantity and quantity of sales and profit margins. However many businesses today including Art Centres are developing a more comprehensive view of business models and business development.

Business models describe as a system, "… how the pieces of a business fit together." (Magretta 2002, p. 91), and how firms create and capture value (Chesbrough & Rosenbloom 2002). In terms of a business model, Aboriginal Art Centres can be seen as collaborative marketing groups and as Wright (1999) established, they "… are not conventional businesses." (p. 25). The business models that characterise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry are intercultural in nature (Acker et al. 2012). The strategic management of intercultural businesses requires that adequate attention is given to cultural values and issues in both theory and practice. In theory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centres could further leverage product difference as a source of competitive advantage. However, in practice, the actuality of successfully putting into operation a business strategy in a particular geographic, cultural, and linguistic location can be a challenge (Adler 1991; Deresky 2008; Hall 1976; Varner 2000). In order for Art Centres to develop appropriate strategies, relevant environmental influences need to be taken into account (Lee & Miller 1996; Madsen 1989; Miller 1988; 1991; Miller & Friesen 1983; Porter 1980; Venkatraman 1990; Zajac, Kraatz & Bresser 2000). Management, therefore, needs to be concerned with the components of how a business creates value and the links between components. Business process should be concerned with ensuring the central tasks of the business are being completed. It is important to understand what drives the Art Centres' business model and the underlying assumptions. In some instances, an organisation's business model requires little attention, whereas the organisations strategies and process require continuous monitoring (Magretta 2002). Although the literature highlighted a range of different management models, there was a range of common elements in those models, for example; mission, customer relationships, value proposition, resources, profit formula and revenue streams, value creation, governance, trust, technology and value network (Amit & Zott 2001; Batt 2003; Hamel 2000; Magretta 2002; Moricz 2009).

The literature indicates that enhanced performance of both individual cooperatives and cooperative systems is possible by engaging in greater collaboration and less competition (Mezzarol, Simmons & Mamouni-Liminios 2011). There are many examples of cooperative collaboration that have the potential to ease total system cost, for example, joint activities and programs, integrating or amalgamating certain aspects of activity / business or conflation of purchasing activities. However, there are a range of influences and circumstances that can effect greater collaboration between cooperatives. These include the interest and skills of the manager, the interest and skills of the governing board and the belief by patrons, members and the governing board that enhanced performance is achieved through competition.

The development and use of clustering or cooperative marketing alliances between Art Centres could develop and strengthen value networks in geographic locations within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry. Gálvez-Nogales (2010) reported that clustering could present many benefits including,

• Improves access to local and global markets.

• Promotes local governance.

• Facilitates innovation.

• Facilitates the scaling up and disseminating of innovations.

• Often linked to other clusters, such as tourism.

Importantly, Gálvez-Nogales (2010) reported that cooperative marketing alliances can create an enabling environment for inter business cooperation.

The definition of enabling environments has been used within the fields of economic development and has been primarily focused on the macro economic policies, institutions and regulatory conditions nations require to strengthen domestic markets, attract investment and successfully compete with each other. Analysts such as Porter (2004) have proposed that the microeconomic level is integral to economic development and the health and innovativeness of the microeconomic business environment is a critical indicator of whether macroeconomic strategies and reforms are likely to work (Porter 2004). Porter's research into microeconomic development has highlighted the multiple potential spheres of influence the enabling environment has on businesses, but has extrapolated this information and used it to measure and assess major economic trends such as competitiveness. His work has also not tracked the impact of these processes on businesses or clusters in any detail.

Using the broadest possible interpretation of the term, the enabling environment for art centres includes cultural, health and social impacts. Art centres have actively resisted the imposition of traditional business models, arguing vehemently and over a long period that cultural and social wellbeing are equally important outcomes and that art centres are a vehicle for Aboriginal people to engage with civic society, maintain their culture and have a political voice (Sullivan 2010; Wright 1999).

Governance

One of the most substantial tasks for Aboriginal people and communities will be to merge sustainable economic activities with important issues such as social affairs, cultural priorities, and legal rights. In remote Aboriginal communities two models of governance need to be considered and catered for:

- The western model; with a separation of powers, defined dispute resolution processes, comprehensive fiscal and administrative management and practical strategy.

- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander model; with openly representative structures, cultural integrity and relevance and with appropriate two way communication.

Staff Training

Altman (1989) and Wright (1999) state that the roles of the art advisors and/or managers are of primary importance to the successful functioning of Art Centres. It could be argued, however, that it is not the role in itself that is important, but the appropriate management, business skills and trust that such staff bring to the Art Centre.

Human Resources and Staff Recruitment and Retention

One of the critical issues in small businesses such as remote Art Centres is human resources, as small businesses can have significant difficulty in sustaining staff over the long term. Five issues related to the employment of staff in remote locations, which are particularly pertinent for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and Art Centres have been identified.

- Isolation from family, friends and peers.

- Staff burnout as a result of isolation and pressure.

- No identifiable career path.

- No succession plan. This in turn places pressure on the new incumbent, as corporate knowledge is not passed on to others.

- Staff face enormous pressures in remote communities in relation to the distribution of funding and resources to individuals, programmes and activities.

CONCLUSION

The Indigenous arts sector is under researched and often subsumed into the bigger goals and initiatives framed by the Closing the Gap policies, thereby greatly increasing the stakeholder base and institutional complexity. This means that art centres have rarely been the primary focus of policy developers and that their hybrid cultural business model has been defined on a federal level within the economic rationalist parameters of the Indigenous Economic Development Framework. In this framework Aboriginal culture and identity are a tool or

potential asset for economic development but not regarded as an end in themselves or a contra point to the very narrow definition of economic engagement and success outlined in the policy. This disjunct in values and goals has meant that government has had at times different priorities for art centres than those identified by the artists and community leaders who have worked to establish them through at times significant investment and have equally high expectations of their benefits to the community. With the assistance and support of their peak agencies, the art centres are trying to actively respond to market and policy developments and continue to be robust and highly valued community organisations with the potential to transform and adapt to new circumstances.

Case Study Questions

The board of management of a remote Aboriginal Art Centre wishes to develop a strategic plan to ensure the Art Centre is sustainable into the future. The new Art Centre manager has been tasked with completing this plan in 3 months.

1. Provide an overview of the tasks and challenges that will need to be addressed in order to address the sustainability of the art centre and develop the plan.

An art centre is deciding which funding avenues to pursue for the long term sustainability of the organisation?

1. What are the issues that need to be taken into consideration?

Selected Readings

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CULTURAL CLASHES AS IMPEDIMENTS TO AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this chapter you should be able to do the following:

1. **Historically, incidents relating to power and control have plagued robust research of Australian Indigenous affairs.**
2. **A lack of understanding of the elements shaping Australian Indigenous culture has led to legislation and government policy that has marginalised research endeavours.**
3. **There are patterns of coherence in principles of culturally appropriate research methods.**
4. **The absence of Indigenous voice, that can reframe research priorities, problems, and engagement, diminishes the strength of pathways for developing the Aboriginal standpoint.**

Abstract   Despite considerable enthusiasm to obtain equality for Indigenous Australians, a deficit persists in a wide array of social indicators. Major contributions from successive governments as well as investment from academic, business, and financial institutions have yet to substantially reduce the gap between the rhetoric and reality of Indigenous disadvantage. The underlying theme of this chapter is the research and investigative activities have been long associated with disappointing outcomes suggesting the employed research regimes are starting points to be optimised with some appealing and promising balanced methodologies.

Key Words   Alternative spiritualties, Dreamtime, Social inclusion and exclusion, Governance confining research

Key Concepts Mutual sharing of information is a central thread for realigning imbalances in methodologies employed in Australian Indigenous research. Much of the research investment has been aligned with standardised and Western protocols, that exclude meaningful dimensions of reciprocity and the dominant kin based blood line connections of Indigenous culture and community lifestyle. Historically, Australian governments have created Aboriginal affairs policy and legislation that was shaped by non Indigenous mainstream views, and this stream of events has led to power imbalances in the investigative mechanisms. Often the procedures do not allow the researchers to engage with the Indigenous people, and thus, there arises a lack of useful communication methods within the researched Indigenous contexts. Consequently, there is a growing ground swell for a transformation in research processes that will enable Indigenous people to have a stronger voice in research concerning them.

INTRODUCTION

Researching first nation peoples and communities is notable for the absence of the voice of those peoples who are being researched. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2005) sees research into native peoples as another manifestation of exclusion and exploitation. She states that

> "... the history of research from many indigenous perspectives is so deeply embedded in colonialisation that it has been regarded as a tool only of colonisation and not as a potential tool for self determination and development. For indigenous peoples, research has a significance that is embedded in our history as natives under the gaze of Western science and colonisation." (2005, p. 87)

Indigenous peoples are the 'passive victims' of research, who are studied by outsiders. These non Indigenous people have different sets of values, different time horizons, different ideas of and uses for knowledge and different languages, lifestyles and histories. Smith (2005) also goes on to outline a programme for the development of an Indigenous research capability. Similar criticisms are expressed by Bishop (2005) with respect to researching the Maori peoples of New Zealand, where he suggests that Western research methods, engagement and norms are very different from the culture, understanding and practices of the Maori people.

For researchers from a Western tradition of science, there is an established process for determining truth, for conducting research and for informing policy and stakeholders. An almost mechanical mechanism operates for conducting science and human research. The forces of 'scientific' research are strong, and in the social sciences there is a trend towards logical positivism: every aspect of human behaviour is measurable and the examined facts reveal the truth through statistical analysis of the underlying relationships (Townsend & Burgess 2008). However, behind these processes are many assumptions and conditions that are challenged when conducting research in domains of contestation such as workplaces and dealing with research contexts that are constantly changing (Townsend & Burgess 2008). Nowhere are these limitations so apparent as with conducting research into Indigenous peoples and communities. These challenges include language, space, knowledge, meaning and values; they are considerable, they pose major challenges to meaningful research and engagement, and they are discussed in this chapter.

In Australia and many other countries there is a code of practice, or ethical protocol, for university researchers. This code of conduct was developed from the research practices of science and medicine, and developing protocols for research that developed robustness, reliability, replication and safety in the research processes, especially where there were potential harmful outcomes and side effects. The ethical protocols for the conduct of science were refined and developed for 'human' research. The inclusion of social sciences was to ensure that potential harm was ameliorated in the research process: participation was informed and voluntary; participants were not in a position of dependency; participants were not identified without their consent; records were securely stored and destroyed after a given time period. There have been many critics of the formal ethics processes as they apply to universities: the processes take a long time; in many cases multiple committees and bureaucracies are involved; there is conflation between ethics and methodology, and projects may be rejected not because they compromise ethical standards, but because their methodologies are contested. The list goes on, for a discussion of and critique of the process see Sappey (2008). For Indigenous researchers the norms of knowledge and truth within formal ethics processes in the social sciences are often different from how Indigenous communities see knowledge, and indeed the world. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2005, p. 97) states that for Indigenous peoples "… research ethics is at a very basic level about establishing, maintaining and nurturing respectful relationship … to build, maintain, and nature relationships; and to strengthen connectivity are important research skills in the indigenous arena.".

Contributing to the literature on Australian Indigenous issues is challenging. These challenges are associated with a range of educational and vocational

related indicators experienced in the Australian Indigenous community, including employment precariousness (Hunter & Gray 2012; Jordan & Mavec 2010), poor hygiene and unsanitary living conditions (McDonald, Baillie, Brewster & Morris 2008), health and mortality (Katijin 2011; Midford, MacLean, Catto & Debuyst 2010), suicide and incarceration rates (Wurst 2009), and land rights agendas (Anderson 2007; Maddison 2008). The emerging literature has provoked a great deal of public debate, led to shifts in government Indigenous policy as well as indepth analyses, but balanced assessments have not documented significant beneficial changes to the level of economic and social development of Aboriginal people (Hunter 2007; Stephens 2010). Some commentators believe this condition arises because the quality of the data is questionable, or impediments arise from incomplete identification of Indigenous status, while others have raised doubt about the robustness of the study design (Biddle, Taylor & Yap 2009; Brereton & Parmenter 2008; Hunter 2009; Pearson & Daff 2013; Tiplady & Barclay 2007). Although all of these factors can mask or bias research results the relevance of a complex array of issues to be confronted in conducting research has considerable capacity for variations in processes and outcomes across Aboriginal landscapes.

Complexities of Australian Indigenous heritage compound difficulties with endeavours to liberalise values of unity. Muir (2011) highlights the commonality of Australian Aboriginal connections to the land and personal relationships with creation of the *Dreamtime* (Stanner 1979), but these core cultural beliefs have variations in the *Dreaming Stories* of creation across different clans. Suter (2003) writes of the migratory prowess of the Indigenous people first as the immigrants to northern Australia, and then as nomadic hunter gatherers across the continent. With separateness a huge number of oral languages evolved (McConvell & Thieberger 2001). Besides the discernible variances in language, art, and lifestyles across the land as well as differences in lifestyle and aspirations between remote, regional and urban Aboriginal people, these dissimilarities attract forces of conciliation. Specifically, commercial mainstream values of the dominant Australian society collide with traditional ceremonial obligations found in Indigenous culture. Australian Indigenous society is not homogeneous. On the one hand, the extremes enrich the cultural and economic tapestry of the Aboriginal population. On the other hand, the complexity of the socially interconnected communities presents a potential hindrance to measurement, understanding and policy framing with traditional Western empirical investigative practices (Altman 2002; Dockery 2009).

The focus of this chapter is to explore three areas of constraints for conducting Indigenous research. One widely accepted position is the variability of strong aspirations for land based spiritual and religious connections as well as alter-

native linguistic capabilities are a function of remoteness (Altman 2003). The adoption of normative research practices manifest methodological problems and conceptual difficulties that become problematic with "Aboriginals living in ancient ways in an ancient landscape." (Johns 2011, p. 15). A second issue for analysis arises from the heterogeneity of sections of the Aboriginal population expressing displeasure for a lack of equity with the dominant society in addition to unattainable opportunity for expanding an envelope for perceived inherent rights (Dockery 2009; Kaplan-Myrth 2005). A reluctance to engage in meaningful dialogue, the adoption of avoidance or even threatening behaviours is unhelpful (Trudgen 2000) to investigators. The third broad difficulty is analytical challenges that compound when external scrutineers require conformity with traditional techniques, normative standards and monitoring procedures. These practices become meaningless in Indigenous communities with linguistic and numerate deficiencies. These three sets of substantive distortions are described in the following section.

LANDSCAPE, LEGENDS AND RELIGION

Living in remote and regional townships exacerbates barriers to Australian Indigenous research. A great deal of findings compiled from censuses data (Biddle 2010; Gray & Hunter 2002; 2011; Hunter & Gray 2012) show over one half of the Australian Indigenous population is in discrete communities or small congregations concentrated near country centres, that are permanently or seasonally enjoying lifestyles of hunter gatherer pursuits on their ancestral lands. A separate observational assessment was given by Altman (2003), who claimed there were some 200 discrete Indigenous hinterland communities in the Northern Territory. Others (Anderson 2007; Hunter 2007) have commented on the distinctiveness of the Australian population – about 30% live in the major cities. Recently, the position was succinctly reported by Altman and Gray (2005, p. 400) when they wrote "… that these Indigenous communities are fundamentally different from other Australian contexts.". From these unlike contexts arise contestations that have origins in different motivational aspirations framed in features of

- Geography,
- Linguistics,
- Alternative spiritualties, and
- Feelings for land.

The next section treats each of these four features to reveal the likely latent material confronting researchers of Indigenous issues.

Geography

Many Indigenous communities are in sparsely populated regions of Australia that are difficult to access. This isolation attracts economic, social, and vocational constraints including distance from markets, highest restriction on accessibility (particularly in northern Australia in the wet season), as well as a range of services commonly available in cosmopolitan settings (Altman & Gray 2005; McDonald et al. 2008; Pholi, Black & Richards 2009). Understandably, this sector of the Australian population is highly dependent on citizenship entitlements, which are expressed through government services and support (e.g., health and welfare, goods/food, income). Seasonal fluctuations in populations and physical access, and partly due to the absence of serviceable transportation facilities, means that access for outside researchers is limited. Consequently, research practices are in general not able to collect relevant and reliable information from these populations (Altman 2002; 2009; Giddy, Lopez & Redman 2009; Hunter 2007; Jordan & Mavec 2010).

Australian government Indigenous affairs policy has not encouraged Aboriginal interaction with researchers. Kaplan – Myrth (2005, p. 69) writes

> "… a flurry of policies that resulted in the dispossession, oppression, and missionary – run services. Segregation extended to all domains of life, including medical care. Aboriginal people were barred entrance to hospital wards, turned away by private practitioners and placed in isolation camps to curb outbreaks of venereal disease and other epidemics. Forced sterilization and vaccination were common practices."

Author Pearson observed these practices and even in the mid 1960s Indigenous people in regional areas were not allowed to enter the town before 'sun up', and had to be out of the town by 'sun down' to return to the closed (Indigenous) reserve out of town. Failure to abide to these restrictions led to imprisonment.

In 1951 assimilation had been adopted as an official Australian policy and this regime was to last for over 20 years. Assimilation was a policy where participation in the political and civic processes by Aboriginal people was conditional on them adopting the Anglo Saxon Australian culture (Anderson 2007; Sanders 2002). Under mounting international pressure a national referendum in 1967 was a pivotal reform when Australian Indigenous people acquired citizenship. This was followed by a further landmark event in Indigenous affairs when the Australian government introduced the policy construct of self determination in 1973 (Maddison 2008). Despite significant government support in the form of finance, land and labour, the establishment of Indigenous controlled agencies and the delivery of welfare services (Smith 2006), the widely held perception

was that government Aboriginal policy continued to fail the community. Many Indigenous people continued to live in poverty, in discrete communities, in spite of the removal of colonial administration established since the 1901 federation, with welfare payments being the "… principle source of household incomes." (Hughes & Warin 2005, p. 3). A further significant policy development was the realisation of Aboriginal land rights. The 1993 Native Title Legislation, which was rooted in the 1992 Mabo decision that recognised Aboriginal settlement prior to colonial occupation was to provide opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, recognition was given for individual rights and interests of the resident Indigenous people with traditional customary arrangements for stewardship of land and seas (Blanch 2008; Johns 2011). On the other hand, this form of community living in itself generated substantial access problems for researchers.

A geographic imbalance of investigation across provincial settings can lead to misconceptions about Indigenous issues. Earlier Foley (2006) raised concerns about emergent blanket characteristics of Australian Indigenous entrepreneurship despite historical evidence showing geographic features have a significant economic heterogeneity on the Indigenous population. To improve the quality of scholarly discourse the focus here will be on factors that inhibit research endeavours in particular rural and remote regions of Australia. There is a plethora of Indigenous clans in Australia. Observation by the first author for nearly 70 years (drawn from the relevant literature as well as personal, social and vocational experiences) with Indigenous Australians in the lower half of Western Australia, central New South Wales, and the northern eastern quarter of the Northern Territory (NT) provides supporting research based outcomes that attest to the distinctiveness and differences across Australia. Inherent in this research sample has been an extensive investment in trust building between researcher and Indigenous clans that has to be earned, and replicated as kin based connections that are non transferable from one Indigenous group to another.

Indigenous peoples located on their own country holdings (over 50% of the NT is native titled) are difficult to access for research endeavours. These remote communal land ownership centres are usually deprived of robust land transportation access, and the dirt tracks can become seasonably impossible to traverse. Most isolated communities in the NT have primitive (light aircraft) landing strips that the people have hacked out of the savannah forest (for medical services), and they prefer that the roads remain primitive as it preserves their isolation. In addition to these physical barriers there are the strong patriarchal kin based social structures that are reluctant to introduce foreigners. A minimum requirement for visitors and researchers is an invitation from the clan Indigenous Elders, who may allow negotiation to be undertaken with the community leaders, and

when approved by them and the enclaved members, a paid permit has to be obtained from an Indigenous organisation to travel to visit the community for a specific period. Even when all these formal arrangements have been completed there is no assurance the meetings will take place. On arrival the researcher can find the community may be partially or completely absent. People may be hunting, fishing, gathering materials, attending a funeral, and attending a cultural gathering or are at some other important event. If appointments are missed the process of introduction has to be repeated until a more positive chance event is realised. This means that longitudinal studies are extremely problematic as it is not uncommon for community members to move to other distant family land holdings and remain there for a considerable period. Establishing constructive interactive dialogue with these remote communities is a long term process.

Visitors, and particularly non Indigenous people, are viewed with suspicion. Acquiring approval to meet Elders and community, even with an accepted spokesperson, can take three or four years. Often there are several Indigenous organisations involved in the process and all have to be given face. Many researchers are unprepared to invest such time into a process of this length before they can begin to acquire data. In addition, there are further independent controlling bodies often non Indigenous, who are the perceived gatekeepers of the processes of research and these have a further set of constraints over research.

Linguistic

In conventional research literacy is an essential element, but it can be a hindrance in Australian Indigenous research. Even in cross cultural studies when the written language is not common (e.g., English) Western scales can be employed by using the back translation procedure to have collected information formatted in a common written set of symbols. However, this technique is without purpose in Australian Indigenous society, which is based on an oral cultural (Kral 2009). While there are exceptions, such as the phonetic script of Yolngu matha, which was created by Milingimbi missionaries during 1953 to 1977 (Trudgen 2000), seldom are the symbols employed by others than linguists, academics or some government officials. Normally, Indigenous Australians talk to each other by telling stories, and by expressing themselves in art, poetry, chants, dance and songs (Brody 2011). A great number of Indigenous languages have been lost since the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 (Suter 2003), and campaigns to recognise language endangerment has grown for the maintenance and revival of the traditional spoken word in regional and remote schools (Hughes 2008; McConvell & Thieberger 2001). However, endeavours to preserve community languages in bilingual education preclude progression in English competency.

While the clans as the owners and custodians of the specific oral versions are supporting language preservation, the absence of competence in English has negative economic and social consequences for Indigenous Australians in terms of access to opportunities (Hughes & Warin 2005).

The reluctance by Australian Indigenous people to learn English has several foundations. Reynolds (2005) points to the work of Coombs and Smith (1994), who posited that Indigenous society perceived the Australian education system as a form of assimilation: children embracing the processes are likely to be weaned away from their heritage and its holistic spiritual view of the world. Expectedly, further resentment by the Indigenous people for the dominant society would accrue by their treatment as outlined in the earlier quotation from Kaplan-Myrth (2005). Collectively, these events, and other government policies compiling the deprivation and misery of Indigenous people has intensified the depth of contempt and indignation by much of the contemporary Aboriginal society for the workings of mainstream Australia. Their marginalisation and victimisation gives tangible reasons while many Indigenous people are unlikely to be motivated to gain a Western style education. Consequently, internalised schooling and learning English is seldom an every day component of their lifestyle aspirations. Indeed, in a context of choice, family is more important to Indigenous people than a formal education.

One of the deepest divides for learning English is the influence of the *Dreamtime*. Not only is this alternative spiritual view the genesis of Aboriginal society, but it underpins the Indigenous epistemological framework (Yunkaporta 2009). This cultural identity takes into account theory and pedagogy that is substantially different to how people think and learn in Western non Indigenous culture (Harrison & Greenfield 2011; Yunupingu 2009). In fact, some learning is inappropriate in Indigenous culture. For example, women's business and men's business topics are gender isolated, and it is protocol for the opposite gender to vacate the forum when the alternative group presents the material. Western educational frameworks seldom appeal to this division, and thus, lack the salubrious worth of the narrative voice of the Indigenous people. A salient aspect of the *Dreamtime* is the ancestral women creators brought the gift of language to give meaning to the Indigenous world. A linguistic myth, held by the dominant Australian culture, is that English is superior to Indigenous languages, but this has yet to find traction in the wider Australian Aboriginal society (Bradley et al. 2006; Hughes & Warin 2005; Kral 2009).

Quantitative assessments demand written literacy capacity, while qualitative investigations are inhibited by oral English deficits. The grassroots of a qualitative assessment is robust communication, which suffers when there is a lack

of healthy dialogue and trust. When respondents are partially able to clearly verbally articulate with the researcher or when unable to engage in effective discourse the message becomes corrupted. An optimistic progression is to employ a bilingual translator, but the rigour of this procedure obliges a sound set of trust relationships between all parties. A further critical dimension of the process is a correspondence of meaning in spite of semantical variations of nomenclature by the respondents, translator, and researcher. In the absence of a quantitative data based statistical analysis, rooted in the Western traditional ideals of scientism, the qualitative technique while not without design shortcomings is an approach enabling the respondents to individually speak about their aspirations and conditions in the community.

Alternative Spiritualties

Indigenous Australians have a personal connection with nature in the phenomenon of the *Dreamtime*. Anthropologists like Cawte (1996), Stanner (1979), Thomson (2006), and Dunlop (see the Yirrkala Film Project) as well as the Shepherdsons, who left a legacy of photographs and script (Shepherdson 1981), together with Maisie McKenzie (1976) have described in detail the holistic milieu to which traditional Aboriginal people subscribe. Muir (2011, p. 371) states that while the spiritualties of milieu are "… notoriously difficult to define or delimit…" it is an "… increasingly important source of spiritual experience outside the mainstream religions." Altman (2003), who also spent considerable time in remote outstations of the NT, wrote the Indigenous people lived on their "… ancestral lands with which they maintained spiritual and religious connections." (p. 68). The personal attachment to land and spirituality is powerfully delineated by Galarrwuy Yunupingu AM (2009) when he writes,

> Our allegiance is to each other, to our land and to the ceremonies that define us. It is through the ceremonies that our lives are created. These ceremonies record and pass on the laws that give us ownership of the land and of the seas, and the rules by which we live. (p. 34)

Long term engagement with Australian Aboriginal people embodies passionate commitment that is rewarded with fascinating experiences lessening the hardship of residing in hostile and primitive areas during compilation and recording of observations.

The choice to live on ancestral lands is often made with a concomitant burdensome lifestyle. In cosmopolitan settings people may daily travel long distances between their place of employment and where they normally live. Spatial mismatch (Biddle 2010) between work and home is unlikely to be a vocational feature of regional and remote Australian Indigenous communities, because

of structural differences between these places and urban centres. In the more remote places few Indigenous people own a motor vehicle or possess the legal permit to drive, and non all weather roads are unhelpful for travel. Yet criticisms have been raised that Indigenous people, with a heavy reliance on income support payments (Altman, Gray & Levitus 2005; Johns 2011), have shown reluctance to move to another location where there are jobs. Major impediments to moving are strong cultural continuities in terms of land, family, well defined kin based blood connections as well as a desire to remain isolated from the social problems of urban centres. Nevertheless, some Indigenous people with lesser attachments to land and clan do express the benefits of embracing formal labour market opportunities.

Proximity to labour markets flavours the strength of *Dreamtime* appeal in conversations with Indigenous people. The discussions highlight encounters in which individual human and non human encounters occur (Muir 2011). Those people who have been able to fulfil the aspiration of living on their ancestral land body, are able to occasionally renew communal obligations, and are working in a mainline job are likely to speak glowingly how they have attenuated their socio economic disadvantage and improved their wellbeing. Dominating the discussion is the valuated attainments are functional and uncompounded acquisitions seldom voicing simply cultural imaginary as evidence by typical comments.

- It is good to get off welfare.

- I no longer have to pawn things to pay bills.

- My family and children can now have a better life.

- I now have a driving license.

- No longer have to go to Centrelink and wait and wait …

These themes seldom attract interest in the mainstream Indigenous literature.

Indigenous people in regional and remote places living on their homeland estates, outside of the formal market economy, show a strong connection with the non human environment. After being greeted on arrival to an outland setting a visitor is given an unique introduction, which begins with a walk around the community by the 'head man' to inspect the garden, then the airstrip, that has been hewn from the forest by community members using axes and saws. These initial stages are likely to follow a viewing of the local fishing area, next will be an inspection of the maturing yams, and then time to sit on the ground with Elders and talk in the shade of a tree. The diversity between these isolated communities, where some members may work intermittently on the CDEP scheme, and more suburban aligned respondents generally reflects divisions of

attachment to the make up of the holistic milieu of traditional Aboriginal culture. Missing from the literature are the personal stories of Indigenous people who are experiencing a degree of spatial mismatch of vocation and lifestyle.

Particular places hold significant affinity for Indigenous people. Some areas are taboo to the wider community and these sacred sites are only seen by initiated men. These places are substantial geographic features where the ancestral spirits resided after creating the animals, plants, rocks and other forms that exist today. For instance, in Western Australia the *Noongar* people believe the *Wagyl* is a meandering serpent that created the waterways especially, the Swan River on which Perth resides. A somewhat similar story is recounted diametrically on the east coast of Australia in the Cains region. In the *Dreamtime Buda Dji* the carpet snake carved out the Barron Falls, and the creeks that adjoin the river from the coast to the table lands. Understanding the *Dreamtime* is the preserve of the Indigenous Elder artists who are entrusted to paint the stories that encode the societal relationships and natural phenomena (Brody 2011). While these intricate conceptual connections are understood by the master artists and by the Elders, who know the meanings of the stories, this knowledge is unlikely to be the province of outsiders. The *Dreaming Stories* vary across the national clans and some of the material is so sacred that it may never be disclosed during conversation. Alternatively, it is a privilege to be invited to a 'special place' of an Indigenous person, who observes spiritual energy akin to how a non Indigenous tourist would appreciate a striking landscape. The dominant Australian society is largely unfamiliar with and traditionally negative to Aboriginal spirituality, a condition that is slowly changing as investigative progress lowers barriers of ignorance.

Feelings for Land

Muir (2011) views the Australian continent as one land occupied by two peoples – Indigenous and non Indigenous. When the Europeans first came to Australia the land was considered to be vacant and belonging to no one (*terra nullius*). Nevertheless, the inaugural Indigenous land rights case in Darwin during the early 1970s (Milirrpum versus Nabalco 1971) recognised the spiritual relationship with land, while the Native Title Act 1993 cemented a legal recognition that Aboriginal people had traditional interests in land. An important aspect of the lost Darwin case was the ruling of Justice Blackburn, who considered Yolngu ownership was a matter of religious belief and not of economic significance (Williams 1986). The Indigenous Traditional Land Owners claimed their holdings on knowledge was learned from ceremonies and oral traditions transcending many generations, but were unable to rigorously articulate land use like 'white people' while spiritual connection to land tenure was difficult to quantify. In the

dominant Australian culture land tenure obliges the creation of textual medium that limit the territories mapped and delineated to the standard and protocols of the Australian Cadastral system (Brazenor, Ogleby & Williamson 1999). With recognition of Indigenous title to land, the use of land and its transfer is no longer a market transaction that cancels prior ownership and occupation. For instance, the Black Tip to Gove pipeline easement (Pearson 2004) involved many Indigenous and non Indigenous stakeholders when determining a route for bypassing sacred sites, crossing state boundaries and recognising topographic features of clan boundaries. Usually, such work involves anthropologist and the process is often contestable and protracted when facilitating the interests of different Aboriginal groups. Research has become an important function in quantifying land boundaries in the Native Title process, which integrates the very different conceptual and spatial land tenure systems of the Indigenous and non Indigenous societies.

Australia has two land systems. One is the Aboriginal tenure system that involves a spiritual and material connection with ownership evidenced by artefacts and memory heritage, with territory highlighted with topographical features. The second, non Indigenous framework in Australia, is the cadastral system (extent, value, ownership), that mathematically defines the boundaries of the land enabling it to be treated as a commercial commodity (Brazenor et al. 1999). A number of actions focussing on Australian land management have provided judicial recognition for coexistence of Indigenous and non Indigenous interests (Hocking 2002), Connections and separateness of cultural, commercial, and ecological interests challenge traditional wisdom rooted in colonialism prompting political reappraisal of the national landscape. There is a multitude of questions to be resolved in this extensive area of Indigenous – non Indigenous relations which is likely to herald a shift in research focus.

One Australian government social experiment involving Indigenous people that has attracted a great deal of scrutiny is the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme. Installed in early 1977 at Bamyili in the NT, the CDEP scheme was a government response to criticisms from Indigenous statesmen and non Indigenous leaders that unemployment financial payments to Indigenous people was fermenting social problems (Altman & Gray, 2005; Maddison, 2008). Initially, the CDEP scheme was introduced to remote Indigenous communities where there was a lack of mainline jobs, but the programme was soon available in Australian urban areas. By 2001 there were over 30, 000 participants, which was 10.9% of the census Indigenous employment population (Hunter 2003). Although there has been expansion and variations to the CDEP scheme the core features provided part time employment for the unemployed,

who chose to work on community projects. Recipients retained access to their unemployment benefits (Altman et al. 2005). As a radical racial discrimination labour market and social development programme the CDEP scheme has attracted considerable reviews and enquires. Some concerns were raised about the lack of uniformity in the scheme administration as well as the equality of treatment of the participants. A general observation was that participants were provided with a relatively secure source of income, but seldom did the members transition to a mainline job outside of the community.

Faced with a persistent lack of improvement in employment outcomes (Dyer 2010), and criticism the programme poses as a racial discrimination issue, the Australian government reframed the CDEP scheme. On the 1st of July 2013 the Remote Jobs and Communities Programme (RJCP) was launched across 60 remote regions of the nation (RJCP 2014). The RJCP, as a streamlined and more flexible service aims to cater for a range of participants and has a major goal of uniting two contrasting themes.

- To provide a robust customary kin based system with tailored assistance to build strong socio cultural communities.

- To mitigate concerns about scheme practices of administration, equity, and treatment of participants, who have been perceived not to be ordinary wage earners.

Employing the RJCP to meld culturally inclusive land and resource management with the ethos of economic, social, and consumer priorities in a global context is an ambitious endeavour. Future researchers have the onerous responsibility of providing evidence of the status of Australian cultural, social and conservation activities.

CONTESTATION, DISCRIMINATION AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Fisher (2008, p. 2) writes "Since invasion [First Fleet 1788], Aboriginal Law has been disregarded through murder, vilification and defilement of people and land". Government policies for Australian Indigenous affairs continued to be rooted in colonial thinking for over 150 years imposing Western values and creating jurisdictions affording scant protection for Aboriginal people (Thomson 2006). In a critical analysis of the white Australian policy that existed from 1899 to 1939 McGinn (2010, p. 31) writes "White Australia Policy supporters also hoped that Australia would be a 'white' country free of Aboriginal people". The White Australia Policy was terminated in 1973 with the introduction of the political construct of self determination. Indigenous people lacked basic rights to the extent the period of assimilation featured the era of the stolen generation

(Johns 2011) when Indigenous children were taken from their parents and put into 'white care'. A following policy of self determination was flavoured with Aboriginal Land Rights legislation, establishment of Indigenous councils, and welfare/vocational programmes to transform the Australian state, but dependency subjected the Indigenous people to a struggle to gain autonomy. Evidence of public concern for Indigenous disadvantage has fostered a flurry of government initiatives termed 'closing the gap' in topics of life expectancy, wellbeing, education and an array of other social indicators (Altman 2009; Pholi et al. 2009). In spite of optimistic assessments that Indigenous socio economic features have improved there are feelings of resentment within Indigenous society, and some of the less charitable perspectives are examined.

Absence of Voice

There is a deep level of mistrust and anguish within Australian Indigenous society. Tensions, embedded in the intersection of culturalism and liberalism (Altman 2009; Dockery 2009; Maddison 2008), with the prominence of Western tradition, began with the reduction of Aboriginal culture followed by segregation and assimilation serving as genocidal intentions (Fisher 2008) to be abandoned in the 1970s by international pressures. This long lineage of shifting government policies and the continuing trivialisation of Aboriginal culture effectively continued Aboriginal subordination by a non Indigenous society. Today, there exists a deep sense of grievance felt by many Indigenous Australians. One of the more respected Aboriginal people is Patrick Dodson (2008), considered to be the father of reconciliation, expressed Aboriginal thought when he delivered the 2008 Nulungu Lecture. In his speech he said.

> "Gospel, Glory and Gold prevailed, initially over a society of hunter gatherers whose rights and responsibilities were made subservient to an alien crown." (*Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues*, 2008, pp. 37–45)

Colonisation eroded Australian Indigenous autonomy to create an uneasy dependent minority society. Dodson is referring to the missionaries, who undermined the authority of the Elders who when baptised were forbidden to engage in ancient ceremonies. The intrusion of the market economy has also been calamitous and when the colonial settlers sought the alluvial gold from the 1880s the Indigenous people were driven off their lands and further marginalised. The position of the Indigenous people is succinctly presented by Dunn and colleagues (2010, p. 22).

> "Indeed, they [Aboriginals] remain a recognised out-group that is often differentiated against in terms of their cultural acceptability by most of the other citizens of that settler society."

Australian governments have stifled Indigenous economic activity by evaluating their enterprise with contemporary business governance and compliance systems. Established in 1968 the Commonwealth Capital Fund for Aboriginal Business Enterprises was a primary source of seeding Indigenous economic activity (Smith 2006). Ongoing commitment to develop Indigenous business and employment opportunities is demonstrated by the creation of supplementary organisations (e.g., ATSIC) and land councils, and with the associated 'evidence' based investigations, and reports of Indigenous entrepreneurship (Indigenous 2009; Open for Business 2008; Submission 2001) as well as recent extensions to forge partnerships with corporate Australia (Australian Government 2007). In spite of the considerable government investment and support a raft of research activity (Buultjens & Fuller 2007; Foley 2006; 2008; Furneaux & Brown 2008; Hunter 2013; Russell-Mundine 2007) reveals the geographic and sector spread of Indigenous small business in Australia has been a limited success, but has largely been excluded from mainstream entrepreneurship.

A considerable literature reporting Indigenous society exists "… in a fundamentally different customary economy." (Altman 2002, p. 35) has been consistently disregarded by successive Australian government departments that have chosen to ignore the Indigenous voice. The notion put by Foley (2007, p. 2) that the Australian government "… has effectively anesthetised the development of the nascent Indigenous entrepreneur." was mirrored in a discussion held with a female Aboriginal Elder who held expectation of establishing a tourism centre.

> "We completed all the documentation at the local Indigenous Training for Employment Programme office for funding assistance. An official came to see us and told us how we were to run the business, on our land, to their rules. The department people do not understand our business has to provide for all the family that is inclusive of kinship. We told the official to go away. Their ideas will not work in our community."

The contrasting goals of non Indigenous small business and Indigenous entrepreneurship attracts conciliatory foresight. Non Indigenous business has a bottom line – profit for an identified singular unit or small group of business owners. Indigenous entrepreneurship also has an identifiable profit group, but it is much larger, an extended family and sometimes a whole community. More importantly, there is a triple bottom line: economic, social, and ecological. Matching the aspirations of the non Indigenous and Indigenous worlds is a fascinating challenge fermenting a considerable rethinking of research parameters. While initiatives such as the Australian Employment Covenant (Jordan & Mavec 2010), Closing the Gap (Altman 2009; Pholi et al. 2009), and the NT Emergency Response (Maddison 2008; Woodliff 2012) are commendable endeavours to

rebuild fragmented Indigenous communities these interventions reflect deprivations from welfare dependence and past policies, that have deflected energies away from more positive Indigenous development (Hughes & Warin 2005). Paradoxically, equality between Indigenous people and other Australians lessens the recognition of Aboriginal heritage and culture. Reconciling these differences accentuates the debate between social inclusion and social exclusion (Hunter 2009), which in turn raises priority for investigation to facilitate merger of these disparate doctrines.

PROLIFERATING INTIMIDATION AND FRACTURING ACADEMIC MISSION

Extensive government investment in funding, policy initiatives, interventions, and investigations has not substantially lessened intergenerational accumulation of Australian Indigenous marginalisation (Biddle et al. 2009; Dyer 2010; Hughes & Warin 2005; Stephens 2010). A wide ranging body of research has clarified the complexity and multifaceted make up of Indigenous disadvantage and indicates that is unlikely to be ameliorated with specific focussed policies that ignore meaningful consultation with the relevant stakeholders (Hunter 2009; Wallace et al. 2009). Intuitively, an emphasis on cultural sentiment and not social wellbeing (Dockery 2009) or dominant universalistic strategic options (economic, education, employment) has obliged researchers to narrowly and tentatively identify the relationships between the indicators (substance abuse, mortality, violence) of wellbeing rather than the pervasive condition (poverty). Another issue that should not be ignored is the credibility of scrutineers, investigators, and the functional regulatory mechanisms that purport to serve the interests of the Indigenous respondents, but in fact stifle the Aboriginal voice.

Avoidance, Peccadilloes and Paternalism

Academic research that attempts to understand the problems, identify the challenges and suggest meaningful forms of engagement and success with policy development also comes against institutional barriers within the academic system of peer review. Reviewers can be the conduits of systems that restrict the publication of Australian Indigenous material. When the first author was a District Engineer in the Western Australian State Railways there was need to inspect the track from Mullewa to Meekatharra, and about half way along the line was the mining town of Mount Magnet, that boasted three hotels. One served the Aboriginal community, one excluded all except 'white' Australians, while the third had a side door where Aboriginal people could buy flagons of wine. A further 90 km toward Meekatharra was the slowly dying hamlet of Cue, and the town publican expensively found in a court judgement he could not

refuse to serve black South Africans. All of these events were in the late 1970s when Australian Indigenous people were citizens and the construct of self determination had been triggered at least five years earlier. In the late 2000s many of these notions of a colonial mindset still prevail in academia as demonstrated by referees who write several pages suggesting how the manuscript should be reframed. Benchmarking this category of reviewers is types of comments along the lines,

> "… and why do the natives receive special attention. Why have they been identified with a capital letter? [Indigenous]."

At the opposite extreme are those who appear to be seeking restitution for past injustices. The Editor sent to the author for comment the report.

> "I cannot read this manuscript. It is disrespectful to Aboriginal people who are referred to as indigenous. There should be a capital I."

After negotiation with the Editor, and amendments the article was published in a Journal devoted to Australian Indigenous issues. Then there are the referees who have withdrawn from their academic responsibilities when Editorial staff write several months after submission of the paper.

> "The Editor likes your paper. We have tried several referees, but none appear to be interested. Can you suggest suitable referees?"

While these instances can cause frustration and delays to publication there are many others who are more amenable to such material and provide constructive criticism. Beyond dispute is material expressing contemporary topics concerning Australian Indigenous issues, that has undergone competent regulatory assessment, can potentially demystify and deescalate long held prejudices.

Over a decade ago, Altman (2002) admonished the Australian government for generating social policies that poorly represent remote Indigenous communities. Consistent with this criticism, and in unionism with the persistent demands by respected Indigenous leaders, including Noel Pearson, the brothers Mick and Patrick Dodson as well as Galarrwuy Yunupingu; to end welfare dependence, Trudge (2014) wrote in *The Australian*, the deprivation and misery persists, yet the government continues to increase funding endorsing failed policies.

While the government has been cajoled for contributions to the malaise of Indigenous society other commentators have expanded the catchment of Australian genre of policy and Aboriginality. Johns (2011) believes Indigenous Australians have assumed misdiagnosed pathways for a better Aboriginal

society, and indeed, he wrote, "… where some remain in the hope that through land rights they may gain a windfall from a resource company." (p. 23). Vogler (2014) reveals uncovered disturbing research findings of youthful sexual abuse in two remote Queensland Indigenous communities is unhelpful to Aboriginal society endeavouring to enter the modern world as the contextual realities were ignored. Foley (2008) has also contended the policies of conservative Australian governments, guided by lobbyists, academics, and social scientists, have limited the expectations of Indigenous people, particularly those who have aspirations to become engaged in entrepreneurial activity. A more intense attack has been made on the researchers of Indigenous academic writing in the succinct statement by Foley (2007), "Some [authors] are well-meaning (others possibly suffer from ignorance); the writings of non-Indigenous academics who stifle the Indigenous voice." (p. 2). But Foley casts the net wider when in a critical analysis of Australian Indigenous entrepreneurship he belittles both the writers and the academic institutions that accept the literature often flawed in generalisations and racial stereotyping.

Contemporary academic institutions and linked bodies have regulations for monitoring and supervising the veracity of research endeavours. In practice, these arrangements are employed with the intention to provide recorded balances and checks for the ethical, moral, and technical administration of proposed and conducted investigations. Generally, these systems operate to traditional and accepted frameworks, that have been formulated from time tested evaluation practices. Basically, these schemes incorporate guarantees as researcher pledges to maintain respondent anonymity, voluntary participation, an absence of coercion, and non disclosure of information affording identification. Operationalising the controlling, monitoring, and coordinating activities are formalised units, often referred to as ethics committees. These units exist as formal or informal mechanisms, often with substantial academic constituents across different hierarchical levels of the representative bodies. Bureaucratic, formal and impersonal practices require researchers to complete several pages of submission, that are often clinically examined by clusters of people, who may have been appointed by convenience rather than for their scholarship of the subject they are evaluating.

The identified obstacles of Australian Indigenous research attract investment in flexible methodologies. Research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has considerably more conservative and restrictive frameworks than the more general recording and publishing protocols. Nevertheless, understanding the social exclusive elements of these Indigenous communities is vital. However, the regulatory conditions are flavoured with social inclusive alignment when

they demand Indigenous people must provide a signed written statement they are prepared to give precise details to the enquiry.

This requirement of a written document introduces at least three severe additional difficulties. First, is the retention of trust, that has been established with the researcher over a considerable period is now substantially weakened. In fact, a written request for reaffirmation in an oral dominant context effectively destroys the kin based relationship with the likelihood of discouraging further meaningful involvement. Second, many Indigenous people in remote communities have a deficit in English literacy. Unable to provide the written statement ensures an absence of respective responsibilities by respondents and researchers for accountability and transparency. Excluding Indigenous people who are English illiterate, and only securing data from those who possess a formal education, is a pathway to antithetical understanding of Aboriginal interests in the pursuit of overcoming worsening community disadvantage. Last, the inability to collect and measure data with traditional paper and pencil tests obliges the adoption of alternative observational techniques, such as photographic recording, often the time honoured technique employed by anthropologists, as a reliable judgemental process. Assessing effectiveness then is done by viewing value added outcomes rather than the employment of conventional normative logic of cause and effect in variable networks. In short, greater flexibility has potential for greater effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

Australian Indigenous research is confronted with difficulties embedded in ethnicity, procedures of evaluation, and constrictive regulatory frameworks. The lack of understanding protocols of traditional Aboriginal communities and a wide range of culturally aligned structures as well as rules for social behaviour has hampered the development of Australian Indigenous research methodology. What is not in dispute is placing greater emphasis on the evaluation of Australian Indigenous issues is commendable in the pursuit of attaining desirable social arrangements. Definitions of these frameworks, including psychological wellbeing, and the methodologies that have been disproportionately represented in the Aboriginal community have been difficult to enumerate. Generations of ingrained habits have prevented Australian Indigenous research gaining a foothold. Conservative governments and a succession of policies, often impacted by a colonial legacy, have been prejudicial to building robust Aboriginal research frameworks. A strong push for Indigenous people to collectively live within the ideology of universalism – common rules for all the Australian people – has led to tragic consequences. Contemporary research has not provided answers

to these predicaments; and in many cases it has been based on values, data gathering processes, beliefs and cultural practices that are alien to Indigenous communities.

The heterogeneity of Australian Indigenous society is evidenced by communities expressing norms adopting social exclusion and social inclusion. Indigenous people residing in communities representing social exclusion are likely to be wedded to traditional, tribal, and ritual lifestyles; inclusive societies will reflect the attributes of the dominant society, with scant engagement with ideals of *Dreamtime,* hunter gatherer pursuits and knowledge of Indigenous cultures; while other settlements amalgam properties of these two extremes. Social norms frame Indigenous research direction. Representatives of inclusive Indigenous society include politicians, professionals and technicians with competencies in English literacy and numeracy, while exclusive Indigenous societies, not integrated into the mainstream society, are destined to have unskilled workers due to their English illiteracy and innumerate abilities. Consequently, exclusive communities prefer story telling and narrative histories as drama, art and dance that are phenomena central to their lifestyle process leveraging authentic Aboriginal cultural protocols and foreclosing some traditional research options. The contrasting inclusive world of Indigenous people, who are living in their homes across cities or suburbia, and do not extensively rely on others for their wellbeing, are able to competently articulate their views in contemporary research. Others have abandoned their opportunity for self determination and their tribal traditions to have neither pristine circumstance. Indeed, often these Indigenous people reside in ghettos or exist as town fringe dwellers, leaving the members venerable and dependent on the dominant society. Hence, seldom are these Indigenous communities able to meaningfully respond to research designed to close the gap in their life opportunities. Faced with this evidence Indigenous voice is unlikely to be comprehensively exposed by the employment of Western centred unitary research designs.

Case Study Questions

In northern Australia there are two Indigenous remote communities intending to partnership in a novel entrepreneurial activity. Both centres have peak populations of about 120 people. The infrastructure of each community is a nominal 12 houses, a central segregated ablution/toilet block, the houses have room lighting and a kitchen stove serviced by underground power from a generator maintained by government personnel. There is a one room school, two government teachers attend three days a week and a local

Indigenous lady as a teacher's aid assists the educational practice. Each community has a dirt landing strip for light aircraft and access to other places is by four wheel drive vehicles using the dirt/gravel roads. One community is on the coast and the other is about 80 km inland.

A notional agreement has been made by the Elders of the two communities for contributory support. The coastal centre intends to commence a seafood industry to provide fresh fish for both communities. In contrast, the inland centre has considerable grasslands and water stocks suitable for the agistment of cattle, which could be selectively slaughtered for the local community and traded for seafood produce. Both communities will need to acquire infrastructure for these ventures. An innovation notion is to fund the projects by isolating a reasonable proportion of community welfare.

Coordination and assessment of this sustainable arrangement attracts government intervention for developmental and operational activity.

1. What systems of assessment could be used to justify and measure the intended achievements both in the short and long terms.

Hint: The complexity of the exercise encourages investment of three small groups. Two of the groups individually represent each Indigenous community. The third group is the representatives of government departments that provide support, guidance, and coordination of the methodological approaches to assess the critical stages of the proposal.

Selected Readings

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PROFILES OF CONTRIBUTORS

Tim Acker is the Principal Research Leader at the Cooperative Centre for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP), leading the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Economies project. This research is investigating the production, sale and consumption of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and identifying opportunities for improving the livelihoods of artists, agents and other participants. Since 1999, Tim has worked in remote Australia focussing on the creative industries and enterprise development and been involved in large-scale cultural and creative projects, including exhibitions, publications and business start-ups. Previously, he has worked in the Western Australian Government's Office of Aboriginal Economic Development and for one of the remote art sector's leading peak bodies, Desart. His work in remote Australia was triggered by working at the Northern Territory University's art school, before co-managing a leading Aboriginal art centre, Warlayirti Artists in the desert community of Balgo, for three years.

John Burgess (PhD, Newcastle; MA, Exeter; MEC, Sydney) is Professor of HRM, Curtin University, Perth. Previously he was Professor of HRM, University of Newcastle. His substantive research is in the growth in contingent employment; labour market regulation; gender and work; and workplace change. He has co authored/edited 15 books, and co edited 18 issues of special journals. John has acted as a grant reviewer for the Australian Research Council, the Canadian Social Research Council and the Emirates Research Council. He is on the editorial boards for a number of journals including Human Resource Management (UK). John has received 10 Australian Research Council grants. He is currently co supervising three Indigenous PhD researchers, who are examining private sector employment programmes and Indigenous art centres.

Sandra Daff was awarded the Graduate Certificate in Community Relations by the University of Queensland. Her vocational career began in the Western Australian Government Water Corporation first at Narrogin and then later in the Perth

Head Office. In January 2000 Sandra moved to Nhulunbuy where she held a senor administrative position in the Alcan Department of Community Services. By 2007 she was appointed to the position of Specialist Indigenous Relations and in this role designed and administered the inaugural ALERT Indigenous educational vocational initiative. She continued to provide leadership, the management and coordination of the programme until her departure in mid 2014. During 2011/2012 Sandra was actively involved with Yolngu Elders, Indigenous communities, Rio Tinto management, and government agencies to design, install, monitor and administer the Ralpa and Goyurr programmes. Sandra has substantially contributed to a series of academic documents reporting achievements of these novel Indigenous educational vocational initiatives. After resigning from Rio Tinto, Sandra moved to her new home in Queensland where she operates a consulting business.

Susan Congreve (BA Hons, USYD) is currently a PhD candidate at Curtin University. She is part of Ninti One's Aboriginal and Torres Art Economies project. This project is informing the development of the remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art sector by investigating the production, sale and consumption of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and identifying opportunities for improving the livelihoods of artists, agents and other participants. Susan has worked in the arts and cultural sector her entire professional life and been based in the Northern Territory for the past 19 years. She has been the Manager of Warlukurlangu Artists (1996-99), the Coordinator of the Telstra Aboriginal Art Award (2000) and the Executive Officer of ANKAAA (2001-03), the peak body supporting art and craft centres in the top end. For more than a decade she has worked as a consultant, developing business plans and training programs for over 40 remote community art centres.

Kantha Dayaram (PhD) is an Associate Professor in Leadership and Change. Her previous positions include Head of School, Deputy Head of School, Postgraduate Program Director and Director of Teaching and Learning. She has substantial experience in working with women from disadvantaged backgrounds and examining the role of women in work across different country contexts. She was fortunate to receive a number of full scholarships, particularly in recognition of her work with vulnerable communities. Kantha is a board member of a not for profit organisation and has over the years served on various academic boards. Over the past 27 years, she has been involved in designing and developing undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs. She has contributed to higher education reform in South Africa, Bhutan, Philippines and the UAE. Her research interests are in capacity building and developing workforce capability, particularly in the areas of youth employment, skills training, and the development of women in leadership. Kantha is a keen advocate of empowering youth and women through education and leadership development, using cross-cultural perspectives.

Klaus Helms is the Chief Executive Officer of the Gumatj Corporation, with headquarters at Gunyangara on the Gove Peninsula. Previously, he held the position of the Government Business Manager with the Australian Federal Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FAHSCIA), based at Gunyangara and Yirrkala of the Northern Territory of Australia. In his role Klaus reported directly to the Federal Minister of FAHSCIA. Prior to this appointment he was employed by the international mining corporation Alcan at Nhulunbuy as the Asia Pacific Director of Community and Government Relations, and in this role acquired extensive experience leading to the development and delivery of successful Indigenous community training and employment programmes. A considerable contribution by Klaus has led to a range of academic publications highlighting Indigenous community capacity development on the Gove Peninsula.

Hamish Morgan has an honours degree in Anthropology (Monash) and a PhD in Cultural Studies (UTS). He has worked in Wiluna Western Australia for a decade in Indigenous education, research, health and land management facilitation roles. He works for Central Desert Native Title Services where he is Program Development Coordinator of the Land and Community Unit. His research interests include cross-cultural communication, Martu knowledge systems and models of development based in social ecology.

Cecil Pearson (PhD, UWA) is currently employed by Curtin University in the role of senior research fellow. While in this position he was the Co Editor of *Research and Practice in Human Resource Management* for a decade. Cecil began his career as a secondary school teacher, but after seven years resigned from the Ministry of Education and entered service with the Western Australian State Railways. During 25 years with Westrail he worked in a number of the country regions as the District Engineer. In the final 10 years of his railway work he held a range of Executive Engineering positions at the east Perth Head Office. In 1991 Cecil was invited to join Murdoch University as a senior academic, a position from which he retired after 11 years. In May 2003, the following year, he was invited to join the Curtin University, School of Management. Cecil has published widely in the disciplines of education, engineering and management.

Kim Petersen (Dip.T. B.Ed., University of SA; B.Social Admin. Post Graduate, Flinders University). Kim is currently completing a PhD at Curtin University supported by a scholarship through the Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Economies project). She has over twenty years of management experience in planning, leading and implementing programs and complex change processes in both the government and non-government sector. This has encompassed

both state-wide leadership positions and diverse senior management positions in Primary Health Care, Human Services, Drug and Alcohol, HIV and Communicable Diseases, Remote Infrastructure and Aboriginal policy and program development. Kim has led and implemented state-wide programs, led reforms and been responsible for leading the development and strategic planning of a range of services, programs and policies across South Australia. This has included the coordination, management and integration of relevant funding and procurement models in the Department of Health and Department for the Premier and Cabinet and has negotiated across government and multi-agency service and funding agreements.

Maria Fay Rola-Rubzen (BAgEc Hons; PhD, UNE). Associate Professor Fay Rola-Rubzen is an Economist with over 25 years of experience in international development in various countries in Asia and Africa and in Australia. She has vast experience in poverty and food security, gender issues, rural and regional development, agribusiness value chains, community development, capacity building, participatory action research and economic modelling and policy analysis. Fay has undertaken research and consultancy projects for various international organisations including the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR); AusAID, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UN-FAO); United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP); International Rice Research Institute (IRRI); Asian Development Bank (ADB), USAID; WA State Government; Winrock International and the World Bank. Fay has published in several international journals and is a topic author in the Encyclopaedia of Life Support Sciences published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Fay has been a grant reviewer for the Australian Research Council. She has led several R&D projects to successful completion and was the Project Leader of *Desert-Biz™*, the Desert Knowledge CRC's core project on desert businesses, leading a team of researchers studying Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses in the desert. Fay is currently the Deputy Dean for Research and Development at Curtin Business School.

Guy Singleton (BSc Hons; PhD). Guy has an honours degree in biological science and a PhD in applied remote Aboriginal community development. He has published works in the respective fields of remote Aboriginal community development and information communication technology for development (ICT4Dev). His work has been cited by the United Nations as a progress indicator for the Millennium Development Goals, via the UN's International Telecommunications Union. Having spent over eight years working with remote Australian Aboriginal communities on community-driven development

initiatives, he is now employed in the field of resource sector corporate social responsibility and has worked for Newmont Mining Corporation and currently resides with Northern Star Resources. Guy is also the Chairperson of the Wiluna Regional Partnership Agreement, which is supported by a MoU between the Commonwealth Government of Australia and the Minerals Council of Australia to improve employment and enterprise opportunities for Aboriginal peoples within mining regions.

Galarrwuy Yunupingu AM was named Australian of the year in 1978. He is a recognised Elder of the Gumatj Clan of the Yolngu peoples, and is a respected statesman of the Australian Indigenous community. During his formative years he was a student of the Yirrkala Methodist Church Mission School, then he attended the Brisbane Methodist Bible College for two years, and then returned to the Gove Peninsula in 1967. In the next period of his life he worked with his father Mungurrawuy (the Gumatj Clan leader) in the struggle for land rights. Galarrwuy played a role with the Bark Petition to Canberra in 1963 and the Gove Land Rights case in 1972, which unsuccessfully challenged mining companies occupying Indigenous traditional lands, as these events preceded the landmark 1993 Native Title Act, which closely followed Mabo. Later he had a leading role in negations for the establishment of the Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory of Australia. In 1975 Mr Galarrwuy Yunupingu joined the Northern Land Council and held the position of Chairman for the period 1977 to 1980, he was an executive member until 1983, and in that year was reelected a Chairman, a position held until the close of 1989.

Gayili Yunupingu Marika is a senior Yolngu custodian of the Gumatj clan of north east Arnhem Land. Born on the shores of Melville Bay at the Galpua community Gayili now resides there and from her studios produces fine arts and crafts that are sold internationally. Respected by the clan Elders for her interest in the traditional stories Gayili has been given permission by senior leaders of several Yolngu clans to reproduce their clan designs. Gayili has held a number of prominent positions on the Gove Peninsula. Early in her working career Gayili was closely engaged with the community as a member of the post office, the local bank, and later as a liaison officer in Aboriginal youth affairs within the Federal Government Department of Aboriginal Affairs. Gayili continued her active role in Nhulunbuy issues when she was actively involved in the Dhanbul Community Family Domestic Violence programmes and for a period in Miwatj Health. For a short period Gayili worked with her sister Janet helping with a house construct programme at Gunyangara. Gayili has three sons and one daughter and with her granddaughters, whom she mentors in Indigenous arts, finds pleasure in executing her creative activities.

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