



UNIVERSITY  
OF WOLLONGONG  
AUSTRALIA

University of Wollongong  
**Research Online**

---

Centre for Multicultural Studies Working Papers

Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts

---

1991

# Australian Aborigines & cultural tourism: case studies of Aboriginal involvement in the tourist industry

Julie Finlayson

---

## Recommended Citation

Finlayson, Julie, Australian Aborigines & cultural tourism: case studies of Aboriginal involvement in the tourist industry, Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of Wollongong, Working Paper 15, 1991, 127.  
<http://ro.uow.edu.au/cmsworkpapers/13>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library:  
[research-pubs@uow.edu.au](mailto:research-pubs@uow.edu.au)

---

# Australian Aborigines & cultural tourism: case studies of Aboriginal involvement in the tourist industry

## **Abstract**

The principal focus of this report has been with issues of direct concern to Aboriginal people and communities involved with cultural tourism. Report recommendations stress the need for greater consideration of Aboriginal cultural perspectives in the development and implementation of government policies.

A central question to emerge from the study is whether cultural tourism is merely a novel angle within current developments in tourism and enjoying a good deal of attention and enthusiasm from tourist organisations and operators, or whether it is primarily a context for commercial enterprise development by Aboriginal people? A related matter is the question of what purpose Aboriginal ventures in cultural tourism are designed to serve and in whose interests they are developed? Answers to these issues were not always obvious to Aboriginal people involved in the ventures surveyed nor was it necessarily apparent to some of the non-Aboriginal participants.

The purpose of Aboriginal tourism ventures is problematic in public policy and in bureaucratic practice. While multiculturalism is providing new direction in museums through public education and in acquisition and display policies, the popular definition of the multiculturalism in cultural tourism lacks consensus. However, Aboriginal people are consistent in their rejection of descriptions of themselves as 'ethnic communities'.

■ Working Papers ■  
on  
■ Multiculturalism ■



■ THE OFFICE OF ■  
■ MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS ■

DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
AND CABINET



■ THE CENTRE FOR ■  
■ MULTICULTURAL STUDIES ■

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG, AUSTRALIA

Paper No.15

**Australian Aborigines  
& Cultural Tourism:  
Case Studies of Aboriginal Involvement  
in the Tourist Industry**

**FINLAYSON**

Working Papers on Multiculturalism No.15

# Australian Aborigines and Cultural Tourism: Case Studies of Aboriginal Involvement in the Tourist Industry

*Julie Finlayson*

*Published for*  
The Office of Multicultural Affairs, Department of the Prime Minister  
and Cabinet,

*by*  
The Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of Wollongong,  
Australia

*Published by*

The Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of Wollongong  
P.O. Box 1144  
Wollongong, 2500  
Australia  
Ph. (042) 213 780 Fax. (042) 286313

*for*

The Office of Multicultural Affairs, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet  
Canberra, 2600  
Australia

Co-ordination: Bill Cope, Adriana Hassapis and Colleen Mitchell (CMS);  
Elizabeth James and David Waddell (OMA)  
Penny Crittle (Centre for Workplace Communication at the University of Technology, Sydney).

Additional copies of this report are available from the CMS, University of Wollongong.  
Price: \$20.00 each. including postage and packing. Mail, fax or phone order to the above address.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commonwealth Government, the Office of Multicultural Affairs or the Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of Wollongong.

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication Data:

Finlayson, Julie Dianne.  
Australian Aborigines and cultural tourism

Bibliography.  
ISBN 0 642 16349 9.

- [1]. Aborigines, Australia - Business enterprises. 2. Tourist trade - Australia. I. Australia. Office of Multicultural Affairs.  
II. University of Wollongong. Centre for Multicultural Studies.  
III. Title. . (Series : Working papers on multiculturalism; no. 15).

338.6422

SERIES ISSN 1035-8129

Text printing and binding by the University of Wollongong Printery (042) 21 3999  
Covers printed by Meglamedia (02) 519 1044

# CONTENTS

## **SUMMARY OF THE REPORT.....page 4**

*The Commercial Versus Cultural Dilemma*  
*Marketing*  
*Product Development*  
*Funding Rationalisation*  
*Mainstream Industry Coordination*  
*Consultation*  
*Private Funding Versus Public Funding in Aboriginal Tourism*  
*Enterprise Development Models*  
*Skills Specialisation*  
*Cultural Promotion*  
*The Commercial Artefact Market*  
*Employment Training Programs*  
*Terms of Reference*  
*List of Tables: Cairns Survey*  
*Maps*  
*Abbreviations*  
*Acknowledgement*  
*Organisations and Individuals Contacted During Field Research*

## **1. INTRODUCTION.....page 30**

*Summary of Chapters*  
*Literature Review: Aboriginal Involvement in Tourism*

## **2. THE ECONOMIC & ATTITUDINAL SUCCESS OF ABORIGINAL TOURISM VENTURES.....page 38**

*Issues in the Economic and Attitudinal Success of Aboriginal Tourism Ventures*  
*The Case Studies*  
*Lake Condah: Victoria*  
*Brambuck Living Culture Centre: Victoria*  
*Warrama Living History Centre Pty. Ltd: Cairns*  
*Tjapukai Dance Theatre: Kuranda*  
*Deeral Village: Babinda*  
*Kuku-Yalanji Rainforest walk: Mossman Gorge*  
*Jabiru Cabaret Restaurant: Cairns*

## **3. THE PORTRAYAL OF ABORIGINAL CULTURE IN THE PROMOTION OF AUSTRALIAN TOURISM.....page 69**

*General Issues in the Portrayal of Australian Culture*  
*Specific Issues in the Portrayal of Aboriginal Culture in Tourism*  
*Keeping Places*  
*Living Cultural Centres*  
*Static Sites as Evidence of Aboriginal Culture (e.g. Rock Art/Archaeological Remains)*  
*Land Management*  
*Culture as a Portable, Marketable 'Experience' or Object*

#### **4. ATTITUDINAL SURVEY OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS' EXPECTATIONS OF CULTURAL TOURISM.....page 79**

*Tourism Surveys*

*The Cairns Survey*

*Discussion of Tables from Cairns Tourism Survey*

*Table 1: Correlation Between Visitor's Age and Interest in Aboriginal Culture*

*Table 2: Correlation Between Visitor's Place of Permanent Residence and Their  
Level of Interest in Aboriginal Tourism*

*Table 3: Correlation Between Visitor's Place of Permanent Residence and Purchase  
of Aboriginal Souvenirs*

*Table 4: Correlations Between Visitor Age and Response to Visits to Aboriginal  
Cultural Enterprises*

*Table 5: Correlation Between Place of Visitor's Permanent Residence and Response  
to Aboriginal Tourism*

#### **5. ATTITUDINAL RESPONSE OF ABORIGINAL GROUPS REGARDING CULTURAL TOURISM.....page 93**

#### **6. ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAMS IN CULTURAL TOURISM.....page 99**

*Brambuk Cultural Centre*

*Lake Condah*

*Cairns: Case Studies*

*Tjapukai Dance Theatre*

*Jabiru Cabaret Theatre*

*Kuku-Yalanji Rainforest Walk*

*Warrama Living Culture Centre*

#### **7. CASE STUDY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS.....page 112**

*DEET: Department of Education, Employment and Training*

*TAP: Training for Aborigines Programs*

*AEDP: Aboriginal Employment Development Policy*

*Main Issues: Enterprise Development*

*Training: Tourism Hospitality*

#### **APPENDIX.....page 122**

*Appendix 1: The Australia Council Questionnaire, June 1990*

#### **REFERENCES.....page 123**

## SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

The principal focus of this report has been with issues of direct concern to Aboriginal people and communities involved with cultural tourism. Report recommendations stress the need for greater consideration of Aboriginal cultural perspectives in the development and implementation of government policies.

A central question to emerge from the study is whether cultural tourism is merely a novel angle within current developments in tourism and enjoying a good deal of attention and enthusiasm from tourist organisations and operators, or whether it is primarily a context for commercial enterprise development by Aboriginal people? A related matter is the question of what purpose Aboriginal ventures in cultural tourism are designed to serve and in whose interests they are developed? Answers to these issues were not always obvious to Aboriginal people involved in the ventures surveyed nor was it necessarily apparent to some of the non-Aboriginal participants.

The purpose of Aboriginal tourism ventures is problematic in public policy and in bureaucratic practice. While multiculturalism is providing new direction in museums through public education and in acquisition and display policies, the popular definition of the multiculturalism in cultural tourism lacks consensus. However, Aboriginal people are consistent in their rejection of descriptions of themselves as 'ethnic communities'.

### *The Commercial Versus Cultural Dilemma*

Aboriginal tourism suffers from a dilemma identified by Altman (1986b) of government funding agencies adopting different perspectives of the purpose of Aboriginal art and craft enterprises and the use of different criteria for evaluating success. Altman's report characterised the problem as a failure in the policies of the funding bodies to 'accommodate the blend of commerce and culture' (ibid. 1989b:109). Cultural tourism suffers from a similar bind: DEET policies support programs orientated to economic outcomes, such as employment within the tourism industry, while Aboriginal participants and other Commonwealth bureaucracies see cultural tourism as opportunities with largely cultural objectives.

## *Marketing*

Product marketing is neglected in Aboriginal training programs; and in evaluations of the commercial potential of cultural enterprises. Few Cultural Centres or other government sponsored Aboriginal tourist ventures mentioned in this report accurately target a consumer market for their product. The Cairns survey of tourists' interests undertaken for this report indicate that despite a high level of general interest in Aboriginal culture there is discrimination by consumers, and this is reflected in market competition and by factors specific to age, education, nationality, and disposable income.

As options for Aboriginal economic enterprises, cultural tourism must be realistically assessed for its potential to deliver sustainable economic benefits to a community. Market research needs to address the issues of product development and funding rationalisation.

## *Product Development*

Little market research on the economic potential of cultural tourism to decrease Aboriginal community reliance on welfare was apparent in the ventures surveyed for the report. Market research on product development and promotion was equally limited; indeed few enterprises had profiles of their future clients and saw little necessity for detailed investigation of leisure tourists and their specific consumer demands. Where an enterprise did have a projection of the commercial potential of the venture it was generally assumed that their market (without specifying which interest groups) would be receptive. By contrast, operators and businesses within tourism are careful to document and survey their potential markets prior to committing their finances. Ventures in Aboriginal tourism, on the other hand, are often built on grandiose hopes, government funding and minimal evidence to support the claims of the potential income. The lack of appropriate market research would be of less concern if these ventures were not publicly funded. There is obvious incompatibility between politicians who want optimistic predictions for commercial success under AEDP policies on the one hand, and public expectation of commercial accountability on the other. Although government-sponsored ventures (such as Brambuk and Warrama) had advice about the commercial viability of the projects and the assessments were made by management and marketing consultants problems persist. In fact, such problems usually arise in areas

## *Consultation*

Industry consultation prior to tourism development is one area where both State and Federal governments can improve the present situation. Formal avenues of communication and consultation between Aboriginal organisations and the tourism industry are almost non-existent; probably Aboriginal groups should assume the initiative, although few Aboriginal communities seem aware of the option through the Economic Development Conferences program (EDC).

Adequate consultation between tourism promoters and Aboriginal communities has not been a hallmark of relations in North Queensland. Consultation requires more time than for example, the two weeks recently allocated for community consultation by the PATA tourism strategy study of Cape York. It is essential that Aboriginal people have opportunities to identify and consider tourism issues and the part they as a community or as individuals, may or may not, wish to play in tourism development in their region. Consultation also serves as an educative process for all parties involved. It provides non-Aborigines with opportunities to appreciate areas of cultural sensitivity and in-concert with Aborigines to work out acceptable alternatives. The ANPWS consultancy program in intercultural projects has had some success as a Commonwealth facilitating agency while political representation of Aboriginal interests in development issues by the Northern Territory-based Aboriginal Land Councils provides yet another illustration of representative bodies acting in facilitating roles.

However, appropriate consultation demands a facilitating organisation capable of establishing a realistic basis for discussing development issues between the interest groups. The most effective means of participation for Aboriginal communities may require formalised access to policy development and to the administering bureaucrats in order to canvass issues which include tourism but range as wide as the environment, mining, employment, and so forth.

As a basis for recommendations on equity matters, the Miller Report (1985) has been extensively used by the Commonwealth Government to establish AEDP as an employment policy, with a number of strategies to close the economic disparities between Aborigines and non-Aborigines. Miller's consultations with Aboriginal organisations around Australia gave particular attention to issues of employment, education and income and programs to re-dress inequalities were initially introduced as joint programs between DEET, ADC and DAA.

The AEDP has funds under EDC to assist Aboriginal people with discussion and involvement in development issues and these are available to communities, organisations, and special interest groups. Tandanya Aboriginal Cultural Institute in Adelaide is one example of a cultural venture which has taken advantage of this option (see Altman 1989b:119). Apart from funding a forum for discussion of development issues, AEDP offers a number of specific programs (formerly administered by DAA) to aid particular skills training in job-related programs under Aboriginal Organisation Training (AOT). Financial support is also available under AEDP to establish small business enterprises through the Small Business Funding Scheme (SBFS). SBFS provides capital support and assistance with labor costs is an option under the Enterprise Employment Assistance (EEA) which pays an unemployment benefit equivalent for up to 12 months. (Warrama Living Cultural Centre employs Aboriginal staff under EEA).

Another loan scheme for potential Aboriginal entrepreneurs is the Aboriginal Enterprise Incentive Scheme (AEIS). This scheme is aimed at unemployed Aboriginal people who wish to start a small business. Where the required loan is a modest sum loans are interest free; obviously a business has to be considered a viable proposition. The level of available funding is suitable for small commercial to enterprises such as commercial art and crafts manufacturing.

State government policies to alleviate economic inequalities between Aborigines and the wider Australian community in tourism initiatives are not advanced. While the States were not expected to duplicate the Commonwealth AEDP strategies, this report indicates that parochial attitudes continue to dominate Aboriginal tourism enterprises and in Queensland particularly, many Aboriginal communities and small businesses are ignorant of the options in Commonwealth and State assistance.

In Queensland, the recent review of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation may be an opportunity to rectify their previous record of poor performance in cross-cultural consultation. In the past QTTC deliberately ignored both the potential for Aboriginal employment in tourism and Aboriginal tourism projects by concentrating their interests on conventional developments such as resorts.

In Queensland, the State Government could encourage organisations like the regionally-based offices of the Small Business Development Corporation to assist Aboriginal tourism ventures with advice about enterprise development, financial management,

business practice, and so forth. As a professional body with a strong commercial orientation this office could well provide the kind of advice which Aboriginal ventures need as a competitive commercial enterprise.

In Victoria, Aboriginal tourism is firmly embedded in the State's strategic development plans for tourism. The State Government has facilitated communication between the tourism industry and Aboriginal enterprises through the Koorie Tourism Unit. The Unit has access to advice and expertise through tourism marketing and promotion networks within the VTC and other State government departments. Cultural enterprises like Lake Condah, the Brambuk Centre, and local Aboriginal Cultural Centres, are thus less likely to be handled as special cases. Yet despite this, the record of Aboriginal participation in State funded cultural tourism has not been ideal. Indeed, the record has been poor on consultation, representation, and Aboriginal involvement, and in opportunities for employment and appropriate skills training. Some Aboriginal groups in Victoria are not happy with the direction of Aboriginal tourism and what they see as instrumental, the control of such projects by the State.

Differences in policy direction between State and Federal Government departments do take a toll on the development of cultural enterprises, especially in funding support. In Victoria lack of coordination between State government departments with separate areas of responsibility within a project like Brambuk or Lake Condah caused major problems and inhibited the commercial realisation of the enterprise.

### ***Private Funding Versus Public Funding in Aboriginal Tourism***

The commercially and socially successful enterprises surveyed in this report were not under direct Aboriginal community control nor did they rely on State or Commonwealth funds. Their commercial success raises the question of what effective role government sponsorship has in cultural ventures, especially where these are established as future commercial enterprises.

Where success in private enterprise combined Aboriginal participation with commercial acumen there were tangible material benefits and improved self-esteem for the Aboriginal staff. This was not necessarily true of many of the Commonwealth and State Government funded enterprises surveyed. Financially most Government sponsored enterprises were heavily dependent on continued funding, as well as seed funding for

the enterprise. Enterprises such as Tandanya (in South Australia) and the Dreamtime Cultural Centre at Rockhampton (in Queensland), are exceptions; both projects receive on-going State and Federal government grants to remain open. The mega cultural enterprise is likely to be in constant need of financial assistance; far from an ideal situation. That this should be the situation after initial research on the viability of a project makes nonsense of many of the commercial assessments associated with such ventures. Funding for cultural enterprises from ADC has always required a rigorous assessment of commercial viability, yet consultants' reports still misjudge potential commercial success (see Altman 1989b:144 for similar cases in the Aboriginal arts and crafts industry).

Future allocations of public funds to Aboriginal communities is likely to require ranking under ATSIC with Aboriginal cultural enterprises competing with other demands for funds. This report questions whether it is appropriate for governments to continue funding commercially non-viable cultural ventures, when government money is crucial to solving the equity gap in areas like Aboriginal housing, education, employment, legal and medical services? One point of view expressed during the research for the report was that Government funding for cultural enterprises should continue irrespective of commercial viability. Supporters of this view cited Commonwealth funding of the Australian Opera or Ballet as comparable situations. However, with other financial support programs for Aboriginal communities competing for limited funds the analogy may not be arguable politically. There is also evidence for one Aboriginal community the proposal to build a massive and expensive cultural centre was rejected by the Aborigines themselves because it was unlikely to be a commercial success and would make 'fools of them'.<sup>2</sup>

### *Enterprise Development Models*

It is imperative that where governments are involved with Aboriginal tourism cultural enterprises are not structured according to a formulaic model. As pointed out by Altman's review:

---

2. I refer to plans to build a cultural centre on the Gold Coast in the Clagiraba State Forest. The Kombumerri Aboriginal Corporation rejected the initial plans developed by an architect for a cultural centre which they felt was grandiose and beyond their financial means. Their response can only be seen as unusual and reflects the sophistication of the group in dealing with development issues.

It is important that the relative efficiency of different industry support models is rigorously assessed (Altman 1989b:157)

Aboriginal people are aware of the need for specific cultural and regional responses to enterprise development, especially in tourism. In the Northern Territory, for example, some Aboriginal communities are interested in cultural tourism but remain indifferent to direct contact with tourists (see Altman 1989a). It has been possible to accommodate this preference and still maintain a financial involvement with tourism. On the other hand, some tourists are keen to meet Aboriginal people and learn about their experiences of life in exotic environments (see recent Northern Territory tourism brochure, 'Come Share Our Culture' May 1990-April 1991). The discrepancies between consumer, producer and sponsor must be identified and accommodated in the development objectives of the enterprise. However, feasibility studies rarely comment on such issues, partly as a result of cultural ignorance about their Aboriginal clients or through inadequate consultation. The situation is exacerbated where management and accounting firms are seen as appropriate agents with sole responsibility for enterprise development strategies. Aboriginal cultural enterprises in this report show that cultural factors actually play an important role in the success or otherwise of a venture. The report also emphasises that success depends in part on the structure of management relations and the associated process of decision-making. Two approaches have been adopted to deal with these concerns and are described below.

### *Skills Specialisation*

Success in cultural tourism for Aboriginal participants may depend on specialisation of skills and interests to allow Aboriginal people to draw on their cultural background in an appropriate commercial context. Despite popular belief to the contrary, it is not unusual to find that in specific situations Aboriginal partnerships with non-Aboriginal people are successful within the terms and social expectations of the Aboriginal employees. Such arrangements are not seen as exploitative, but as arrangements which resonate with specific Aboriginal cultural views of obligation and support, which in turn are common features of relationships in Aboriginal families and in Aboriginal communities. Tjapukai Dance Theatre provides a successful example of a cultural enterprise based on specialisation of cultural skills and commercial knowledge.

Some State Government enterprise relationships described in the report failed to distinguish between options for success in inter-cultural partnerships and paternalism.

Government financed cultural ventures often denied Aboriginal employees information about the enterprise, options for involvement; indeed the structure of power and decision-making in management left some Aboriginal people wondering who were the real beneficiaries of the project. On the other hand, it is important that Aboriginal people assume responsibility for project control. In doing so they need to move away from simplistic notions that control is a matter of the difference between private and public funding. Many Aboriginal people believe that State or Federally financed enterprises offer fewer constraints on Aboriginal autonomy than do privately financed ventures. However, the facts of State or Commonwealth Government intervention in Aboriginal enterprises do not support this view; indeed, Aboriginal ventures which receive public funds are subject to close and constant public scrutiny.<sup>3</sup> Government funded enterprises tend to expect Aboriginal staff to display diversification in their entrepreneurial and management skills, while commercially funded ventures worked on the principle of specialisation.

Aboriginal people argue about enterprise models, irrespective of specialisation or diversification in skills and management responsibility as issues of project control. The definition of what constitutes an Aboriginal cultural enterprise is hazy in terms of management, ownership and employment. Aboriginal communities and government bureaucracies are equally undecided about the distinction. Yet until the differences are made plain privately funded Aboriginal tourism will be minimal and subject to criticism by both Aboriginal people and bureaucrats.

### *Cultural Promotion*

It is important that the current principle source of funding for Aboriginal tourism, namely government sponsorship, looks beyond conventional images of cultural symbols in promotion of Aboriginal culture, and instead to develop Aboriginal cultural ventures with flair and creativity. Marketing of Aboriginal culture as the lifestyles of traditional hunter-gatherers alone only serves to suggest a false picture of contemporary Aboriginal societies, and perpetuates only one form of Aboriginal cultural expression. Indeed reiteration of Aborigines as 'stone age' hunters living in wild and

---

3. The financial collapse of the Lake Condah project when it was under Aboriginal control became a major public issue in Victorian newspapers and was also reported in a national newspaper. The story line focused on financial mismanagement of public money and Aboriginal incompetence.

exotic environments creates difficulties for communities of Aboriginal town dwellers. It also silences Aboriginal contributions to regional contact history. Consequently, urban-rural Aboriginal people are given a marginal cultural and historical position which is legitimated as 'natural' and not subject to critical assessment.

Cultural centres tend to promote Aboriginal cultural values through the forms established by their role models — the natural history museums. There was no evidence from ventures surveyed for this report that new approaches are emerging. In fact, few Aboriginal groups had ideas of how to present their specific historical and cultural experiences with integrity. Perhaps the historical, rather than the natural history museums, are the more appropriate role models for cultural centres? Aboriginal people need a forum where social experiences and material objects are presented in terms of a dialogue between the past and the present, while supporting the concept of history as a forum capable of accommodating diverse perspectives.<sup>4</sup> A dialogue between different groups of participants in time and space is also part of a similar approach to the interpretation of 'facts' in autobiography; in both cases the approach offers an appropriate means for hearing all 'voices'. In practice few Aboriginal tourism ventures incorporate history in this way. The Victorian State Government's brochure on the history of Lake Condah mission for example, excludes Aboriginal perspectives and experiences of mission life by historical omissions and in a consensual view of colonial history.

Similarly, repatriation of Aboriginal material culture from State museums to Keeping Places and Cultural Centres must contribute to a social and historical dialogue. Without this context cultural objects become inaccessible to their immediate custodians and to the wider community. When this happens, Cultural Centres and Keeping Places promote culture as an exotic 'spectacle'. Many State museums are aware of this problem, but conventional displays and education programs continue to dominate perspectives in Aboriginal Cultural Centres and Living History museums. Public education about local Aboriginal history, or the social and political experiences of Aboriginal families in rural or urban communities requires a break with the philosophy of natural history museums. Yet none of the ventures mentioned in this report saw anything difficult in their relationships sponsorship by natural history museums; indeed most were dependent on them for assistance in developing community Cultural Centres.

---

4. American living history museums, as at Williamsburg, capture the spirit of this kind of dialogue.

The professional connections between Aboriginal Cultural Centres and the State must be re-negotiated if Aboriginal people are to re-gain their control over their own history. But whether the State is prepared to lend public money for enterprises which challenge cultural and political orthodoxy has yet to be tested. However, in cultural tourism there is an opportunity to challenge homogenous social views and to foster diversity.

### *The Commercial Artefact Market*

The issue of cultural integrity in production of artefacts in commercial tourism is discussed in detail by Altman's report (1989b). The issue is sensitive in States like Victoria and Queensland where the production of Aboriginal artefacts is no longer directly connected with a traditional context. In the absence of such formal expressions of cultural continuity many of the east coast Aboriginal communities are replicating pan Australian Aboriginal arts and crafts, albeit with less skill, in order to assert their Aboriginality. Cultural integrity is thus an issue of both the commercial and political arena.

Controversies over commercial production of Aboriginal artefacts are unresolved in the eastern States. The National Party Government in Queensland showed little interest in expanding Aboriginal options for creative artistic work other than by providing a sales outlet for craft work without the benefit of quality control. The present Queensland Labor Government might be advised to look to the programs established under Commonwealth funding in the Northern Territory, which encourages artistic dialogue between Aboriginal artists in the remote communities and urban Aboriginal artists from the major cities. What Queensland Aboriginal artists suffer is largely the effects of institutional deprivation on their artistic and cultural expression. Proposals for development of regional and local art, mentioned in the Queensland Labor policy statement on the arts, must include initiatives for Aboriginal projects, even new forms of involvement and respect for Aboriginal artistic expression.<sup>5</sup>

---

5. In September 1990 some Aboriginal spokespeople in Cape York called for wide-spread Aboriginal support to boycott the annual Laura Dance Festival. They argued that the Festival was exploitative of Aboriginal cultures and still carried all the paternalism of its promotion as the brainchild of the former National Party Government.

In North Queensland, tourists buy Aboriginal souvenirs, but often in preference to visiting an Aboriginal cultural centre or other cultural tourism attraction. The recent appropriation of Aboriginal art work and its incorporation in museums and galleries has enhanced Aboriginal material culture by their value-added commercial importance. Although tourists are rarely discerning consumers when buying Aboriginal artefacts, they show an enthusiasm for owning a piece of Aboriginal culture. This is what artefacts represent in the tourist market. Recognising this, many Aboriginal tourist ventures cater to tourists with extensive displays of material objects as confirmatory evidence of their cultural heritage.

### *Employment Training Programs*

Employment training programs often fail because they are unresponsive to the needs of the community they were designed to serve. This conclusion is not new and is especially evident where programs are devised and introduced according to government policy directives and goals. DEET's current industry support programs centre on training and enterprise development in the context of full-time employment in the wider labor market. Yet AEDP strategies recognise that in some Aboriginal communities this goal is impossible to achieve. There is diversity of use and interpretation in AEDP and DEET programs at regional and State level over employment and enterprise development. Altman's report (1989b) commented that DEET and agencies implementing AEDP did so in different ways in different States; a situation which caused some confusion for clients. DEET, for example, concentrated on an enterprise model for cultural ventures, and conversely gave less attention to a cultural project's commercial viability. Altman illustrates this with case studies of Aboriginal art and craft production. There is evidence that similar problems occur in other areas of the Aboriginal economy (see Altman 1989b:156). DEET has insisted on Aboriginal employment training for the formal labor market, yet their approach contrasts with Aboriginal perceptions of success and employment, and inevitably compounds what the Snowdon report (1989) outlined as cultural and structural problems in formal training programs.

DEET training schemes and enterprises have also evaluated program effectiveness in relation to funding contributions, not necessarily project outcomes. Institutionally-based training programs repeat the pattern of measuring success by formal objectives alone. However, within communities success is the ability to appropriately transpose academic learning into problem solving and skills competence for community and

commercial contexts. Obstacles to successful training identified in the present report are cultural factors often invisible to those outside the community and unrecognised by the professional educator; some of these inhibitions are specifically mentioned in the report (gender, factional interests, poor literacy, desire for on-site education, poor choice of training staff, and so on.) Finally employment programs which operate through the assumptions of the program designer and ignore the cultural differences of the clients usually create additional learning problems.

The effectiveness of employment training is limited where programs are too brief, or too narrowly confined to specific skills. Training in tourism hospitality is broadening to overcome this difficulty. Hotels in North Queensland work in conjunction with the TAFE and CES to provide introductory courses supported by mainstream tourism training. Nevertheless other states continue to see the Queensland approach, developed through trial and error, as innovative.

A number of international hotels in the Cairns area recognise the value in tourism promotion of employing Aboriginal staff and the opportunity it gives international visitors to meet Aboriginal people. Employing Aboriginal staff who are locals also makes good economic sense. The practical advantages outweigh recruiting staff from southern states. Some hotels have responded creatively to solving the needs of their Aboriginal staff; for example, one hotel runs a regular bus service for shift workers who live in a nearby town but have neither public nor private transport. Support like this may also be necessary in other tourism enterprises if Aboriginal material resources are limited and likely to effect employment and training options.

DEET - in conjunction with TAFE - provides training for industry-based employment. However, not all courses have had a strong practical or commercial emphasis. Recently Cairns TAFE recognised the importance of giving their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates commercial training. The college engages art gallery owners, picture framers and selected business people to run courses on commercial and general business practice. Yet these courses remain informal units of the mainstream curriculum.

Financial assistance under AEDP for on-the-job training or formal educational programs were not well known to many Aboriginal people I interviewed. The large scale cultural ventures surveyed in this report were generally well informed. The reverse was true of the small cultural ventures.

Far more community knowledge of enterprise development programs and government support for hospitality and tourism is needed. This requires face to face contact and discussion, rather than written statements of employment policy and government strategy papers alone. Perhaps DEET could sponsor regional tourism conferences for Aboriginal entrepreneurs through work shops centred on specific problem solving, while also providing a general forum for discussion with representatives of the tourist industry about product development and marketing for a commercial future in cultural tourism. Revision of some of the current funding policies, such as EEA which provides a wage subsidy for 12 months, should be a priority if commercial success is seen as important in cultural tourism. Finally, success in cultural tourism must acknowledge and accommodate Aboriginal cultural constraints which are likely to impinge on Aboriginal employment success in the formal labor market.

## *Terms of Reference*

The report is to:

- Analyse the success in economic and attitudinal terms of a review of Aboriginal ventures in the tourist industry;<sup>6</sup>
- Analyse how Aboriginal culture is portrayed in the promotion of Australian tourism in general and in these ventures in particular;
- Conduct an attitudinal survey to gauge the expectations of international tourists and whether such expectations were met in the case of these ventures;<sup>7</sup>
- Conduct an attitudinal survey of Aboriginal groups to gauge aims and expectations regarding tourists and whether the existing tourist enterprise meets these expectations;<sup>8</sup>
- Examine whether existing Aboriginal employment training programmes are meeting the needs of Aboriginal trainees in these communities or ventures;
- Examine the findings of the case studies in relation to existing government policy and ascertain changes in policy that might be needed.

## *List of Tables: Cairns Survey*

- Table 1: Correlation between visitor's age and level of interest in Aboriginal culture.
- Table 2: Correlation between visitor's place of permanent residence and interest in Aboriginal culture.
- Table 3: Correlation between visitor's place of permanent residence and purchase of Aboriginal souvenirs.
- Table 4: Correlation between visitor's age and response to Aboriginal tourism.
- Table 5: Correlation between visitor's permanent residence and response to Aboriginal tourism.

- 
6. Strictly speaking the original terms of reference for this report asked for a study of two ventures in Aboriginal tourism. However, this has been extended to a broad based study due to contingencies in the field research unknown at the time the terms of reference were set.
7. The attitudinal survey was conducted with international and domestic tourists only in the Cairns area.
8. An attitudinal survey was not conducted with Aboriginal people for methodological reasons. However, qualitative comments from Aboriginal people are included from the study areas, and references are available from other sources concerned with Aboriginal involvement in tourism.

## *Maps*

Map 1. The Grampians, Victoria

Map 2. Lake Condah, Victoria

Map 3. The Cairns Region, North Queensland

## *Abbreviations*

ADC	Aboriginal Development Commission
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AEDP	Aboriginal Employment Development Policy
AEIS	Aboriginal Enterprise Incentive Scheme
ANPWS	Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
ATC	Australian Tourism Commission
BTR	Bureau of Tourism Research
CAE	College of Advance Education
CES	Commonwealth Employment Service
CEDAM	Centre for Educational Development and Academic Methods, ANU
CDEP	Community Development Employment Program
C&E	Conservation and Environment, Victoria
CFL	Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, Victoria <sup>9</sup>
CMTS	Community Management Training Scheme
DAA	Department of Aboriginal Affairs (Commonwealth)
DASETT	Department of Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training
DFSAIA	Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Queensland
DOGIT	Deeds of Grants-In-Trust Communities, Queensland
EEA	Enterprise Employment Assistance
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunities
EDC	Enterprise Development Conference (program)

---

9. After the Federal Government elections in March 1990, the Victorian Labor Government reshuffled several portfolios including Conservation, Forests and Lands which became Conservation and Environment. The Minister concerned is the Hon. Steve Crab who currently holds a second portfolio of Tourism.

EMTS	Enterprise Management Training Scheme
JTS	Job Skills Training
MPE	Ministry Environment and Planning, Victoria <sup>10</sup>
NAIDOC	National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration
PATA	Pacific Asia Tourism Association
QAC	Queensland Aboriginal Creations, Brisbane
RSPACS	Research School of Pacific Studies
SBFS	Small Business Funding Scheme
TAFE	Technical and Further Education College
TAP	Training for Aborigines Programs
VTC	Victorian Tourism Commission
VAS	Victoria Archaeological Survey
WE	Work Experience (program)
WIP	Work Information Programs
WIT	Work Information Tours

### *Acknowledgements*

The report was written while I held the position of Visiting Researcher at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Canberra. I am indebted to the Institute for their assistance in providing the necessary facilities during the research and production of the report, together with funds for the field studies.

Ms. Judy Johnson worked as a research assistant during the initial stage of the project compiling a bibliography on Aboriginal involvement in tourism in Victoria and North Queensland.

A number of colleagues contributed to my understanding of the issues behind cultural tourism; I thank Dr. Luke Taylor of the Museum of Australia; Dr. Jon Altman of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University; and Mr. Bill Arthur, formerly Visiting Fellow, AIATSIS.

---

10. The Ministry of Environment and Planning, prior to the March Federal election, had an Aboriginal Affairs unit. This is now a separate portfolio under the Hon. Brian Meir who combines the Ministries of Aboriginal Affairs and Consumer Affairs.

Dr. Toni Makkai, RSPACS, Australian National University, gave generously with her advice and experience of questionnaire design and implementation. Ms. Claire Atkinson of CEDAM, Australian National University, assisted the report with her knowledge of statistics and the data processing of the questionnaire.

Mr. Vince Ross and Mr. Ralph White, Koorie Officers in the Victorian Tourism Commission, very kindly invited me to accompany them on their field visits to Aboriginal communities in Western and Northern Eastern Victoria. They are excellent ambassadors in their work.

I spoke with many people in Victoria and the Cairns region during the field research and wish to thank them all for their time and interest. Individual names do not appear here as they are too numerous to mention. However, a full list of individuals and organisations consulted for the report appears elsewhere in this document. Much of the field data relied on the cooperation of these people and their willingness to openly talk to a stranger about their views of tourism. I appreciate the frankness and hospitality of those who did so. I am also grateful to the hotels and tourist organisations who distributed questionnaires to their clients.

Both Dr. Kingsley Palmer of AIATSIS, Canberra, and Ms. Renata Rustowski of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra, were supportive of the research and efficient in their administration of the project as representatives of the sponsoring agents. Special thanks to Mrs. Donna Hume of AIATSIS for her invaluable help with production of the report.

### ***Organisations and Individuals Contacted During Field Research***

#### **In Victoria**

Mr. Vince Ross, Koorie Tourism Officer, Victorian Tourism Commission.

Mr. Ralph White, Koorie Tourism Officer, Victorian Tourism Commission.

Mr. David Clarke, Victoria Archaeological Survey.

Ms. Norah Van Warden, Project Officer Lake Condah, Victoria Archaeological Survey.

Mr. Alan Hudson, Manager Field Operations, Aboriginal Affairs Branch, Ministry of Environment and Planning, Victoria.

Mr. John King, Portland, Victoria.

Mr. Johnny Lovett, Kerrup-Jmara Ranger, Lake Condah.

Mr. Tom Day, Heywood, Victoria.

Ms. Euphemia Day, Heywood, Victoria.

Mrs. Connie Hart, Kerrup-Jmara Elder, Portland, Victoria.

Ms. Rita King and Ms. Renee King, Kerrup-Jmara Elders, Portland, Victoria.

Mr. Dennis Reed, Conservation, Forests and Land, Regional Office Portland, Victoria.

Mrs. Gracie Sailor, Hamilton Keeping Place, Hamilton, Victoria.

Mr. Alan Simpson, Brambuk Cultural Centre, Grampians, Victoria.

Mr. Dennis Rose, Brambuk Cultural Centre, Grampians, Victoria.

Mr. Jon Saunders, Conservation, Forests and Lands, Horsham, Victoria.

Mr. Alan Burns, and Mr. John Kennedy, Goolum-Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative, Horsham, Victoria.

Mr. Peter Wilson, Manager, Brambuk Cultural Centre, The Grampians, Victoria.

Mr. Jim Gough, Aboriginal Lands Section, Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, Victoria.

Mr. Robert Taylor, Project Manager, Small Business Development Corporation, Melbourne, Victoria.

Mr. Derek Fowles, Aboriginal Affairs Branch, Ministry of Environment and Planning, Victoria.

Mr. Ian Clarke, Koorie Unit, Victorian Tourism Commission, Melbourne, Victoria.

Mr. Rex Atkinson, Aboriginal Keeping Place, Rotary International Village, Shepparton, Victoria.

Staff at the Echuca Keeping Place, the Old Court House, Echuca, Victoria.

Mr. Barry Stewart, Sunraysia Aboriginal Cooperative, Mildura, Victoria.

Mr. Ken King, Aboriginal Alcohol Rehabilitation Unit, Mildura, Victoria.

Mr. Herb Pettit, Chairperson, Robinvale Aboriginal Cooperative, Victoria.

#### **In Canberra**

Dr. Jon Altman, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, Canberra.

Dr. Luke Taylor, Curator, Museum of Australia, Canberra.

Dr. Richard Baker, Curator, Museum of Australia, Canberra.

Ms. Lesley Band, Ms. Jane Carter and Ms. Lois Wishart-Lindsay, Arts Development Section, DASETT, Canberra.

Ms. Lyn Grasson and Ms. Julie Cronin, Policy Development Section, DASETT, Canberra.

Mr. Chris Fondum and Mr. Mike Smith, Promotion and Cultural Awareness Section, ATSIC, Canberra.

Ms. Jenny Harrison and Ms. Bettina Sotta, Exhibitions Organisation, DASETT, Canberra.

Mr. Peter Taylor, ANPWS, Canberra.

Mr. Con Boekel, ANPWS, Canberra.

Mr. Chris Clarke, Research Officer, Aboriginal Hostels Ltd, Canberra.

Mr. Mike Parsons, Mingatjuta Consulting Services, Alice Springs.

Mr. Peter Rhodes, DEET Aboriginal Employment Development Branch, Canberra.

#### **In Sydney**

Ms. Kristine Jarret, Aboriginal Employment Coordinator Liaison Officer, Southern Pacific Hotel Corporation, Sydney.

Ms. Jane Spring, Policy and Research, Strategic Development Unit, Australia Council, Sydney.

#### **In Queensland**

Ms. Annie Holden, Ph.D. scholar, Griffith University.

Mr. Alan Dale, Ph.D. scholar, Griffith University.

Mr. Bruce Derrick, Development Manager, Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, Brisbane.

Ms. Maree Wellwood, Manager Market Research, Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, Brisbane.

Ms. Jan Lowrie, Cultural Appreciation Branch, Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Brisbane.

Mr. John Conroy, Manager, Queensland Aboriginal Creations, Brisbane.

Ms. Toni Malamoo, ATSIC, Brisbane.

Mr. Noel Geertz, ATSIC, Townsville.

Mr. Ross Rolfe, Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Brisbane.

Prof. Philip Pearce, Department of Tourism Studies, James Cook University, Townsville.

Mr. Jeff Richardson, ATSIC, Cairns.

Mr. Mike Frampton, General Manager, Warrama Living Culture Centre, Cairns.

Ms. Ann Duke, Consultant in Material Culture, Warrama Living Culture Centre, Cairns.

Ms. Toni Peachey, Warrama Living Cultural Centre, Cairns.

Mr. Bruce White, Tharpuntoo Legal Service, Cairns.

Mr. Geoff Donaghy, General Manager, Far North Queensland Promotion Bureau Ltd., Cairns.

Mr. John Courtenay, Gulf Local Authorities Development Association Inc., Cairns.  
 Alderman Rose Blank, Cairns City Council.<sup>11</sup>

Ms. Patimah Molone, Cultural Appreciation Officer, Department of Family Services  
 and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Cairns.

Ms. Kathy Ware, Administrator, Deeral Village, Babinda.

Mr. Ian King, Proprietor, Outback Images, Cairns.

Mrs. Roslyn Kemp, Aboriginal artist, Mareeba.

Mr. Damian Harper, CES, Cairns.

Mr. Michael Sweeney, Marketing Manager, Rainforest Station, Kuranda.

Ms. Bev. Parker, Marketing Manager, Rainforest Resort, Kuranda.

Mr. John Woodhams, Regional Manager, Small Business Development Corporation,  
 Cairns.

Ms. Cindy Judd, Manager, Tjapukai Dance Theatre, Kuranda.

Ms. Judy Bell, Administrator, Jilli Binna shop, Kuranda.

Ms. Maree Richards, Homemaker Coordinator, Jilli Binna, Kuranda.

Mr. Lyn Hobbler, Hobbler's Bus Service, Kuranda.

Mrs. Enid Boyle, Kuranda.

Mr. Lance Riley, Vice Chairperson Ngoonbi Aboriginal Cooperative, Kuranda.

Mr. Frank Cronin, DEET, Cairns.

Ms. Roberta Wong Leung, Area Director Human Resources, Radisson Plaza Hotel,  
 Cairns.

Mr. Don Moore, Human Resources Manager, Radisson Plaza Hotel, Pt. Douglas.

Ms. Judy Thompson, Skillshare, Kuranda.

Rev. John Adams, Yalga-Binbi Institute for Community Development, Cairns.

Mr. Victor Jose, ABDEV, Cairns.

Mr. David Buchanan and colleagues, Mossman Gorge Community.

Ms. Shirley Swindley, Secretary, Goobindi-Bamanga Community Advancement Co-op.  
 Society Limited, Mossman.

Mr. Walter Zeigelbauer, Land Management Officer, Aboriginal Coordinating Council,  
 Cairns.

Ms. Penny Henderson, Marketing Manager, Jabiru Cabaret, Cairns.

Mr. Merv. Ah Kee, CES, Cairns.

Mr. Joel Becker, Bookseller, Becker's Books, Cairns.

Ms. Thelma Wright, Day Tour Manager, Australian Pacific Tours Pty. Ltd., Cairns.

---

11. Since my interview in May 1990, Alderman Blank was tragically killed in an airplane accident.

Dr. Lesley Clark, MLA (Barron River) Smithfield.  
Mr. John Howe, real estate agent, Abbotts Real Estate, Kuranda.  
Ms. Jenny Green, Aboriginal artist, Kuranda.  
Ms. Anna Hassett, Social Planner, Cairns City Council.  
Ms. Carrie Bries, Community Arts Officer, Cairns City Council.  
Ms. Jill Jakel, Cairns/Mulgrave Community Development Officer, Cairns City Council.  
Mr. Ray Elias, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Access Programs, Cairns TAFE.  
Ms. Margaret O'shane, Director, Jintu, Parramatta Primary School, Cairns.  
Mr. Paul Kamsler Jnr., Director, Marketing and Sales, Pacific International Hotel,  
Cairns.  
Mr & Mrs. Joe Morgan, Proprietors, Anuaka Aboriginal Arts and Crafts, Cairns.

# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Field research for this report was undertaken at specific locations in Western Victoria, and in the greater Cairns region of Far North Queensland. The original field proposal differs on certain points from what eventuated. This was the result of contingencies only evident after the proposal was first mooted. In Victoria, for example, none of the major enterprises in Aboriginal tourism were operating. This made it impossible to evaluate their commercial success. A second modification was the methodology for assessing the attitudinal response and expectations of Aboriginal people involved in tourism. I felt the more appropriate method for evaluation was qualitative, not quantitative.

The field data provides the context for assessment of the principles by which governments structure their policies and infrastructural support for Aboriginal participation in cultural tourism. Frustrations as well as the joys of the endeavour are exposed in the discussion.

The picture of Aboriginal tourism in Victoria is compared and contrasted with the development of cultural tourism in the Cairns region where the research concentrates on Aboriginal tourism enterprises in Cairns, Kuranda, and Mossman.

Using a comparative method to evaluate the political and economic influences in cultural tourism, I have highlighted issues of equity, access and participation by Aboriginal people in enterprise development in the wider society. There is a great deal of diversity in cultural tourism, but all contexts share the commonalities of experimentation with training programs and management strategies. In Victoria, the current interest in Aboriginal tourism is fuelled by developments at Lake Condah and the Brambuk Living Culture Centre. Neither enterprise is presently open to the public, although they expect to open in the latter half of 1990, or early 1991. On the other hand, most of the Aboriginal enterprises in the Cairns region are already operating and in some cases, for example with the Tjapukai Dance Theatre, the enterprise has an established reputation within the tourism industry.

The discussion in the report moves between general observations of models of enterprise development in cultural tourism and the specific details of Aboriginal enterprises.

Some enterprise models have failed or are in danger of doing so and I have tried to explore why. The explanations of success and failure are however, discussed in terms which respond to the Aboriginal perspective of tourism, while acknowledging that administrative views of government organisations and commercial interests are also important. Analysis of the field data has highlighted questions about the nature of Aboriginal involvement in entrepreneurial tourism beyond immediate dilemmas concerned with issues about the social impact of tourism ventures for Aboriginal people and their quality of life.

#### General Questions Addressed Were:

- (1) The appropriate definition of Aboriginal cultural tourism? Field research shows a broad interpretation in the range of ventures using the term to describe their enterprise. This includes commercial tourism ventures run by Aboriginal families, community enterprises, even businesses with Aboriginal staff or content, but non-Aboriginal management. A purist might also want to question what is meant by cultural; would this term include commercial products for example, or only specific items or experiences?
- (2) What are the identifiable objectives of cultural tourism for Aborigines and are these shared by government agencies funding the enterprise? These questions highlight issues of enterprise control and management and asks who holds the effective power in final decision making.
- (3) Is cultural tourism likely to achieve economic equity for all Aboriginal participants? (compare for example, Aboriginal tourism as an industry in Central Australia with its potential in Victorian tourism). Is it realistic to expect cultural tourism to provide sustainable economic growth? Are other benefits of cultural tourism, such as cultural revival or better race relations, important priorities in cultural tourism when ventures are sponsored by public funds?
- (4) The issue of cultural authenticity and integrity, referred to in the Review of the Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Industry (1989) as the 'commerce vs. culture' dichotomy in product development is emerging as a general concern in Aboriginal tourism. Aboriginal enterprises on the east coast of Australia have struggled with the dilemma for some time. Yet the problem is now surfacing in areas of the Northern Territory where Aboriginal 'kitsch' is creeping into Aboriginal artefacts produced for commercial

tourism (Altman pers. comm). 'Kitsch tourism', in contexts where Aboriginal culture still has social and political immediacy illustrates one of a number of difficulties with managing cultural impacts in tourism. The issue of impact management has a long history in the eastern Australian states, yet a satisfactory resolution has still to be achieved.

## *Summary of Chapters*

*Chapter 2:* In this chapter the attitudinal success of an enterprise in cultural tourism is evaluated in terms of Aboriginal interests. For the Aboriginal participants the economic success of a venture may not be as crucial to the enterprise as it is for their government sponsors. On the other hand, Aboriginal people realised that tourism was an opportunity for enterprise development and economic independence; but satisfying the different obligations of the parties involved is a major challenge.

*Chapter 3:* In all the ventures surveyed Aboriginal culture was portrayed through an emphasis on traditional aspects of Aboriginal lifestyle and culture. The only differences were those of emphasis. Some enterprises, however, realise the importance of experiential tourism and are moving away from the passive, didactic presentations to appreciation through active involvement with Aboriginal people.

*Chapter 4:* International visitors are interested and curious about Australian Aboriginal people. However, the attitudinal survey showed that there is segmentation of interest level by education, age and nationality within the group. International tourists show a preference for combining shopping with indirect involvement with Aborigines. Only a minority wanted direct contact with another culture.

*Chapter 5:* Aboriginal people expressed a wide range of attitudes to their participation in cultural tourism and often failed to differentiate between economic aspirations and expectations and the social impact of tourism on their day-to-day lives.

*Chapter 6:* Many people involved with Aboriginal cultural tourism were unhappy with the available employment training schemes because course objectives and learning processes were usually unrelated to concrete situations of enterprise development. Training bodies like the CES and DEET felt courses lacked appropriate evaluation and

post-course counselling. A number of organisations commented on the low expectations ('service level entry') built into induction courses for Aboriginal employment in tourism.

*Chapter 7:* Major policy issues in Aboriginal cultural tourism are the need for consultation and the power relations of the potential enterprise. Consultation is needed in the formulation of tourism strategies with Aboriginal communities to empower them with sufficient knowledge to make sound, realistic discussions about tourism as a form of economic development, and with regard to social and cultural impacts. Within the structure of an enterprise the power relationship between the funding bodies and the recipients raises the question of whether the venture is an opportunity for economic development or another form of economic and political paternalism? Finally, in some situations I reviewed, the enthusiasm of tourism for Aboriginal ventures by the tourism industry threatens to overwhelm some Aboriginal communities and marginalise them from involvement in commercial projects which directly impinge on their country, cultural proclivities and autonomy.

### ***Literature Review: Aboriginal Involvement in Tourism.***

There is a substantial body of literature available on the social and economic impact of tourism on particular Aboriginal contexts in remote areas; notably in areas of the Northern Territory and in Western Australia. This literature review is not comprehensive as bibliographies are available which treat Aboriginal cultural tourism in detail (see White 1987; Johnson 1990). What the present review provides is a brief summary of some of the main issues identified by the Australian research on the socio-cultural impact of tourism in Aboriginal communities. Much of the Australian research addresses specific points of concerns such as joint land management arrangements in Aboriginal owned national parks; or socio-economic issues within regional studies such as those presented in the East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project (see Coombs et al. 1989).

Studies examining Aboriginal economic involvement in tourism in the Northern Territory focus on the qualitative impact of tourism for Aboriginal people living on Aboriginal owned land and critically assess how tourism might provide a renewable economic base without compromising cultural sensitivities (see Altman 1989). Of fundamental interest in these studies is the degree of self determination Aboriginal people have over their own socio-cultural environment in the face of pressures from

tourism to compromise indigenous cultural perspectives. Critical assessment of the success of Aboriginal joint management programs are well documented for the Commonwealth Parks of Uluru and Kakadu. Both parks are owned by Aboriginal communities, but a condition of ownership was administration of the park by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service following the lease-back agreements. The popularity of the parks with domestic and international tourists has necessitated a sophisticated infrastructure to service tourists' needs, including cultural interpretation of each park's heritage. Interpretation has also become a protective measure and an educative strategy in the management of the park's physical infrastructure (see Gale and Jacobs 1987).

Management of social relations between Aboriginal communities and members of the wider society in tourism is mentioned in research studies. In most communities a range of options exist for management of tourism: some communities engage in commercial ventures through indirect contact with the tourist market in art and craft production and marketing; while others are happy to have direct contact in bush walks, camping ventures, and so on. Unfortunately, the expectation that tourism will generate desired economic and social benefits for all Aboriginal communities in all contexts is misplaced, and in some communities welfare may remain the primary source of cash income. This has been pointed out in several contexts, most recently in the Review of the Review of the Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Industry (Altman 1989b).

- Studies of the impact of tourism on Aboriginal communities co-resident with tourism enterprises stress the importance of Aboriginal control; even the need for Aboriginal involvement in tourism in order to manage its proliferation on terms which empower the resident owners. At Mutitjulu community at Ayers Rock for example, the community deliberately chose not to be involved with further economic schemes centred on tourism (see Altman 1989a). Instead, by prioritising their economic and social needs, the majority of the Mutitjulu people at Ayers Rock emphasised the importance on their domestic and social privacy and the mediation of intrusive social interaction from tourists. In a different approach to the issue of management and control of the milieu of tourism, the Gagudju Association purchased the Cooina Hotel in Kakadu National Park partially to regulate access to alcohol amongst members of their community. The hotel also provided the community with investment in the tourism infrastructure. The project failed to ameliorate Aboriginal demand for alcohol, nor did it temper the demand for facilities by tourists (see Altman 1988; Brady 1985; Palmer 1985; Central Land Council et al 1987).

In general the published literature on Aboriginal participation in tourism has been confined to tourism in remote or exotic areas. This report presents a different, at present less documented context in Aboriginal tourism in rural and urban eastern Australia. Cultural tourism in these regions in 1990 is innovative and experimental, partly because the problems communities face here differ from those found in remote locales. Significant differences between the two geographical contexts of remote and eastern Australia are grounded in the historical processes which have shaped Aboriginal culture and lived experience. Nevertheless, tourism deliberately promotes Aboriginal culture using images of Aboriginality which ignore regional, cultural and historical differences. Instead promotional images favour the ideal of homogenous Aboriginal cultural and environmental contexts (see chapter 3). Field research suggests such homogeneity is a fabrication. Similarly, identifying a general formula or single panacea for Aboriginal success in tourism is almost impossible. Regional diversity and historical differences amongst Aboriginal communities and their economies are important factors in developing and identifying workable strategies for successful enterprises and must be given consideration (see also Snowdon 1989).

Field research reported here indicates that there may be little commonality behind what the tourist industry sees as appropriate and what aspirations are held by Aborigines. Nor do tourists and Aborigines share mutual understandings of tourist activities. Aboriginal people at Uluru for example, were baffled as to why tourists would want to climb the rock and saw tourist infrastructures as necessary to tourists' safety (see CLC et al 1987). Similarly, while tourists are curious about Aboriginal life styles, Aboriginal interest in non-Aborigines is often a peripheral concern (see Brady 1985).

The Miller Report (1985) on Aboriginal Employment and Training alerted the Federal Government to cultural tourism as an untapped source of employment opportunities for Aborigines and as one industry for future employment growth. The Kennedy Report (1987) supported Aboriginal involvement in tourism by suggesting the development of a National Tourism Policy to facilitate Aboriginal participation in culturally appropriate ways. Both reports argue that cultural tourism would encourage improved race relations. However, the Miller Report and the Blanchard Homelands Report (1987) emphasise Aboriginal arts and crafts as a priority industry above other tourism ventures. Some researchers now question the hopes channelled into arts and crafts as the best single option for Aboriginal tourism (see Altman 1989b; Altman and Taylor 1989c).

The public's knowledge of Aboriginal tourism identifies in the main with developments in remote Australia. Yet cultural centres or keeping places have been established in the eastern Australian states over the past 15 years. Aboriginal cultural centres were especially popular amongst rural shire councils keen to attract a tourist industry in the 1970s. The centres and keeping places articulate the philosophy of the conventional museum, operating as a repository of material culture and cultural heritage. No doubt these models seemed appropriate expressions of Aboriginality for communities in Tasmania, Victorian and New South Wales, on the grounds that traditional Aboriginal culture is no longer believed extant. Keeping places served as memorials to the past enshrining a traditional 'golden age' in their cultural displays and historical interpretations. Yet nostalgia for the past ignores contemporary expressions of Aboriginal culture. It emphasises a cultural hiatus between the Aboriginal past and present. Unfortunately, cultural tourism in the eastern States has yet to resolve the dilemmas of tourism and cultural integrity and to accommodate social change in their attitudes to Aboriginal tourism.

Finally, this report illustrates the diverse responses to development and marketing of Aboriginal culture now current in tourism in eastern Australia. The only Commonwealth agency I could identify as actively seeking to develop a concerted approach to Aboriginal participation and cultural management in environmental tourism is the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. They are developing a model of joint management in national parks and have instigated training programs for community-based Aboriginal rangers. ANPWS tries to work with communities to identify suitable personnel (for example someone within the local community who is culturally knowledgeable and accepted as such). ANPWS advocate the importance of active Aboriginal involvement in land management. In addition, the agency has a contract system whereby government departments in various states can acquire funds for a project facilitator to assist with specific project development. The Brambuk Living Culture Centre in the Grampians, Victoria, is a good example of the contract program and how it is intended to operate; the facilitator brought together representatives of the five regional Aboriginal cooperatives and worked with them to develop a management plan and direction which reflecting the communities' aspirations and expectations.

However, it should also be pointed out that the ANPWS' interest in Aboriginal involvement is largely directed to land management and environmental conservation rather than specifically with cultural tourism; although it is certainly appropriate to interpret culture as man-land relationships. Unfortunately, all ANPWS programs

which I am aware of are adapted for remote areas. Thus ANPWS initiatives still place Aboriginal communities and individual rangers within the ambit of traditional symbols of Aboriginality emphasising the remote, the land, and cultural strategies based on economic management of land. Aboriginal involvement with national parks in urban centres is still experimental; although some of the Victorian Government's metropolitan parks feature Aboriginal history in their interpretative literature. This is a State Government initiative.

Another group striving to articulate a cohesive vision of Aboriginal involvement in land related issues is the Victorian State Government's Division of Aboriginal Lands within the Department of Conservation, Forestry and Lands. Part of their purpose is a political desire for Aboriginal economic equity with non-Aborigines, through furthering Aboriginal participation in the development of viable economic initiatives for their communities. In Victoria, Aboriginal people speak of tourism as an escape from 'government hand-outs'. The meaning of this may not be as obvious as it seems. Aboriginal communities often want funds for cultural projects which are unlikely to have any viable commercial basis, but realise the importance to government bureaucrats of speaking in the appropriate language. Aboriginal experience with tourism in the Northern Territory suggests that the outcomes are not always beneficial and for some communities there is in fact a preference for welfare as community income support, because regular employment inhibits and compromises Aboriginal freedom to participate in their own cultural concerns.

## CHAPTER 2. THE ECONOMIC AND ATTITUDINAL SUCCESS OF ABORIGINAL TOURISM VENTURES

### *Issues in the Economic and Attitudinal Success of Aboriginal Tourism Ventures*

1. Discussion in this chapter focuses on issues of equity: first, for whom are the tourism enterprises designed to be an economic success; and second, how is success best defined in terms of economic or social development, or is it possible to successfully combine both? What happens in community projects when only one sector of the Aboriginal community directly benefits from an economic success, or when one member of a family or kin group becomes involved in private enterprise and is unwilling to distribute the profits with other members of the family? Does the communal model of enterprise development actually equate with Aboriginal notions of social relations and resource management?
2. Aboriginal enterprises have to accommodate a bureaucratic and popularly held ideal of a homogenous Aboriginal community, and secondly, the role of the Aboriginal family as an influential interest group. Government encourages Aboriginal enterprises to operate according to definitions of communal interests. The Aboriginal community is assumed to be a collective with communally shared aspirations and objectives for development. Yet in practice the role of the Aboriginal family, or the clan group, always represents a strong partisan and politically based interest group in community affairs. In some Aboriginal communities indigenous land tenure aligns with social groups. Hence in areas like the Northern Territory, Aboriginal interests in tourism operate under the umbrella of the wider social group, rather than by separate social units. Similarly, Aboriginal-owned cattle stations are enterprises which have corporate title to land. However, the model of corporate ownership is not necessarily compatible with encouragement of individual business enterprises in eastern Australian Aboriginal communities nor under the AEDP initiatives. Surprisingly, many AEDP projects sponsored by the Federal Government continue to stress community-based enterprise development.
3. For many Aborigines economic success is not necessarily measured financially. Success may be evaluated by changes which improve the socio-economic quality of life for the

whole community, with better service delivery or in the articulation and realisation of wider aspirations.<sup>12</sup> It may be that Government stress on economic success as a fundamental objective in the evaluation of a program needs adjustment to deal with social factors. Indeed too often Aboriginal tourism projects are assessed according to notions of success familiar to administrators; namely, commercial success. Yet the relationship between economic success and project success is not always clear to the Aboriginal participants. Administrators set objectives according to a bureaucratic culture and language which frequently has no correlatives in financial management procedures within the Aboriginal community. Consequently, many Aboriginal communities lack the experience and expertise of business to fulfill the administrative expectations of a funding organisation. They face the additional handicap of lack of knowledge and resources to compete successfully in the tourism market place. Problems are compounded when enterprises receive no support from governments beyond the establishment funding; yet even establishment funding often begs the question of how funding needs within the Aboriginal portfolio were prioritised?

4. In Victoria, Aboriginal attitudes to tourism enterprises were spoken of as opportunities for Aboriginal self-determination and as alternative options for community development outside the welfare system. Many Aboriginal people saw tourism as their alternative to welfare dependency without recognising the irony of their claim.

## *The Case Studies*

### **Lake Condah: Victoria**

#### *Background*

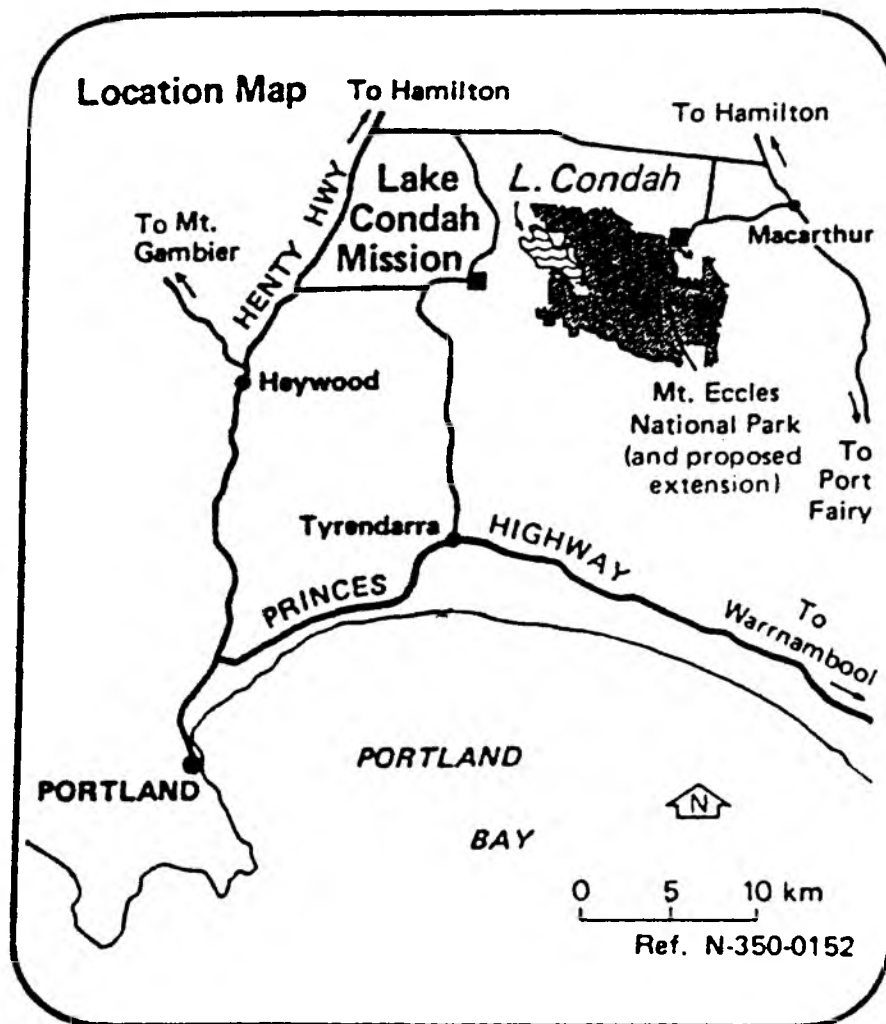
Lake Condah in the Western District of Victoria is a former Church of England mission. It was established in 1867 and laid out in a style much favoured in the 19th century (see Lake Condah Aboriginal History leaflet, 1988). Today only the foundations of the mission buildings remain, although there has been an ill-advised attempt to reconstruct a dormitory. The most prosperous years of the mission were those of the late 1880s. But changes to the Victorian Aboriginal Protection Acts created a legal separation between 'part-Aborigines' and 'full-blood Aborigines' amongst mission residents. A gradual

---

12. It should be noted that a concept of community as a group of like minded people is not a realistic view of the Aboriginal community; nevertheless, it re-appears as a constant in government dealings with Aboriginal enterprise and community management issues.

economic and social decline began from that point. By 1919 the mission was officially closed. However, some families continued to live on the mission until the late 1950s when the remaining mission land was sold to local farmers and those buildings still standing either removed or destroyed. Adjacent to the mission land are the Lake Condah stone fish traps. These are significant archaeological features in Victoria's Aboriginal history (see Coutts, Frank, and Hughes 1978).

### *Location Map—Lake Condah*



Map by courtesy of the National Parks Service

In 1985 part of the former mission land was again resumed by the State Government under Commonwealth legislation.<sup>13</sup> Inalienable freehold title over this land was vested in an incorporated body, the Kerrup-Jmara Elders Corporation, and title given as compensation in a dispute over land between the Kerrup-Jmara people and the Alcoa Oil refinery. The dispute centred on a proposed industrial development in the beach dunes close to Portland. The dunes were well-documented as sites rich in Aboriginal artefacts. The terms of the final settlement required Alcoa to contribute \$50,000 per annum to the Elders Corporation for the upkeep of the mission property and with financial help and advice from the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands (CFL), Victoria Archaeological Survey (VAS) and the Aboriginal Affairs branch of the Ministry for Planning and Environment, the newly-acquired property was set up as an Aboriginal initiative in tourism.

Unfortunately, the enterprise was not a success. In part this was due to factional fights between the Kerrup-Jmaras, some of whom live in Melbourne, while others reside locally in Heywood and Portland. Interest in Lake Condah property varied. The Melbourne-based Kerrups controlled the financial management of the enterprise, although eventually it became public knowledge that mismanagement and embezzlement were involved. The sorry story of failure was brought to the notice of the Federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs in an effort by one faction to sort things out. The VTC stepped in with a plan to salvage and revive the original enterprise. They plan to lease the mission over the next two years and make it viable, at which point they will return the property and the now successful business to the Kerrup Corporation; at least this was their intention in March 1990.

### *Discussion*

1. Despite repeated requests to the administrator of the Koorie Tourism Unit of the VTC, no formal statements or information about the development plan of the Lake Condah project were made available to this researcher. It is quite possible that the project direction is not yet formalised and is likely to proceed in response to State political and financial contingencies. Indeed staff from the finance section of the VTC, who were advising Aboriginal employees at Lake Condah in March 1990, were equally uncertain about the project's future direction. Thus, there are no public statements of the project's expected success in commercial or social terms available for comment. This

---

13. These powers were available to the Commonwealth through the 1967 Referendum granting the right of Federal intervention in State Aboriginal affairs.

makes it difficult to comment in detail on the enterprise. However some issues in the project deserve mention.

2. A driving force behind the development of the Lake Condah project has been the direct intervention of the Victorian Minister of Tourism, Mr. Steve Crabb. In company with the Minister, the newly-appointed Aboriginal ranger for Lake Condah visited Aboriginal tourism ventures at Rockhampton and Woorabinda in Queensland, Ernabella in South Australia and Kakadu in the Northern Territory.

For the Aboriginal ranger at Lake Condah, the project is an opportunity to create positive attitudinal changes in the wider society. He sees the project as a chance to reverse the conventional historical stereotypes about Aborigines and Aboriginal culture in an educational setting conducive to racial understanding. In these terms the project has symbolic benefits for the local Aboriginal community. Nevertheless the ranger was aware of the lack of direct economic benefits in the project for the Kerrup-Jmara community in Heywood and Portland and the continuing desperate need for better material circumstances in these communities. He was uncertain as to how the present lease arrangements would practically benefit Kerrup-Jmara people.

3. Another member of the local Kerrup-Jmara community saw Lake Condah as a symbol of 'self-determination' for Aboriginal people.<sup>14</sup> A tourist venture seemed to him one way for Aboriginal people to 'own their own business'. Yet he also felt the project had symbolic importance because Aborigines owned the land and might control the project. For him, the role of Aboriginal ownership and control was primary; any economic significance the venture had as an independent economic proposition was secondary.

4. The lease arrangements on Lake Condah are as follows: (Surprisingly, the Koorie tourism staff seemed unaware of many of the terms.) Aboriginal trainee staff will be chosen by a selection panel of three, including one Kerrup-Jmara. However, the selection panel can proceed without the Kerrup-Jmara representative, as long as two of the three panel members are present. Some staff positions at Lake Condah are designated for Aboriginal employees, but this does not automatically mean Kerrup-Jmaras. The lease specifies an annual rental payment to the Elders Corporation, with deductions for maintenance costs likely to leave little cash in hand. A condition of the lease is that the Elders Corporation has no involvement with the property or the

---

14. He had previously been involved with the earlier tourism venture.

tourism enterprise and all decisions about the enterprise are solely the prerogative of the VTC acting through the Koorie Unit. Aboriginal involvement is confined to appointed Aboriginal employees. Kerrup-Jmaras involvement is minimal. Even visiting rights are limited; for example, no Kerrup-Jmara is able to visit Lake Condah without 48 hours notice in writing to the resident manager. Overnight stays by Kerrup-Jmaras will have to be booked and paid for in common with requirements for all visitors.

5. The enterprise depends on a massive financial investment to create an infrastructure which includes new roads to the mission and to the fish trap area, up-graded accommodation and extensions to the present amenities and kitchen facilities. The buildings on the property in March 1990 were neglected and vandalised to an extent where repair work was crucial.

The CFL is expected to provide a new road for bus and car access between the mission area and the fish traps, and to replace the existing wooden bridge, now used only by local farmers, with a new bridge capable of supporting the extra heavy traffic. There is an additional proposal to re-flood all Lake Condah fish traps for the benefit of the visiting public, although the feasibility of doing so is still under investigation.

6. The extensive financial investment in the Lake Condah project makes it difficult to believe that the Victorian Government will relinquish its interests in the project within two years. Their present interest in the project is the start of an important experiment in cultural tourism, with Lake Condah as a pilot scheme. Plans to coordinate CFL's interpretative data on the neighbouring Mt. Eccles National Park with Lake Condah, Framlingham and Discovery Bay will follow. These areas all have points of interest with regard to Aboriginal archaeology, history and traditional land management strategies, and the VTC will market them as thematic tours.

7. The Lake Condah project is not a Kerrup-Jmara community initiative. Aboriginal employees at Lake Condah will not be selected for their familial or traditional associations with the area. The Tourism Commission's priority is staffing Aboriginal tourism ventures in the immediate future. Hence they want to fast-track Aboriginal training in tourism and hospitality in order to staff the new ventures proposed for Western Victoria. None of their plans include a commitment to train Kerrup-Jmara for staff positions, which is puzzling given the VTC's promise to return the project to Kerrup-Jmara control.

8. The present tourism structure at Lake Condah and the apparent ignorance in the local Aboriginal community about the project's direction warrants explanation. What community access is there to information and what level of participation and contribution is possible for Aboriginal staff? It also throws into relief the notion of Aboriginal ownership of land as a basis for equality. It was neither clear to me nor to Lake Condah's Aboriginal ranger what his powers were or the extent of his administrative authority with regard to the enterprise. At the same time it was clear that project decision-making was unlikely to be either consensual or participatory. A local Kerrup-Jmara woman who stood to benefit from employment in the project, voiced her concerns that opposition to the project would surface once the district's Kerrup-Jmara people were aware of the restrictions they faced under the terms of the lease. Many of these people habitually fished and camped in the area and this was now impossible.

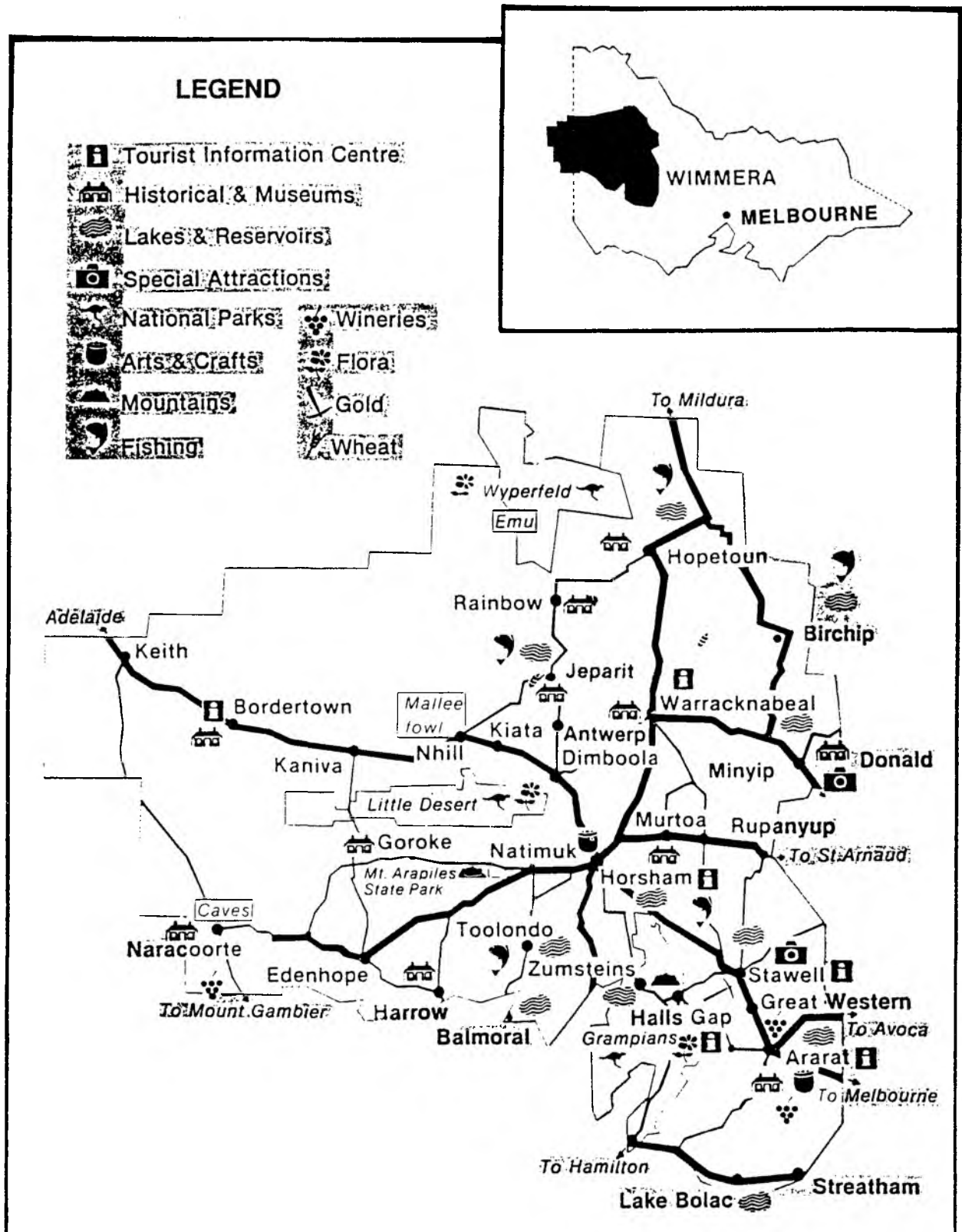
9. The VTC intends marketing Lake Condah as tourism with an emotional, educative content. Experiential tourism targets special interest groups, for example, students of history or archaeology who have an existing interest in the venture and its facilities and will have a ready appreciation of the site.

#### **Brambuk Living Culture Centre: Victoria**

##### *Background*

The Brambuk Centre is situated at Halls Gap in the Grampians, Western Victoria. The idea for such a centre has had a long gestation, although enthusiasm from the State Government has fluctuated. Five regional Aboriginal communities participate in the venture; Goolum-Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative, Horsham; Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative, Warnambool; Kerrup-Jmara Elders Corporation, Melbourne; Lake Condah Aboriginal Cooperative, Heywood; and Framlingham Aboriginal Trust. These communities were registered in 1987 as Brambuk Incorporated. Their involvement in the project is based on the historical associations of traditional tribal affiliations with the Grampians. In 1990 several Aboriginal communities were no longer active in the project, although the two Cooperatives who are active are the Framlingham Aboriginal Trust near Warnambool, and Goolum-Goolum Cooperative at Horsham.

## The Grampians Victoria



Funding for the project comes from several Victorian Government departments, such as CFL, MPE and the VTC. Over the last four years the ANPWS has provided funds through their consultancy program for a facilitator to assist the project and to work with the Aboriginal management team.

Brambuk is situated on ANPWS land adjacent to the CFL ranger and interpretation centre in Halls Gap. The location is ideal for tourism as the Grampians are an established and popular holiday resort, especially for domestic tourists who are the majority of visitors to the area. In 1989 an estimated 147,580 domestic tourists visited Halls Gap as visitors; Victorian tourists were predominantly from Melbourne (but Victorians from elsewhere in the State are also recorded); or South Australia.

Hopes are high for Brambuk's success. The Grampians has 103 documented Aboriginal sites and is regularly visited by holiday makers and special interest groups.<sup>15</sup> Peak visitor periods are Easter, the school holidays, and the wild flower season (September to December). In April 1990 the Centre expected to open to the public by September of the same year; this has now been amended to early December 1990.

Brambuk Inc. has financial interests in the Rocklyn Downs Motel directly opposite the Brambuk Centre. The Rocklyn Motel was originally purchased with funds from ADC (now ATSIC) and MPE to serve initially as accommodation for staff employed in the building stages of the centre. As a public facility, it will be refurbished to provide budget accommodation for back-packers or young overseas travellers (see Brambuk Strategic Plan, March 1989).

The objectives of Brambuk Inc. are public and are quoted in full below. They include both economic and attitudinal concerns. I quote them in the ranking order of primary and secondary status as Brambuk Incorporated published them.

Primary:

- (a) to create economic self-sufficiency and to bring forth pride in Aboriginal cultural heritage by the operation of viable tourism and cultural enterprises;

---

15. Gale and Jacobs 1987, quote 103 sites. The CFL office in Horsham puts the figure of Aboriginal sites at 80. In any case, vandalism has been a problem with rock art sites in the Grampians and many of the shelters are either closed to the public or caged as a protective measure.

- (b) to establish and maintain the Brambuk Cultural Centre as a place where, through displays, cultural activities, demonstrations, exhibitions and guided tours, the richness of Aboriginal culture, past and present, can be shared with Australian and overseas visitors;
- (c) to provide, through the Aboriginal communities of Victoria, a focus for Aboriginal cultural activities;
- (d) to assert the importance of conserving the natural environment and the Aboriginal heritage sites in the Grampians, including the flora and fauna, the rock art, scarred trees and stone quarries.

Secondary:

- (a) to provide a forum for contact and interaction between Aborigines and visitors to the Brambuk Cultural Centre;
- (b) to raise the level of understanding and appreciation within the general community of the aspirations, problems and issues facing Aborigines today;
- (c) to resource Aboriginal people in the promotion and sharing of their culture through programs and activities that they design and implement;
- (d) to contribute and promote an Aboriginal perspective of the cultural heritage associated with Western Victoria and the Grampians National Park (Brambuk Strategic Plan, 1989).

*Discussion*

1. Much of the discussion draws on information available in Brambuk's Strategic plan, although developments have not proceeded according to the plan. In 1989 it was anticipated that between 20-30 trained Aboriginal staff would run the enterprise by the time the Centre opened. With the same optimism the plan predicted that financial independence should be possible within five years of opening (see Brambuk Inc. Strategic Planning Conference, March 1989). However, it is now conceded by management that the Strategic Plan represents more of a 'wish list' than a reflection of reality. Nevertheless, I have chosen to work closely with this document in order to illustrate how the enterprise has constantly assessed and re-assessed their direction and purpose in the face of different challenges to the project. Such a practice is unusual in most of the Aboriginal tourism ventures I encountered during research. The Strategic Plan illustrates how important it is to maintain a critical attitude to a project and to feasibility studies conducted as exercises in projected enterprise success rates.

Furthermore the document contrasts with the paucity of publicly available information on development strategies for Lake Condah.<sup>16</sup>

2. In 1989, at the time of the Strategic Planning Conference, and during my field visit in March 1990, Brambuk had no administrative structure.

There is nothing in place except a management committee, and a small, independently funded cultural research unit. Brambuk Inc. has no paid staff and no working capital dedicated to the Living Culture Centre. There have not been any funding submissions to create an organisation structure, because there is no secretarial or professional staff to do so (Brambuk Inc. Strategic Planning Conference paper, March 1989).

Because of the lack of organisational and administrative structure, the role of the facilitator has been crucial to continued progress and development of the enterprise. Twelve months after the Strategic Planning Conference, the position of centre manager was finally advertised and applicants interviewed. The management team argued that the best qualified and experienced person for the job was the primary requisite. They did not want to elevate race above other criteria.

3. Aboriginal staff are employed on the project. Aboriginal workers were employed on the building site, and Brambuk has an Aboriginal display and design coordinator. Three other Aboriginal men are currently funded jointly by CFL and ANPWS to undertake research and ranger responsibilities. Funding and supervision of the building program is the responsibility of the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands. But funds for staff have come from CFL as well as ANPWS.

4. Brambuk Inc. has made every effort to deal with the economic realities of their enterprise in the planning strategies. While the venture is ambitious, it is expected to conform to sound commercial business practices. However, management's ideal is to strike a balance between economic and cultural priorities through self-management, and this is embodied in their hopes that within three years of opening Brambuk Inc. could be:

---

16. As I mentioned above, no official documents were available on Condah, and even staff closely associated with the project had few ideas about how the project was likely to be organised, staffed or managed.

turning over \$1/2 million per annum; running a tour company with international promotions; providing a regional leadership; acting as a springboard for other activities; becoming independent of government involvement (Brambuk Inc. Strategic Plan, March 1989).

However, whether this is possible remains to be seen. Although the 1989 Strategic Plan estimated that the centre required 30 staff, the associated wages bill in the first year, adopting a modest wage estimate of an annual salary of \$20,000 per person was thus in the vicinity of \$600,000 per annum. This is a significant sum to cover as one of a number of expenses in the first year of operation.<sup>17</sup>

5. To their credit, the Brambuk management committee is aware of the economic problems they are likely to face, especially as tourism operates within a seasonal and unstable market. The enterprise has commercial loans to re-pay which might curtail wishful thinking, depending, of course, on who pays.

Careful consideration was given by management to questions such as whether a high participation rate by Aboriginal staff was both a social and commercially viable reasonable priority, or whether financial goals were more important. The Strategic Plan recognised that attitudinal differences were likely in the objectives of the project; 'a conflict between community aims and monetary values may arise as the venture becomes commercially viable'. In other words, it was a question of deciding how to correlate commercial interests with socio-cultural priorities. The difficulties of doing so were exposed in the 'mismatch between current community social structures and business structures required for success, and conflicts between the community's aspirations and government agency's aims over things like ownership, treaty and legislative arrangements' (Brambuk Inc. Strategic Plan March 1989).] Solutions were not so easily identified.

6. In 1989 Brambuk tackled the problem of commitment by the State Government to continued funding of the project. Management has had no clear indications from government about funding termination of the enterprise, but securing continued funding is one of a number of problems in project development. The lack of secure funding is part of an administrative 'Catch 22':

---

17. However, other cultural ventures like the Dreamtime Gallery in Rockhampton, Queensland, are funded at close to \$850,000 per annum as on-going costs without any apparent consideration of the economic and social costs of this level of funding in terms of other Aboriginal needs in the region.

Brambuk will not receive funding until it has demonstrated professional management and competent business planning. Brambuk cannot provide professional management and competent business planning until it receives adequate funding (Brambuk Inc. Strategy Plan, March 1989).

The involvement of different funding bureaucracies with Brambuk's capital development compounds the problems of uncoordinated funding. No department was really willing to take responsibility for funding an administrative structure nor for long-term planning of the financial assistance available to Brambuk. This made the situation impossible for Brambuk. Until Brambuk has its own administration, they have to rely on various government departments to deal with this aspect of the project as the separate departments see fit. Further complications have developed with changes in areas of responsibility by departments who initially monitored and supported the project. There is little Federal Government funding of Brambuk.

7. The Strategic Plan outlines Brambuk's hopes for product marketing and the general commercial viability of the enterprise.<sup>18</sup> Frank consideration of their obligations as financial dependants of government and to the political climate in which the project is developing are aired for public discussion. However, the management team has not always resolved these issues. What they have recognised is that resolution requires sensitivity to the wider issues likely to influence a project and its chances of success. These broader issues concern cultural tourism within the immediate region and community and within state tourism.

#### **Warrama Living History Centre Pty. Ltd: Cairns.**

##### *Background*

As with Lake Condah, little written material is available for public consultation on the Warrama Centre. The idea for such a centre was first aired publicly in 1984 by a number of Aboriginal leaders in the Cairns area, including Mr. Mick Miller whose ideas have had a formative influence on the project. Funding was successfully sought from ADC and DAA. Warrama, as a cultural enterprise, borrows heavily in its concept and inspiration from the Polynesian Village in Hawaii.

A recent publication sets out the concept of the Warrama centre.

The word Warrama means a meeting place or gathering place. Our Living History Centre is being developed as a major cultural and economic base for North Queensland

---

18. By July 1990, Brambuk engaged Peat Marwick Consultants to develop an economic marketing and management strategy plan for the centre.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Board of Directors are representative of communities from Murray Upper to the Torres Strait Islands and west to Mornington Island. It is their aim to achieve the following:

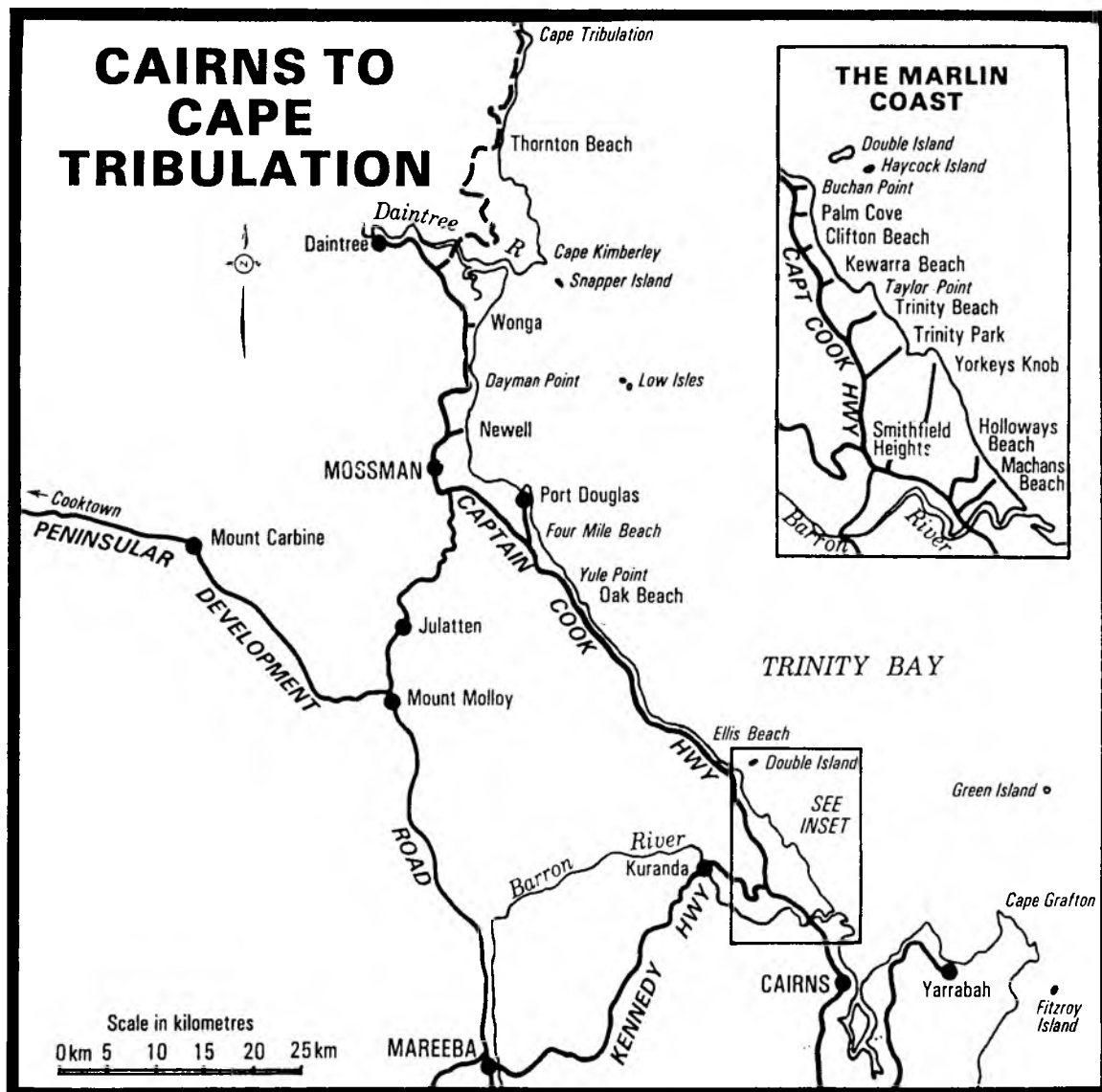
- become one of the major employers and trainers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the areas;
- create cottage industries in the represented communities;
- become a major venue for the presentation and preservation of living cultural activities;
- become a resource to contribute to the cultural revival and survival of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- invest net profits from the project into other commercial ventures for the benefit of North Queensland communities;
- and provide encouragement and an income to artists, craftspeople and performers from throughout the north.

The establishment of Warrama as a major tourist destination is vital to the fulfillment of these aims.

The publicity also describes Warrama's attitude to cultural tourism. Staff at the Centre were adamant that the Centre should not be misconstrued as a 'theme' park; indeed they were insistent that the integrity of indigenous culture not be compromised in the concept, displays and exhibits.

As a tourist destination we aim to entertain, involve and inform our visitors. Warrama places prime importance on a quality experience based on cultural authenticity. The centre will provide a show-case for the cultural heritage of the indigenous people of our area. Warrama Living History Centre will provide both Australian and overseas visitors to our region with an exciting and unique cultural experience (Warrama Living History Centre brochure, 1990).

## *The Cairns Region*



In May-June 1990 when I visited the Cairns region, the centre was facing the immediate problem of preparation for an official opening in August 1990, to be known as the Inaugural Warrama Festival. A cultural festival is planned for the opening by way of introducing what it is hoped will become an annual event at the Centre. Invitations have been sent to indigenous performers in New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Hawaii, and a variety of dance and musical performances are planned. The festival will offer traditional performances as well as contemporary rock, and country and western music. However, in June few of the facilities or buildings necessary for the opening were completed.

Once the Centre is open, Warrama plans to offer the visiting public various facilities, including craft displays, a bistro, exhibitions of traditional dancing, a retail outlet, bush food walk, and canoe rides on the artificial lake. As the enterprise develops, other activities and resources will be opened accordingly.

#### *Discussion*

1. Warrama Living History Centre is built on land whose title is held by ATSIC (formerly ADC). The project is designed to promote Aboriginal self-management and economic self-sufficiency; indeed, many of these ideals for the Centre were directly influenced by the Miller Report (1985) and the emphasis in the document on opportunities for Aboriginal community and economic development in tourism. The Centre expects to employ 55 staff from opening day. Further employment opportunities for Aboriginal people are tied up with ancillary enterprises such as manufacturing retail goods for the Warrama shop or producing food for the restaurant.

2. The Centre has had massive financial assistance in public monies through government agencies promoting Aboriginal development. Excluding consultancies commissioned and paid for by the then ADC, money so far injected into the project has totalled between \$3-3.5 million, and perhaps even as high as \$5 million.<sup>19</sup> The Centre has also borrowed heavily from the Commonwealth Development Bank with loans of more than \$1 million redeemable within three years of the Centre opening. However, the project's completion is subject to further grants from ATSIC. Capital costs seem to have soaked up most of the grants.

---

19. Pers. Comm Mr. Jeff Richardson, ATSIC Cairns.

Wage costs are likely to be off-set by subsidies under DEET training schemes. The twelve members of the Warrama Board of Directors receive no wages, although they do receive sitting fees. Some changes in Board membership have occurred through the period of the project, but in the main, people who sit on the Board represent specific government funding bodies. The claim that the composition of the Board represents local Aboriginal communities does not stand up under close scrutiny.

3. Aboriginal staff and bureaucrats involved with Warrama claim the facilities provided by the Centre are unlikely to compete with similar, or existing Aboriginal facilities already operating in the region. Yet it is obvious that overlap will occur. A rainforest bush foods tour, for example, is already established in the Mossman Gorge National Park and run by local Aboriginal people from the Gorge community. Similarly, while Warrama plans to stage traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait dances for tourists, two successful dance troupes already offer such a facility. Both dance groups are centred at Kuranda and are well-known in the tourist industry. Despite such obvious duplication, Warrama intends developing their own dance theatre using Aboriginal people from the Cairns area. Which groups of Aboriginal people in Cairns would participate and how their particular contribution would be culturally authentic, as opposed to the dance performances that offered by existing dance enterprises, was not explained. Despite the confidence of government funding agencies supporting Warrama, and the economic projections for Warrama's success, there is very little physical infrastructure to show for the substantial capital investment in the centre.

4. One area of difficulty which constantly impedes progress is management and staff relations. By the time I visited Warrama several General Managers of the Centre had come and gone. Warrama's management problems are of interest for the light they throw on Aboriginal attitudes to self-management and enterprise development.

5. The current manager is non-Aboriginal. He brought to the position a successful record in project development in different commercial contexts.<sup>20</sup> However, he constantly faced the dilemma of whether Warrama's Board expected to operate the venture as a commercial enterprise or as a community welfare project. The lack of clarity on this

---

20. The project development manager at Warrama in May 1990 had 13 years' experience in project development, marketing and managerial duties in both the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

point is interesting. The original objective for developing such a centre was to create an alternative to government welfare schemes and the social and financial dependency engendered by these structures. In the words of one administrator, Warrama was a 'Black project and another avenue for funds to communities apart from government [welfare]'.<sup>21</sup> Once again the irony of this perception deserves comment. I think it reflects a notion widely held by many Aboriginal people that money from the government is 'owed' as compensation, whereas private investment in Aboriginal enterprises continues a history of commercial gain and exploitation at Aboriginal expense. There was no objective evidence during the survey for this report that government financial aid to Aboriginal enterprises is devoid of an agenda involving control and management over communities and individuals.

6. The project manager felt the Warrama Board was itself undecided about whether the Centre should act as a community welfare project or as a commercial enterprise. Their ambivalence was evident to him in their attitude to decisions about after-hours use of equipment; employment policies; delegation of responsibility and authoritative decision-making within the project. From his point of view the manager's position was increasingly untenable by the Board's vacillation on these points. Management tensions and difficulties were exacerbated by his being one of the few non-Aboriginal people working in the project. The 'handicap' of race was compounded by having neither allies nor kin on the staff or on the Board, as most of the Aboriginal staff did, and by not understanding much about the cultural parameters Aborigines operated by in the work place.

7. In fact, many of the frustrations experienced by the non-Aboriginal manager concerned the determination of power in staff-management relations; as much as they reflected disparities in experience of business culture and misunderstanding of the demands of an unfamiliar commercial environment. Inevitably, the manager felt the Board's commercial inexperience and subsequent inability to clearly define the purpose of the the project (i.e. the choice between a welfare scheme for the long-term unemployed, or as a viable business venture), made it increasingly difficult to realise the centre's commercial potential.

---

21. Of course this kind of distinction is not strictly accurate as government funding pays for both the establishment and on-going costs of the enterprise, without which the project would be impossible.

8. A specific management issue which caused problems for the centre's current manager was staff employment. In his opinion the selection of many of the Aboriginal staff was determined by family influence and represented what was effectively closed shop employment. Most staff employed in the building stages of Warrama were long-term unemployed with few trade skills to offer. This led to a situation where work often had to be re-done because of problems caused by shoddy or inept workmanship. Additionally, people with little continuous experience of employment took a casual attitude to their employment obligations and absence from the work place was a constant problem. A combination of these difficulties has slowed completion of the venture, its projected completion date, and its estimated income earning potential.

9. Few of the management issues will be easily resolved (see chapter 6 for further discussion). An outstanding difficulty is the hazy demarcation of authority in the day-to-day execution of the project. Who holds the power of decision-making in the project and what these powers consist of has not been clarified to any of the parties concerned. At the same time there is no clear or apparent separation of powers between the Board of Directors and the project manager, although the latter is expected to assume daily responsibility for the project.

10. For many of the Aboriginal family groups, and perhaps for some of the individuals involved, Warrama is a private resource where equipment and project materials can be borrowed and used without consideration for priorities set by the manager. Confronting this issue in order to resolve it was yet another of a number of management problems the manager felt increasingly unable to handle.

### **Tjapukai Dance Theatre: Kuranda**

#### *Background*

Tjapukai Dance Theatre is a privately-owned commercial venture based in Kuranda, about 26 kilometers from Cairns. Kuranda township is popular with tourists who come by tour coach or the scenic railway to shop at the Kuranda markets (Wednesday, Friday and Sunday) and more recently to visit the tropical butterfly farm and the nocturnal animal attraction. Kuranda is well known for the spectacular Barron Falls, bush walking, and boating on the Barron River.

Originally, Kuranda was as a service centre for the district's forestry workers and dairy farmers who settled the area after the Cairns-Mareeba railway was laid in 1895. Tourism was well established in Kuranda as early as the turn of the century.

Coastal people found Kuranda's cooler climate a welcome relief from the humid summers and today tourism is the town's principal and only industry.

Between 1914-1962 the Aboriginal community in Kuranda lived at Mona Mona, a Seventh Day Adventist mission in the scrub about 30 kilometers from the town. Some Aboriginal families received Exemptions from the mission and moved into Kuranda township in the mid-1940s; others followed them during the early 1950s. Despite dwindling numbers and serious economic problems the mission did not officially close until 1962, at which point all mission buildings were auctioned or re-located and the land resumed by the Queensland Government. The majority of the Mona Mona people continue to live in the district, either in Kuranda itself or in the rural villages close to the mission, such as Myola, Mantaka, Kowroah and Oakforest. In 1975, the Aboriginal community established Ngoonbi housing cooperative, and a small art and craft shop, Jilli Binna.<sup>22</sup>

Today Ngoonbi Cooperative administers a number of houses for rent by members of the Cooperative. Ngoonbi also manages a tropical fruit orchard on the edge of town. However, disinterest and mismanagement have left the orchard neglected and all the sheds on the property are leased to a non-Aboriginal commercial business. Ngoonbi employs a full-time Aboriginal administrator, and a full-time Aboriginal community worker or home-maker. Jilli Binna shop sells a range of tourist products (T-shirts, bark paintings, post cards, and so forth), as well as housing a small museum illustrating the history of the rainforest Aborigines, and their subsequent life on Mona Mona. Jilli Binna shop operates in competition with the Tjapukai gift shop. Although Jilli Binna sells its goods at lower prices, the range of items available is limited and the presentation poor.

#### *Discussion*

1. Tjapukai is a privately-run business with four active partners, three of whom are non-Aboriginal and one of whom is Aboriginal. The latter member is a well-known Queensland dancer. His family is from Kuranda and he has many close relatives in the Aboriginal community. The business is further supported by 'silent partners' who contribute capital to the enterprise but have no part in daily management. The European partners have divided their labour according to their own expertise; one

---

22. Jilli Binna also operated as a shop selling food and refreshments at one stage. Today it still sells Aboriginal art and craft but has a second function of operating as the local CES and Social Security office for Kuranda people.

specialises in theatre production and choreography, another handles the accounting, while a third partner deals with the marketing of the enterprise within both Australian and international tourism, and the fourth person assumes responsibility for the management and choreography of the dancers. A non-Aboriginal staff member manages the Tjapukai gift shop. The owner-managers of Tjapukai never considered applying to any government agencies for support. They felt the involvement of outside bodies would be intrusive and diminish their autonomy to operate and direct the project.

2. The theatre is housed in its own complex in the main street of Kuranda. The complex includes a souvenir shop selling books, clothing, Aboriginal memorabilia, and a modest restaurant where snacks and light meals are available. The theatre has a seating capacity of 270 people. Shows run twice a day, six days per week; although in the peak tourist season there are shows seven days per week. The tourism industry, and in particular bus tour companies increasingly pressure the management to offer shows seven days per week throughout the year.

3. Tjapukai has 14-15 Aboriginal male dancers in the troupe, of whom 13 are employed full-time. There is some suggestion that women be included in future productions, but this is subject to negotiation amongst the Aboriginal men. The 13 full-time dancers receive above-award rates, while staff employed as extras are paid casual wages. Extras who are keen and reliable are offered first option on a regular place with the troupe if a vacancy arises. Two Aboriginal men handle the stage lighting, and a third Aboriginal man acts as their support if necessary. The latter also performs additional jobs such as collecting theatre tickets, cleaning and sundry other jobs as needed. Tjapukai also employs Aboriginal women, two of whom work full-time in the theatre's booking office and in the souvenir shop.<sup>23</sup> There are no Aboriginal staff employed in the restaurant.

4. Wages for some of the Aboriginal staff are subsidised through DEET training funds. Although the dancers are paid above-award wages, on occasions the management assists individuals with help for personal financial difficulties. When dancers have

---

23. A part-time non-Aboriginal woman works in the front office at weekends.

taken out loans to purchase items such as new cars, wage deductions are arranged with a bank or building society.<sup>24</sup>

5. The exact details of Tjapukai's financial success were not publicly available. However, it is obvious the partners work hard to ensure the venture's success and the present international tour by the theatre is a measure of their public popularity and wide public support. In May 1990 a troupe of Tjapukai dancers left for a promotional tour to Europe and America on behalf of the Australian Tourism Commission as part of the Commission's recovery program for Australian tourism. Tjapukai was chosen because ATC felt a different aspect of Australian tourism was wanted in their overseas promotions; indeed, an angle which goes beyond the kind of tourism the Paul Hogan advertisements encouraged with their stress on Australia's sun and surf. In contrast, Tjapukai's message deliberately presents culture as an aspect of Australian tourism as yet unexplored by visitors.

6. The attitudinal success of Tjapukai theatre in Kuranda has been nothing short of remarkable for the Aboriginal community. The prospect of becoming a Tjapukai dancer is an esteemed vocation for many Aboriginal boys in the town, and a career choice to be respected. The dancers are men whose success is public; these men travel, they own their own transport, they earn a regular wage, and they have a prestigious social profile. What Tjapukai offers to male Aboriginal youth is an alternative to long-term unemployment, away from constant, demoralising encounters with the hotel and the police, and a forum for self-expression and development they enjoy and feel comfortable with. All this is a considerable achievement, especially in a town with an Aboriginal unemployment rate of ninety-eight percent. The advent of Tjapukai theatre has been a boon to the Aboriginal population in particular, but the wider local community has also benefited from the increased tourist trade.

### **Deeral Village: Babinda**

#### *Background*

Deeral Village is an Aboriginal-run commercially-orientated manufacturing enterprise at Babinda, about 60 kilometers south of Cairns. It is an extension of Deeral Aboriginal Housing Cooperative which, in turn, is an organisation associated with the Uniting

---

24. The practice of wage deductions is not unfamiliar in the Aboriginal community since the housing co-operative has used the same method to ensure payment of rent on Ngoonbi houses.

Church Fellowship at Deeral (some 10 kilometers from Babinda). The housing co-operative and the manufacturing business are structurally associated, although the two enterprises function independently of one another. The Uniting Church, through the Board of Directors, is involved in both ventures and many of the members of the fellowship are members of both projects.

#### *Discussion*

1. ATSIC (formerly ADC) funded the project with a grant to equip and develop Deeral workshop. Funding grants totalled between \$100,000–\$150,000. An administrator, accountable to a Board of Directors, now operates the workshop. Some ATSIC staff question the viability of the enterprise, despite its present annual turn-over of \$150,000–\$200,000. Unfortunately, Deeral's products compete in a market already saturated with similar Aboriginal souvenirs. In May 1990 when I interviewed the Deeral administrator, she acknowledged the economic obstacles confronting the enterprise. Not only was the venture suffering from competitors who were able to produce a similar product more cheaply, but the lack of consumer spending in Cairns associated with the slump in tourism after the 1989 pilots' strike had temporarily dampened the demand for Deeral's products.

2. The workshop currently supplies products to local souvenir shops and selected interstate outlets. Their main product line is in tourist artefacts, although on request, hand-crafted items are available such as the traditionally styled wooden Queensland rainforest shields, woven fish traps or bicornate baskets. All of these items were part of the traditional rainforest material culture. On the basis of a special order individual Aboriginal craftsmakers are sub-contracted to produce the items. Many of the Aboriginal people at Murray Upper do such specialised work.

3. Deeral employs six full-time and seven part-time Aboriginal employees. DEET provides a wage subsidy and ATSIC funds an Aboriginal Liaison officer's position.<sup>25</sup> Three to four Aboriginal people are employed on a piece-work arrangement to do the figurative painting on the boomerangs, animal figures, swords, clubs and didgeridoo. The jigsaw puzzles made by Deeral as part of their original repertoire of wooden artefacts are still produced by a woman working on piece-work rates. Full-time employees at Deeral consist of a book-keeper, a marketing and sales representative, a

---

25. Deeral's administrator did not elaborate as to which DEET scheme they received funding from, however, I suspect it was probably EEA wage subsidies over a 6 month period.

community worker, a foreman for the workshop and a machinist/woodworker. Although all Deeral staff are Aboriginal, many of the members of the Board of Directors are non-Aboriginal. Some of these people are retired businessmen and through their influence the Board often acts in an advisory capacity to the workshop.

4. The Deeral workshop started as an initiative to foster self-help and employment for local Aboriginal people as alternatives to the increasing unemployment associated with the collapse of the sugar industry. The latter had been the main source of local employment. A second objective of Deeral, but one not yet achieved in full was generation of sufficient income from the enterprise to support a resident Uniting Church minister. Apart from economic independence, attitudinal objectives for the Deeral enterprise was support services at that time unavailable to Aboriginal people outside Cairns. The present administrator explained that the ideals of the workshop are based on a preventative approach to solving social problems through self-sufficiency, and reversal of the emphasis on patching problems with short-term solutions. The workshop networks with other community organisations like World Vision in self-help programs. For example, World Vision has a shop in a nearby town where Aboriginal people from the Deeral workshop screen print or silk screen their graphics for T-shirts and T-towels. Like Deeral, World Vision also promotes community ventures with an emphasis on self-help and independence.

5. The first products made by Deeral were wooden toys. Unfortunately, these proved too expensive to produce given their limited demand. Eventually, Deeral found a ready market for Aboriginal artefacts and now the popularity of this line dominates production. Deeral attempts to maintain an exclusive market for their Aboriginal souvenirs by only supplying some retail outlets. Duty-free shops at the upper end of the consumer market buy many of their 'suitcase size' souvenirs. However, the policy of catering only to a selective market is not strictly adhered to as Deeral artefacts are also sold at week-end markets, including the Kuranda markets. Deeral is not in fact in a position to control product marketing. Their goods are sold wholesale, and retailers in turn, re-sell the objects to the public at a profit margin impossible for the workshop to control or emulate. The administrator realises the cream in profits is in the retail trade, but because of costs and shop rentals the Cooperative seems unable to take advantage of retailing options. Inconsistencies in marketing their products abound. Deeral has the potential to attract passing trade at the workshop since the main highway passes their door, but advertising of the workshop's location is minimal.

Deeral has tapped into the Aboriginal souvenir market for tourism promotion. Some of the five star hotels in Cairns order small 'toy' boomerangs from Deeral for use in marketing promotions overseas. But the principal demand for Deeral's work are the batches of wooden boomerangs they make. These items are the principal sources of income in the enterprise.

6. On the other hand, the workshop has the added advantage of facilities which could expand their present commercial interest in tourism. Adjacent to the workshop grounds is an open-air amphitheatre, and a creek where Aboriginal bush foods and medicinal plants are growing. Ideally, with the theatre, the bush walk, and the workshop, Deeral could offer tourists a packaged experience enhanced by the existing picnic facilities and amenities block, all set in twenty-one acres of lush rainforest. Yet the potential of the venue is barely recognised by staff. Perhaps the reluctance to market these facilities is part of a general uncertainty about dealing directly with the tourist industry. To offer an enterprise of interest to the tourism industry, Deeral would need to integrate their attractions and link up with an existing bus tour company. Further expansion of their tourism facilities, for example with dancers in the amphitheatre, is also limited by the shortage of suitable people as full-time performers; or Aboriginal people who can speak with knowledge and authority about preparation and use of the bush foods and medicines. Furthermore, a major problem Deeral faces in marketing the venue is that Babinda itself is not a tourist town nor does it offer any of the usual tourist attractions promoted in the region. Of course the latter should be an advantage rather than a disadvantage, but this is not a current perception in the wider tourist market.

7. Some of the Workshop's production costs are reduced by the discount Deeral gets for buying their paints in bulk from Queensland Aboriginal Creations (QAC) in Brisbane. QAC is a State Government organisation established to market Aboriginal art and craft from the State's DOGIT communities. QAC's brief is actually wider than this since they also operate as an informal community out-reach program to encourage art and craft production amongst Queensland Aboriginal communities and in institutions such as prisons and rehabilitation centres with Aboriginal residents.

8. The administrator outlined a number of major problems faced by the business. In her opinion the introduction of World Heritage legislation to Queensland rainforests has badly affected the availability of rainforest timber for use in the workshop. Another problem is quality control in production and this requires constant monitoring, especially when there are changes in staff.

## **Kuku-Yalanji Rainforest Walk: Mossman Gorge**

### *Background*

Mossman is a town 70 kilometers from Cairns with an economy reliant on the sugar cane industry and the employment this provides. However, with the boom in tourism in neighbouring Port Douglas and Cape Tribulation, and the slump in the sugar industry, tourism is emerging as a new industry.

The Aboriginal community at Mossman Gorge is classified as an urban reserve under Queensland legislation. The Gorge community is located 8 kilometers outside the town en route to the Mossman Gorge National Park, a favoured recreational spot with tourists and locals alike. The Gorge community is one of a number of Aboriginal communities still administered at some level by the State Government. The Australian Inland Mission has ties with the Gorge community and a resident pastor assists with community development projects.

### *Discussion*

1. The Kuku-Yalanji Cultural Centre at the Gorge was opened in 1987. The Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islanders Affairs assist with advice on accounting procedures, and in other difficult areas. The Department provided the capital for a shed and machinery for the project and the enterprise is a legally-registered company. All directors live in the Gorge community. The Aboriginal guides volunteer their time and work. They are not paid because of restrictions on extra income for those on unemployment benefits. However, if CDEP is introduced to the community, employment at the Gorge tourist venture will qualify as work.
2. DEET funds administrative training on the project. This is a training area of greatest need as few Aboriginal people involved have any knowledge of how to keep accounts, or act as a secretary. Efforts to train various directors in these skills have occurred from time to time, but constant change amongst the directors makes continuity of training difficult. A Liaison Officer from the Cultural Appreciation Branch of the DFSAIA assists with expert advice or skills when needed. She maintains close contact with participants in the venture through weekly visits.
3. The Kuku-Yalanji take groups of tourists on a half hour walk through the rainforest in the adjoining national park. This is followed by morning or afternoon tea of tea and damper. Under a small 'gunya'(shelter) of bark, staff boil the billy for tea, and in the hot ashes of the same fire, damper is baked in a camp oven. During the refreshment period, the Aboriginal guides play the didgeridoo and talk about the kind of hunting

weapons used in the rainforest, or simply answer questions raised by visitors. The format of the visit is low key and casual and has the great advantage of allowing people to interact with one another in the best of circumstances. Eight Aboriginal male guides rotate their work load. Another group of eight men and children perform dances for large tour parties. A number of women participate in serving refreshments. The principle of volunteer work is successful because there is a pool of people to draw on at any one time. Moreover, although the Aboriginal hosts are often shy and reserved in their social interaction with tourists, they cope very well, as tourists' responses confirm. Whatever private or cultural inhibitions Aboriginal people, or indeed the Europeans have in dealing with one another directly, is generally overcome by the relaxed atmosphere and the small numbers involved.

4. Apart from tourists who might wish to join such a tour as individuals, the Gorge enterprise is marketed as a tour option through Australian Pacific Bus tours and the Daintree River Train tour company respectively. The Kuku-Yalanji visit appears in the tour itineraries of both companies for day trips to the Pt. Douglas and Daintree districts. The success of the Gorge enterprise is that the project allows Aboriginal people to be themselves. To date they have not had to change dramatically in order to market themselves or their product. Of course, their ability to continue operating as they are depends on tourists continuing to perceive their 'product' as authentic. The present casualness of the enterprise may not always find an accepting market; some tourists are disturbed by Aboriginal dress styles and non-standard English and find both unpleasantly confronting. But for tourists who are not unsettled by such visible cultural differences the Gorge enterprise has much to offer as an experience in cultural tourism.

5. Tour operators often had an idiosyncratic perspective on the Gorge enterprise. The day tour manager of Australian Pacific Tours felt that every six months Gorge staff needed a 'shake up' in their organisational and business practices. Problems likely to interfere with business were factional fighting amongst Gorge members, particularly amongst those associated with the project; unreliability; and lack of consistent quality in product and presentation. Additional problems were factional difficulties between Aborigines at the Gorge community and those in Mossman township over control of the project. Problems such as the latter are left to the Liaison officer at DFSAIA to untangle.

6. Australian Pacific Bus Tours markets the Kuku-Yalanji tours on both their day tour and long distance itineraries. The Gorge staff receive \$8.00 per tourist. The possibility

of making greater profits from the venture, even that of a living wage, is not possible at this stage because of income restrictions under welfare. Any sales on items from the workshop such as boomerangs, T-shirts, baskets and so forth, they keep. However, the range of crafted items was limited and the quality uneven; I doubt there was much profit in sales. Artefacts not sold through the enterprise are sometimes sent to Brisbane to Queensland Aboriginal Creations.

7. Australian Pacific Tours are confident of the success and attraction of the Gorge enterprise and say they recognise its value in the tourist market. They commented that amongst international visitors, Americans especially enjoyed the experience and appreciated the opportunity to talk directly with Aboriginal people. The bus tour manager commented that she was sure the Gorge enterprise offered something special to tourists and when the enterprise was well organised tourists 'raved about it'. Aboriginal people at the Gorge point to their Visitors' Book as evidence of success.

8. The enterprise has stimulated a resurgence and revival of interest in Kuku-Yalanji traditional culture. Some of the older people are attempting to teach younger people how to weave baskets or make hunting weapons, and community dance groups have started. The local high school in Mossman holds an annual cultural day at the Gorge for Year 8 students and a close working relationship between the school and the Gorge community has developed through a common aim to present more of local Aboriginal history and cultural awareness in the curriculum. Gorge people visit schools in Pt. Douglas too. The enterprise has encouraged contact with Aboriginal and Islander students at the Cairns TAFE and led to on-site training courses in tour leadership and the practical details of tourism management. Queensland National Parks contributes to the environmental component of the walk with information about poisonous or prohibited plants in the vicinity.

9. However, despite glowing testimonials and general encouragement for the enterprise from mainstream tourist operators, some bus companies who previously sold Kuku-Yalanji tours criticise the enterprise as unreliable. Most critics, like Tropic Wings, one of the major tourist companies in the region, terminated their involvement.

10. Financial details of the Gorge enterprise were not available. However, the attitudinal aspect of the venture seems to be successful; potential paid employment; improved self-esteem, better racial understanding between the local community and Gorge residents; Aboriginal cultural revival; and a chance to participate in local

tourism. Literacy courses for children and adults is a further positive community outcome associated with the Gorge enterprise.

11. A gratifying benefit of the enterprise has been the opportunity and occasion for Aboriginal children in Mossman to take pride in their Aboriginal heritage. The cultural exchange program between the Gorge and the local schools has improved levels of community tolerance and helped Aboriginal children deal with the teasing and racial comments they previously encountered.

### **Jabiru Cabaret Restaurant: Cairns**

#### *Background*

Jabiru Cabaret Restaurant is not an Aboriginal-run tourist venture. However, it is a tourism enterprise which offers both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders opportunities to work as dancers. The clientele is estimated to consist of forty per cent who are locally resident and sixty per cent domestic and international tourists who come with organised tour groups, or as independent parties. Jabiru's management describes the enterprise as a cabaret restaurant, although it could equally be seen as a nightclub, or theatre restaurant. An evening at Jabiru combines a show, dinner, and a glimpse into Aboriginal and Islander culture through dance.<sup>26</sup> It is as much entertainment as it is educational. The venture is operated by a husband and wife team, neither of whom are Aboriginal or Islander. The husband handles the theatrical aspects of the show and general management of the venture, while his wife deals with promotions, costuming, promotional marketing and personnel. The business employs 28 people, including the 8 dancers. Jabiru has its own premises in the Cairns International Hotel shopping village.

#### *Discussion*

1. Jabiru receive no support funding from any government agencies although they have contacted the Australia Council and Aboriginal enterprise support schemes.<sup>27</sup> The management is unhappy about this and feel the rejections are discriminatory. Ironically, they claim refusals for funding are based on the enterprise not fitting into arbitrary categories such as being totally Aboriginal/Islander; while they are also dismissed because they are not a wholly European business. Management say there are no grants available to cross-cultural enterprises like theirs. Consequently, they have

---

26. Guests dine out to a floor show and late night dancing for \$44.00 per person.

27. On this point see chapter 5 and Jabiru's wage subsidies.

had to seek private funding for the venture and to date they estimate a \$1 million investment in the business.

2. Most of the Jabiru dancers are graduates of the Sydney-based Aboriginal and Islander Dance Theatre. All are competent performers of modern dance as well as versatile in traditional styles. A professional handicap for these dancers is lack of work options in classical ballet. Many of the dancers have a mixed cultural heritage and are often rejected by indigenous dance groups who see them as 'not Black enough'; while European dance companies are said to criticise them as 'not White enough'. Oddly, the dancers have not met with an enthusiastic reception for their work from other Aboriginal or Islanders in Cairns, some of whom call the Jabiru dancers 'up town Blacks' and accuse them of being exploited by their European managers.

3. Generally speaking the Jabiru Cabaret has made a positive contribution to confronting public stereotypes about Aboriginal and Islanders. The management has few, if any problems with racism at the cabaret and when an incident has occurred, they make it clear that racism is not tolerated in the restaurant. Many visitors have remarked that the show 'was not what we expected' and some of the locals have been astonished to find the dancers performing outside a traditional repertoire. At the end of every show guests can meet and talk directly with the dancers. Many people take the opportunity to do so.

4. Jabiru dancers are paid a wage \$100 above the Actors' Equity Award rates. Employment arrangements are casual and not usually bound by a formal contract. Instead a mutual agreement between the dancer and the management is sufficient. The entertainment industry is notorious for a high turn-over amongst performers and those who stay with a show for more than 6 months are considered reliable, steady employees. On average Jabiru dancers stay with the cabaret between 12 and 18 months. Jabiru artists do not give free public performances, apart from dancing at local schools during NAIDOC Week. However, money earned through 'outwork' performances is accepted as cash-in-hand and not subject to a commission by the management.

5. Initially many of the male dancers had difficulty renting accommodation in Cairns. Real estate agents took the attitude that Aboriginal tenants were high risks and resisted help with accommodation. The management took their own action on the accommodation problems by renting a flat in their own name and sub-letting to the performers. Now the cabaret is well known and established, artists no longer face this

kind of racism. The Jabiru management also received unsolicited advice from local business people about the poor employment record of Aboriginal employees who were described as 'always boozed' or 'going walkabout' or generally 'unreliable'. Such predictions have not proved true of Jabiru's employees.

6. Detailed financial records of the enterprise are not public. Access to such material is always a difficulty in research into private enterprises; unlike many Aboriginal businesses which are publicly scrutinised because supported by public funds.

## CHAPTER 3. THE PORTRAYAL OF ABORIGINAL CULTURE IN THE PROMOTION OF AUSTRALIAN TOURISM

### *General Issues in the Portrayal of Australian Culture*

1. How to promote Australian culture within the framework of a multicultural society is not yet clear amongst government policy makers nor is there consensual agreement for a working definition of 'Australian culture'. In some sections of DASETT's tourism portfolio, some staff speak of the 'Australian lifestyle' and 'Australian culture' in the same breath, without discriminating between the terms. It would, for instance, be of interest to know the characteristics of an 'Australian lifestyle' in a multi-cultural society.

2. The concept and definition of cultural tourism requires clarification in multi-cultural Australia. Some DASETT staff responded positively to the notion of Aboriginal culture contributing to the promotion of Australian tourism. However cultural tourism involves sensitivities which have been identified in tourism research overseas, and more recently, in Australia (see White, 1987). Despite available research, most administrators pay little attention to such information in the development and implementation of projects in cultural tourism. Decisions tend to be made for political reasons and end by neglecting the host communities which can be socially and economically marginalised to an even greater extent.

3. Unfortunately, DASETT's tourism marketing continues to promote Australian tourism as the 'beach and B-B-Q'. The contrast could not be more marked between DASETT staff sympathetic to cultural tourism and colleagues who define the issues of cultural tourism as merely differences in the definition of culture, not policy. The consequent lack of coordination in programs in cultural tourism is a serious obstacle to developing a concerted approach in policy and marketing.

## *Specific Issues in the Portrayal of Aboriginal Culture in Tourism*

1. Whether we think of Aboriginal communities divided by a geographical axis such as that between the north and south, or as an axis separating remote from settled areas, Aboriginal people in the eastern States are united by historical commonalities. Tourism for them is thus part of a resurgence in cultural identity and a re-discovery of many of the details of their traditional heritage. For Aborigines in Victoria, as in the Cairns region, the process of colonial settlement and conquest ruthlessly suppressed many forms of legitimate cultural expression. Hence, present interest by the wider community in Aboriginal place names, traditional land management, artistic expression of various kinds, music and so forth, furnish Aborigines with opportunities for cultural revival with possible financial outcomes.

2. Unfortunately, neither of the major cultural tourism ventures in Victoria had marketing publicity available for analysis. However, a number of general comments are possible. Brambuk, for example, is emphasising the cultural persistence of Aborigines in the Living Culture Centre, while Lake Condah is adopting a historical focus in their marketing and orientation. Both ventures are re-claiming history and re-casting it. Undoubtedly there is a role for Aboriginal communities in eastern Australia to educate the wider society about Aboriginal experiences in Australian history. The framework of cultural tourism seems eminently suited to such a purpose. It may well be that a place like Lake Condah mission offers a unique opportunity to do this. However, the issue of *who owns the history* has to be sorted out. The Victorian Government's tourist publications on Lake Condah and its history as an Aboriginal mission suggests an unproblematic version of contact history and cultural integration in the district. Yet a visit to Lake Condah mission with site interpretation by the Aboriginal ranger gives a radically different view. This man and his family were intimately associated with the mission, and their experiences are potentially subversive of the orthodox histories. In fact the Aboriginal ranger wants to use visits by non-Aborigines to Lake Condah as a means of reversing historical misconceptions about Aboriginal culture, and to educate for improved racial understanding by telling the other side of the mission story. However, I wonder whether the latter is in accord with how the State Government views the process of fostering new historical and racial understandings.

3. The unique content of what Aboriginal people have to offer cultural tourism, namely their lived experience, is rarely tapped in tourism. In eastern Australia their

historical perspective should enrich historiography, especially in the context of race relations and local history. The skills which many Aboriginal people have in this enterprise is their ability to talk about their everyday lives and that of their parents on the mission; and their experiences of closed rural Australian communities where Aborigines were at the bottom of the social hierarchy. In short, the experience of being Aboriginal in rural Australia at different times, 1900s, 1930s or 1950s, is largely unknown in the wider community. Nor is it realised what effect this experience has had in shaping present Aboriginal lives and attitudes.<sup>28</sup>

4. The Koorie Unit of the VTC sponsored eye-catching posters designed by a Victorian Aboriginal artist to promote the Aboriginal tourism enterprises in the Grampians and at Lake Condah. The posters depict colourful scenery of the respective locations (a rock shelter in the Grampians, and the stone weir system at Lake Condah). The message emblazoned on each poster suggests visitors: —

*COME AND SEE A FORTY THOUSAND YEAR OLD CULTURE...*

*...AND TAKE IT BACK WITH YOU!*

Underneath the main photograph is a collage of small coloured photo-graphs and the contact details for the Koorie Tourism Unit.

These posters are the subject of heated debate, largely because the wording implies visitors are invited to interfere with archaeological sites. Vandalism is a serious problem in the Aboriginal rock shelters in the Grampians. Tourism posters 'officially' suggesting people take a bit of culture 'back with you' is inappropriate advertising. The real intention of the poster was, of course, to encourage tourists to experience Aboriginal culture by visiting the sites, and to take their new knowledge home with them. Cultural tourism aims to actively engage people in empathetic experiences which repeatedly draws them back to the enterprise or site. Unfortunately, the ambiguity of this particular poster badly mixes images. But the controversy indicates the degree of care and attention needed to integrate words and images in a manner which is appropriate and preserves the cultural integrity of the venture.

5. In Victoria, I visited a number of small-scale Aboriginal tourism projects, including the Shepparton Keeping Place, the Hamilton Keeping Place, and the Old Court House

---

<sup>28</sup> Ruby Langford's autobiography is a literary version of this (see Langford, 1988).

at Echuca. The promotion of Aboriginal culture in these ventures illustrates the diversity of interpretations and approaches to the commercial and public representation of Aboriginal culture in tourism development. Few of these ventures had promotional brochures as most were associated with tourism in their region (for example, through Rotary or in a regional tourism promotion organisation).

6. Below is a categorisation of the current models in tourism by which Aboriginality is promoted for commercial consumption. In Cairns the commercial tourism ventures the report focuses on are; the Warrama centre, the Tjapukai Dance theatre, the Jabiru Cabaret restaurant, and the Kuku-Yalanji Tours. All the Aboriginal tourism enterprise surveyed reflect specific assumptions about Aboriginal culture and it is these assumptions which are the basis for the categories mentioned below.

### *Keeping Places*

Originally, Keeping Places were founded as 'safe' houses for the return to Aboriginal communities of cultural artefacts from state museums. However, this function has not always been paramount. Keeping Places tend to present Aboriginal culture as indigenous history made digestible for the wider public through an emphasis on cataloguing and documentation to re-create a 'traditional' Aboriginal past. Inevitably, the keeping place is crowded with images and displays of the material culture of the hunter-gatherer lifestyle, with little attention to explaining the connection between these images and the contemporary Aboriginal communities in the district. The Keeping Place in the Rotary International Village in Shepparton, Victoria, is a typical example of this type of enterprise. The Hamilton Keeping Place housed in the Old Council Chambers is a similar example on a smaller scale. In both cases, past Aboriginal lifestyles and specific adaptations are presented in terms of the relationship between resident Aboriginal people and their local environment.

### *Living Cultural Centres*

Aboriginal culture in Living Cultural Centres also emphasises the importance of history, although some concessions are made for continuity with present Aboriginal communities and particular historical contexts. The Living Cultural Centres were a response by governments for policies supporting Aboriginal survival and cultural

expression in a multi-cultural society. However, many Aboriginal people resent being identified in any way with 'ethnic' groups and refuse to see themselves as part of the multi-cultural society.

### ***Static Sites as Evidence of Aboriginal Culture (e.g. Rock Art/ Archaeological Remains)***

Archaeological sites are popular tourist venues in national parks, as studies from Kakadu suggest (see Gale and Jacobs, 1987; Sullivan 1984). However, site interpretation is necessary to make many of these sites accessible to tourists. Studies also point out that the sites need protection from unintentional damage caused by visitor ignorance (see Gale and Jacobs, 1987; Sullivan 1984). But many Aboriginal groups in south-eastern Australia also require interpretation of the archaeological evidence of traditional lifestyles and this is true of the sites in the Grampians and at Lake Condah.

### ***Land Management***

1. Public perceptions of Aboriginality has many forms. Perhaps the most popular is the concept of a nexus between man, land and animals. The ANPWS is developing successful models of joint land management within high impact tourist zones such as Uluru and Kakadu National Parks. In the Man-land-animal model the traditional Aboriginal relationships are endowed with conservation values, in the framework of economic strategies for astute resource management. Indeed, where Aboriginal communities have maintained economic or cultural interests in land, as very often happens in the remote areas or so-called 'wilderness' regions, joint management arrangements have a high success rate in tourism. Tourists are impressed by Aboriginal knowledge of a landscape which appears to them as alien, unfriendly and forbidding. Where ANPWS ranger programs incorporate Aboriginal staff and have the support of the local Aboriginal community visitors' perceptions of the authenticity of their tourist experience and the Aboriginal relationship to land is validated.

2. At present only the ANPWS seem to be dealing with tourism from the basis of Man-land models. Certainly, the organisation is in the forefront of joint management programs to protect and make accessible sites of heritage value. ANPWS make a point of working to accommodate cultural sensitivities of the Aboriginal land owners in

national parks under leaseback agreements. In some cases, the form of arrangements are experimental, and different approaches are tried. But in areas like Cape York in North Queensland, tourism is likely to radically affect present Aboriginal relationships. Communities need assistance in sorting through the cultural values they wish to preserve in the face of the social impact of tourism. Aboriginal relationships with land in areas like Cape York demonstrate a vital and continuous history and stand by way of contrast with a prevalent view in tourism that tracts of 'wilderness' are undeveloped and ripe for speculative ventures.<sup>29</sup>

3. The land-man model is inappropriate for all Aboriginal groups. For instance, its relevance and importance is lost on most urban Aboriginal communities. Yet alternative models of Aboriginality promoted amongst rural-urban Aboriginal communities (such as culture centres and living history complexes) fail to confront the historical and cultural specificities of rural and urban Aborigines; although the majority of Australia's Aborigines live in such communities. Increasingly, Aboriginal lifestyles are characterised by high mobility and population shifts away from the bush into settlements and towns.

### *Culture as a Portable, Marketable 'Experience' or Object*

1. Culture as a commercial product to be bought and sold takes one of two forms. On the one hand, Aboriginal artefacts are regarded as fundamental expressions of culture; an attitude commonly found in the commercial promotion of Aboriginal art and craft. On the other hand, culture is thought of as an encapsulated essence made accessible through the one-off exotic spectacle, as in theatrical displays and dance performances such as Tjapukai and Jabiru cabaret provide.

2. Culture as a commercial experience is allied to a conventional view in tourism that the material object embodies cultural knowledge. In the market place, Aboriginal artefacts and souvenirs sold to tourists correlate and resonate with ideals and images of a traditional Aboriginal past. Thus souvenirs such as boomerangs, didgeridoos, clap sticks, clubs, and so on are all presented to the public as legitimate symbols of Aboriginality. Cultural differences amongst Aboriginal groups are ignored. Lack of discrimination about cultural or regional differences are trivialised and minimised.

---

<sup>29</sup> The Daintree River area of Cape Tribulation has suffered this kind of fate. Industrial interests in the area have tried to resurrect former mining interests on these grounds.

The consumer has no means of discriminating in their purchasing and regional distinctions eventually become irrelevant. However, this is not the situation in the Northern Territory where regional differences are emphasised (Altman pers. comm.) which suggests that marketing of Aboriginal artefacts is often subject to parochial interests.

3. A cursory glance at any number of tourist brochures advertising tours, camping expeditions, or activities for back packers, illustrates the popularity of Aboriginal images in promotional material. All the images project a view of Aborigines in traditional culture contexts. Yet these images are euphemised to the extent of being meaningless. The nomadic hunter-gatherer is presented as pan Australian. Tourism is ambiguous about Aboriginal culture wanting to present it as both bland and uniform (with a common stock of material artefacts) and as exotic. The reduction of difference denies cultural diversity or complexity and makes nonsense of serious efforts to understand contact history and the basis of present racial problems.

4. The following examples are descriptions of Aborigines taken from promotional brochures in a number of tourist offices in Cairns.<sup>30</sup>

One tour company based in Cairns advertises a 14 day Cape York safari as an 'Outback Adventure' and explains what they offer:

- Experience the difference...Our guides are true blue Aussie bushmen, the descendants of pioneering overlanders.
- Have lived with the Aborigines and know their culture and Dreamtime.
- We'll show you survival skills and bush tucker on an Aboriginal walkabout.
- We'll introduce you to some of the colourful characters who live in the vast Australian outback.

Day four on the four day Cape York adventure promises...

- into the dense tropical rainforest. Participate and experience a day in the life of an Aborigine on walkabout, visit an Aboriginal community...

---

<sup>30</sup> All spelling and headings are reproduced as they appear in the brochures.

5. The following example is not taken from tourist literature promoting the Cairns region, but it is available in Cairns as a pamphlet of regional interest to tourists travelling in North Queensland. The material not only has been reprinted unrevised, but continues to include references which are offensive and racist. The pamphlet, entitled 'Round North Queensland and the Reef' is available to tourists through the Far North Queensland Promotion Board in Cairns and distributed free.<sup>31</sup> The following tragedy associated with an unusual rock outcrop in the Mackay area was presented in these terms:

In 1886, the Aborigines of the Lindeman Tribe were causing big problems for the local whites, culminating in the massacre of the Field family. Native Police were sent to sort the buggers out, but they legged it to the top of Mt. Mandurana, 12 kms north of Mackay. The police, bent on arresting the culprits, chased them up the mountain. One of their number, Kowaha, wanting to avoid capture, jumped from the cliff with her baby daughter, wrapped in a shawl stolen from the Field family, in her arms. Kowaha didn't make it, but miraculously, the child survived, and was fostered by James and Mary Readdy, a pioneering family in the area. Mt. Mandurana became known as 'Black Gin's Leap,' and later shortened to 'The Leap' (Issue 40590;11).

6. The Kuku-Yalanji tour at Mossman Gorge is advertised in a brochure circulated by Australian Pacific Tours as the 'Crocodile Safari, Aboriginal Dreamtime Trail' and offers several attractions....

Scenic views of the Coral Sea and Port Douglas, Aboriginal Dreamtime Jungle Trail, Crocodile River Safari, Daintree Township and Butterfly Farm, Mossman River Gorge and Rain Forest Jungle Walk.

The Kuku-Yalanji tours offer a smorgasbord of cultural activities:

Follow the dreaming trail of the Kuku-Yalanji Aboriginal people and walk along one of their centuries-old hunting trails that penetrates deep into the rain forest. See the Curtain Fig Tree where the small spirit people live. See buttressed roots from where woomeras and boomerangs are carved out by Kuku Warriors hundreds of years ago. Your Kuku-Yalanji guide will explain the trees and what they are used for, learn about 'bush tucker', the animals and how they were hunted. Hear all the animals of the forest interpreted through the versatility of the didgeridoos. Share billy tea and damper made by the women.

---

<sup>31</sup> The offending material was pointed out to the manager of the Far North Queensland Promotions Board in Cairns with the suggestion that he take action to amend or withdraw the offending excerpt.

Australian Pacific run day tours to Kuranda which include a visit to the Tjapukai theatre.<sup>32</sup> Their brochure describes Tjapukai performances in these words:

Experience the mystical legend of 'the Dreamtime' as presented by the Tjapukai Dancers. Listen to the magical sound of the didgeridoo during this presentation of culture and humour.

7. The latest flyer from the Warrama Living History Centre is subtitled 'The Real Australian Cultural Experience' and in May-June 1990 the flyer was enjoyed extensively, circulated as part of a glossy tourism booklet, publicising various shopping facilities and tourist attractions between Cairns and Port Douglas. The Warrama advertisement outlines the main attractions the centre will offer visitors. Attractions are accompanied by coloured pictures. (I have not quoted every facility Warrama potentially offers, but selected only a few.)

- Come alive to the rhythmic sounds and vibrant colours of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander theatre
- Travel by outrigger canoe to an exotic destination
- Step back in time and experience life in a traditional village
- Take a guided walk through our botanical gardens and share the wisdom and knowledge of the world's oldest tucker
- Discover the romance of the tropics, dining by candlelight in our lakeside restaurant.

8. Deeral Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Corporation, (Deeral workshop) have their own promotional literature based around the range of artefacts they sell. Every artefact on the poster has a simple description of its use printed underneath. In some cases the description includes a local Aboriginal language name for an object.

Eel Trap *Yunggarr*. Manufactured from lawyer cane (as with dilly bags) and baited with meat. Fixed in position and left overnight in stream, the eel swims in and is unable to turn and escape. Found only in rainforest areas.

Sword *Bagut*. Used for ritual combat, larger swords were extremely heavy and difficult to manoeuvre. Shapes varied from slightly curved to straight. Made from hardwood timber which is old and has minimal sap. Found around the Cairns region, south to Cardwell.

---

<sup>32</sup> Tjapukai does, of course, have their own advertising literature, although they advertise widely in regional tourism publications.

9. Jabiru Cabaret Restaurant undertakes their own marketing, while also advertising in regional marketing brochures. Tickets to their show resemble postcards and visitors are encouraged to mail them to friends at home. The postcards feature promotional shots of the dancers.

10. Jabiru never performs dances without prior permission from the relevant cultural custodians. This has not dampened criticism of the show by people who suggest the cultural material is unauthentic. Management and dancers reject the criticism as unfounded. Individual dancers bring their own dance composition and choreography, but only after permission is granted by the relevant 'elders.' Some dancers have dreamt a dance routine and incorporate it.

11. Traditional dances come from Yarrabah, the Kimberley (the snake dance, sugar bag dance and courtship dance), Arnhem Land, Mornington Island, and Murray Island in Torres Strait. A Mapoon dancer claimed that the older people at Mapoon see the public performance of their dances as a means of preserving their culture and fostering continuity.

12. Jabiru is not a venue for didactic cross-cultural education. The management is well aware that while tourists enjoy a little cultural content, too much of it can lose an audience. As a night out it is important that Jabiru offers patrons a 'good time'. Entertainment is thus as important to the show as the effort to authenticate performances of indigenous dancing. There is no overt attempt to educate people or change their views about Aborigines or Islanders. It is the effort to preserve cultural integrity in a commercial context and to ensure the audience is appreciative of the artists and their work which has priority from management.

## CHAPTER 4. ATTITUDINAL SURVEY OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS' EXPECTATIONS OF CULTURAL TOURISM

### *Tourism Surveys*

1. The attitudinal survey was conducted only in the Cairns region. This area is heavily promoted in international tourism and direct flights to Cairns are available from America, Japan and destinations in Europe.

Victoria, by contrast, has a majority of domestic visitors from inter-state, or from elsewhere in the State. The attitudes of international visitors has received precedence in the report.

2. Tourism organisations are increasingly interested in qualitative data on desired leisure and recreational experiences amongst domestic and international consumers. Apart from a growing demand for active holidays based around particular experiences, ('experiential tourism'), there is developing interest in visitor contact with other cultures. Recently the Australia Council surveyed attitudes amongst international tourists on Aboriginal culture (see Research Paper No. 4 June 1990). They commissioned supplementary questions to the standard BTR questionnaire administered at all major Australian airports. The results were available and are included as an Appendix. However, assessing the level of visitor interest in Aboriginal culture is only one step in the strategic development of cultural tourism. A further step is deciding what activities or enterprises legitimately constitute cultural tourism. This issue has yet to be clarified within the tourist industry and amongst government policy advisers. The current state of play is confined to debate over definitions.

3. Hawkins (1989) distinguishes between a broad and narrow definition of cultural tourism. She sees cultural tourism as an oppositional concept, arguing that cultural tourism is an alternative to other forms of tourism:

Cultural tourism is posed as an...opposition to the type of tourism that is gross, intolerant, exploitative and extremely destructive. That is why cultural tourism is more than just tourism for cultural motivations. Embedded in this whole term is

a series of criticisms of mass or commodity- based tourism, and the implication that one could organise tourism around different experiences and in ways that have less destructive impacts (Hawkins 1989:11).

/

She goes on to identify the tourist interested in cultural tourism as most likely to be someone from a middle-class background who...

is keen to use travel as a means of education, self growth and increased knowledge (Hawkins 1989:11).

Hawkins hypothesises a relationship between cultural tourism and educational levels, while acknowledging that the appeal of cultural tourism also takes subtle forms such as thematic holidays. Hawkins identifies other changes in leisure patterns such as short holidays with a specific purpose, and increasing dissatisfaction with resort-based tourism with its disregard for local culture. In fact cultural tourism is now a subject officially addressed in Australian tourism research (see Journal of Tourism Studies).

Hawkins' study of State tourism for the NSW Tourism Commission in 1989 identified the following general features of Australian tourism:

(a) tourist operators regard a spectacle, together with shopping opportunities, as essential elements in any tourist venture. Tourists are considered to be the ideal consumers because they have plenty of money to spend in a short time.

(b) What is popularly thought of as appropriate developments or enterprises for tourists are usually based on unsubstantiated generalisations in tourism. Too often assertions in tourism are made without the benefit of any research into market trends or employment potential. This surprises Hawkins since it is well known that tourism is a volatile, highly unstable industry with precarious employment conditions such as shift work, seasonal work, and part-time employment.

(c) Hawkins noticed that Australian tourism is dominated by 'developers, real estate agents and multinational tourism companies, such as hotels and airlines' (Hawkins, 1989: 10). Of cultural tourism she writes:

The Australian tourism industry is generally dismissive of culture at all levels. I think the dominant representation of Australia in tourist material and within the industry is the idea of Australia as a 'natural resource'. In tourist literature Australia is featured as a land rich in natural attractions, a land in many senses

without a culture. And I guess the Paul Hogan 'Ockerism' ethos tends to reinforce this (Ibid. 1989:10).

4. Hawkins credits resistance to cultural tourism from the tourist industry to lack of a monetary incentive. Without a financial kick-back from public institutions, tour operators are unlikely to promote the venue. Few Australian museums and galleries charge entrance fees, although the high level of tourist interest in these venues was apparent in the Australia Council survey (ACC 1990) and suggests tourists are independently seeking out these facilities. On the other hand, the tourism industry concerns itself with catering to tourists by building facilities which are immediately recognisable as part of an international tourism culture. Identical resorts and five star hotels are the same whether you visit one in Melbourne, Singapore, London or Bombay and the blandness provides some tourists with a sense of personal security in alien socio-cultural environments.

5. However the five star international hotels in Cairns realise that blandness and lack of local flavour in their hotels is no longer in their best interests. A change of direction has been employment of local Aboriginal and Islander staff. The Southern Pacific Hotel chain, for example, actively recruits program under AEDP. The Ramada Hotel chain is equally interested in recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait staff, especially for hotels in tropical locations like Cairns. In a further step Kewarra Beach Resort in Cairns adopted an indigenous cultural theme in the hotel's architectural styles. Kewarra extended the mixture of Pacific and Torres Strait Islander themes to the hotel decor, and where possible they employ Islander staff.<sup>33</sup> The resort regularly features a 'kup mauri' feast with music and dancing performed by Torres Strait Islanders. Other major hotel chains in the Cairns-Port Douglas area (e.g. Club Tropical) now seek Aboriginal or Islander staff in recognition of their special contribution to tourism (see also chapter 6 on training programs in cultural tourism).

6. The homogeneous approach in tourism and hospitality perpetuates assumptions about the nature of the consumer market which are questionable. Sophisticated surveys of leisure tourism shows segmentation into different kinds of tourists with specific needs and interests. The travelling public are characterised by diversity rather than commonalities. Marketing carefully differentiates the various sectors in order to match tourism needs and interests in each sector with appropriate facilities. Moreover, it is

---

33. Although it should be mentioned that the culture theme is unclear and rather a mismatch of various cultural motifs and symbols.

not recognised that tourists' needs are fluid; for example, 'adventurers' may desire travel experiences with minimal concern for material comforts at one point in their trip, but at another stage they desire secure, luxury accommodation. Age, sex, income and education are all factors which influence the market profile of tourists and their ideal holiday. How and if tourists plan their holidays, what they expect from the experience and the type of accommodation they seek are additional points of discrimination in marketing and sales promotions. Tourism marketing uses such distinctions as reference points to consumer trends and patterns when catering for tourists. Obviously, similar market research on tourist profiles and levels of interest in Aboriginal tourist ventures are necessary before embarking on such enterprises.

### *The Cairns Survey*

1. A copy of the questionnaire is reproduced as an Appendix. There were fourteen questions asking the respondent to tick the appropriate box, with a further four questions seeking qualitative answers. The questionnaire was left at several tourist venues in Cairns and Kuranda. The venues chosen were the Pacific International Hotel; the Kuranda Rainforest Resort; two Youth Hostels in Cairns<sup>34</sup>; the Radisson Hotel at the Pier; Tjapukai Dance theatre; and Jilli Binna shop in Kuranda. Tropic Wings Bus Tour Company also participated by handing out questionnaires to travellers on day tours to Aboriginal entertainments in Kuranda and at the Rainforest Station (near Kuranda)<sup>35</sup>. All questionnaires were distributed at the discretion and with the assistance of management over a three week period in April 1990<sup>36</sup>.

I also surveyed people directly. Busy tourist locations like the Kuranda township, Kuranda railway station and the many outdoor eating facilities and meeting places along the Cairns Esplanade provided a captive audience for the survey. These locations are popular with international and domestic tourists alike.

2. Data from the questionnaires were statistically analysed by Ms. Claire Atkinson from the Centre for Educational Development and Academic Methods (CEDAM) at the Australian National University, Canberra.

---

34. One Youth Hostel belonged to the Youth Hostel Association and the other was a private commercial venture.

35. I am most appreciative of the help with the questionnaire I received from these organisations. I did have some hotel refuse to distribute them or support the research.

36. Tourism authorities usually define the peak season in the Cairns region as the months of July-September.

3. There is little literature available on tourists' expectations in relation to Aboriginal tourism, although qualitative aspects of Aboriginal involvement in tourism have been investigated (see K. A. Hughes 1989 for a tourism satisfaction study of one-day tours, including Palm Island) and Gale and Jacobs, (1987 on Aboriginal rock art; and 'Sharing the Park', 1987) used questionnaires and other survey techniques with visitors to national parks.<sup>37</sup> The Australia Council surveyed international visitors in relation to Aboriginal culture and arts. Their general conclusions are worth quoting:

- Half of the visitors to Australia (about 49%) are interested in seeing and learning about Aboriginal arts and culture.
- 30% of the visitors in the survey purchased Aboriginal arts or items related to Aboriginal culture.
- The value of these purchases is estimated at \$30 million per annum, most of which accrues as a direct economic benefit for Australia.
- Almost 1 in 5 visitors went to an art gallery or museum especially to see Aboriginal art.
- Visitors from the USA/Canada and Continental Europe are the most interested in Aboriginal arts and culture and were the most frequent buyers of Aboriginal art and souvenirs (Australia Council 1990).

The Australia Council survey was carried out during February 1990 and the results extrapolated for a 12 month period.

The sample results were then weighted to give estimates for all visitors in the period, using the arrival figures of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Research Paper No. 4 Policy and Research, Strategic Development Unit, June 1990).

4. Unexpected conclusions came from the questionnaire of international visitor expectation and satisfaction I undertook in Cairns. I had assumed that back-packers were likely to be sympathetic to and uniformly interested in Aborigines and Aboriginal culture. In fact, a proportion of back-packers are totally disinterested in Aborigines and concerned only to enjoy holidays and activities based around the reef, rainforest and sun. Their ideal holidays combine physical activities with the opportunity to meet

---

37. See also R. Baker's study of tourism and tourists at Boorooloola in the Northern Territory and the impact on the resident Aboriginal communities in a collection of papers presented to the AIATSIS Remote Communities Conference, Townsville, July 1990.

other back-packers. At the other end of the tourist spectrum retired people on organised tours were often quite hostile to any contact with Aborigines and showed a marked disinterest in visiting attractions involving cultural contact. Some of these tourists voiced their hostility in the open-ended section of the questionnaire where they wrote frankly and disparagingly of Aboriginal homelessness and public drunkenness.

5. The Cairns survey also pointed out the unrecognised importance by tourism studies and market research of souvenir shops as a major point of contact with 'Aboriginal culture' for all tourist groups. Many of the tourists surveyed had not visited Aboriginal tourist venues such as Tjapukai or Jabiru, but all had wandered through an Aboriginal souvenir, or art and craft shop. These shops provide a 'safe' contact with Aboriginal (material) culture, and enable people to purchase the necessary memento of their trip. Indeed a shop is a forum in which cultural artefacts can be seen free of any onus to become personally involved in any way. The implications of the high level of visitations to Aboriginal souvenir outlets should not be ignored. These venues are significant in the commercial marketing of Aboriginal art and craft to a wide public and many tourists use them as interchangeable cultural experiences with enterprises like Tjapukai or Kuku-Yalanji tours, etc. Tourists have a preference for small portable artefacts such as boomerangs, clap sticks, cut-down didgeridoos, post cards, and wearable art such as T-shirts and graphics. Aboriginal art and craft which is actually fine art, fails to interest the average tourist, who looks for a 'bargain' in their souvenir hunt.

#### **Tourists' Responses to Question 17 and 18**

1. Visitors used the questions to comment in general about their experience of tourism in the Cairns region and responses elicited a wide range of opinions on specific and general aspects of tourism in the area. April 1990 was a wet month in Cairns and comments about this cropped up repeatedly. One tourist complained that the advertising brochures left her unprepared for the cold, dull weather Cairns had during that month. Others complained of the constant rain and the accompanying mosquitoes.

2. Many travellers appreciated the beauty of the natural scenery in reef and rainforest. There were plenty of activities to choose from; in fact some tourists found the choice overwhelming. A number of people felt the cost of tours was too high, and many commented on the generally expensive prices for food and accommodation.

3. A number of tourists felt Cairns was too commercial and had too many high-rise developments. Although the season had not yet started in May and June, some people were dismayed by the number of tourists. Tourists were critical of some of the facilities; the tourist shopping in Kuranda, for example, was described as 'unauthentic'. Several back-packers commented on the poor standard of accommodation available to them in hostels and mentioned hostels with rooms which were damp and smelly. Younger people also complained about the lack of night life in Cairns with little to do in the evenings. Other tourists felt the shops closed too early (about 5.00 pm in the off season).

4. Several older domestic tourists repeatedly mentioned their worry about the Aboriginal men and women sleeping in the streets of Cairns and several comments were recorded about the need for a visible police presence to make the streets 'safe for tourists'. (Incidentally, none of this group mentioned any unpleasant experience they had faced as a result of Aboriginal homelessness.) On the other hand, some visitors remarked on the friendliness of Aboriginal people and their appreciation of the opportunity to mix with them. One person applauded the cultural mixing they saw in the Cairns' population.

5. Tourism employees were seen as friendly and casual; however, one visitor felt the commentaries on bus tours were boring and repetitive and most enterprises too commercial. In general, tourists were positive about their holiday experiences in Cairns and repeatedly stressed the variety of activities available (such as scuba diving, snorkelling, rafting, bushwalking, and so forth), and the fact that for many of them their length of stay was too short.

#### **Tourists' Responses to Question 16**

1. Respondents had the opportunity to comment on activities they would have liked to enjoy with Aborigines, as well as the option to air opinions about Aboriginal tourism which they felt were important.

2. A number of people felt they would have liked more opportunity to speak with Aborigines, or to discuss their conditions. Some wanted to know about present Aboriginal assimilation into the wider community. Many of the responses were from Australians. One person wanted direct contact with Aboriginal people, but was unsure how to organise it. Indeed, some of the activities with Aborigines which people would have liked were in fact available in the region, but obviously publicity about such enterprises was not reaching all segments of the market. Some travellers identified Aborigines with the Northern Territory, in particular with Alice Springs and Ayers

Rock (Uluru). This has led to an indication of the successful and thorough advertising of Aboriginal tourism through the Northern Territory Tourism organisations.<sup>38</sup> They now realised Aborigines also had a visible presence in North Queensland.

3. Some tourists were keen to see corroborees, to live with Aborigines and to spend long periods of time with them in order to learn about the rainforest and land-related issues. One person suggested that small groups of visitors and Aborigines was the ideal way to facilitate effective communication and to promote learning and listening. Another respondent suggested Aborigines run a self supporting enterprise, such as a cattle station or bush camp, where tourists could live and learn in return for working on the property. Such a scheme would enable both groups to live with one another, while learning about their different cultures.

4. Adverse comments about Aborigines also surfaced. Two tourists were robbed by Aborigines and older tourists were frightened and concerned about drunk and homeless Aborigines on Cairns' streets. Yet one visitor felt Aborigines were not included enough in mainstream tourism in Cairns, and some felt there was too little contact and not enough opportunity for communication or cultural exchange. Interestingly, the comments about the desire for more prolonged contact were made by Australians, most of whom were from outside Queensland.

An overseas visitor argued that Aborigines must be 'sick of tourists pestering them'; while another international tourist perceptively remarked that 'Aborigines seem to feel separate' [from the wider society]. Members of an overseas church group touring Australia noticed with surprise and pleasure how many Aboriginal people were part of the congregation of the church they attended.

5. An Australian tourist had some thoughtful advice about cultural tourism of interest to Aboriginal enterprises. She felt that 'Aborigines should not be show-pieces for tourists' and that cultural tourism had to involve a change in attitude to include an appreciation of and sensitivity to the cultural proclivities of other tourists (such as the Japanese). Thinking on these comments in more depth I wondered if cultural tourism in locations like Cairns where there is a high proportion of Aboriginal and Islander visitors from elsewhere, whether the concept of tourism could be usefully applied to

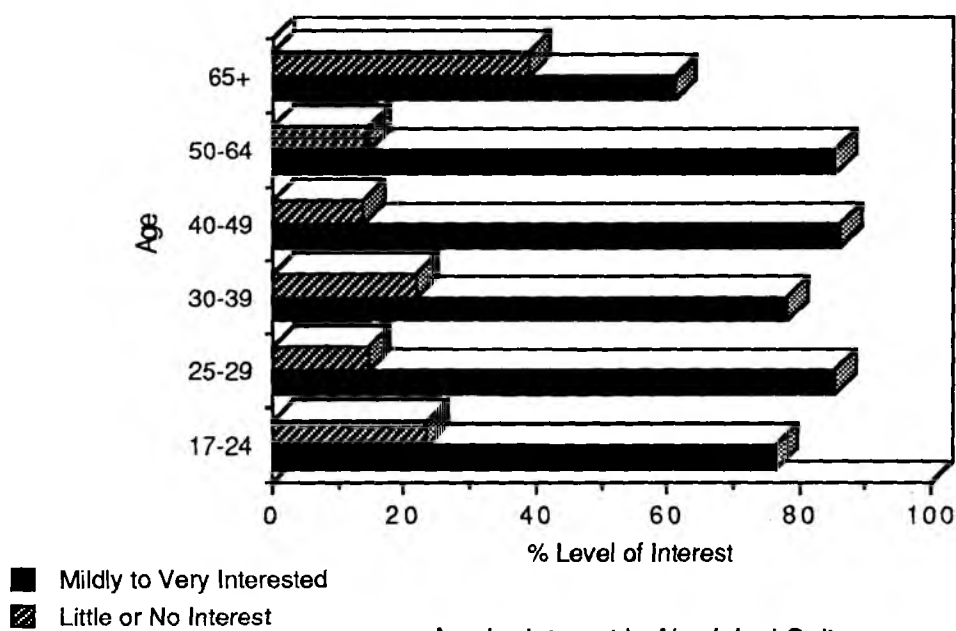
---

38. The Northern Territory Tourist Bureau has recently produced a new brochure called 'Come Share Our Culture; a guide to Northern Territory Aboriginal Tours, Arts and Crafts' aimed at providing tourists with a number of different options in Aboriginal tourism. The tour brochure is current between 1 May 1990 and 30 April 1991.

cater for these people as tourists. There is, presently, little notion of Aborigines as tourists nor any response in tourism to cater for them locally, either in accommodation (generally left to government agencies like Aboriginal Hostels Ltd.) or in services. Despite back-packers being seen as the travellers who want low-cost accommodation, cheap meals and inexpensive tours and leisure activities based around casual, small-scale enterprises, all of which might equally apply to Aboriginal desires in tourism, there is no market vision of, or response to, the Aboriginal tourist. Perhaps cultural tourism might, in the future, encourage the tourist industry to look at this avenue in appropriate locations such as Cairns, Darwin, Alice Springs and so forth.

### *Discussion of Tables from Cairns Tourism Survey*

**TABLE 1: CORRELATION BETWEEN VISITOR'S AGE AND  
INTEREST IN ABORIGINAL CULTURE**  
[CROSS TABULATIONS BETWEEN QUESTION 18 AND QUESTION 9].



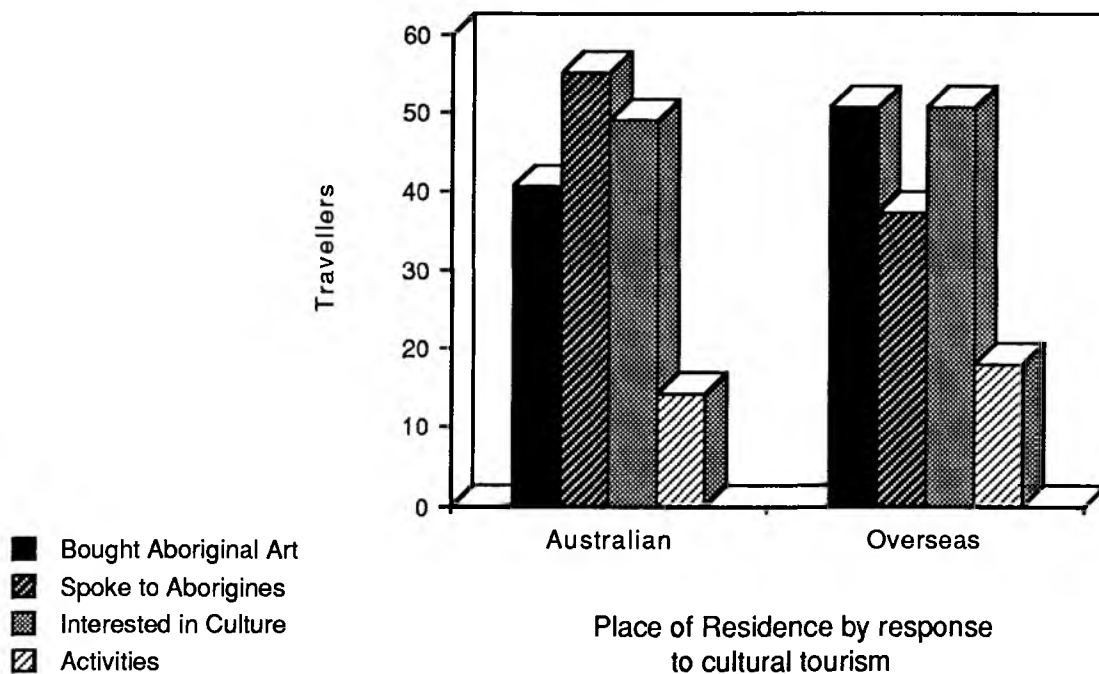
Across all age groups between 17 and 65 years and over, the majority of respondents were mildly to very interested in Aboriginal culture. Differences in the degree of interest between age groups varied slightly with people 65 years and over registering slightly less interest than in all the other age groups. However, correlations between age and disinterest in Aboriginal culture showed 40 per cent of people in the older age group (65

years plus) to be the most dis-interested. About 20 per cent of tourists in the 17-24 years bracket and those between 30-39 years also registered dis-interest.

The level of dis-interest amongst younger people was unexpected. Although just under 25 per cent of the surveyed respondents in this category were dis-interested, it is not a significant figure given the overall enthusiasm for Aboriginal culture registered by all age groups.

However, the survey did not confirm what I had expected; that younger tourists would be the most interested of all age groups, and that the degree of interest would diminish in proportion to increasing age and conservatism. (The Australia Council survey did not separate interest according to age of their respondents, although their results confirmed that about half (49 per cent) of the international visitors who participated in their survey had a desire to see and learn about Australian Aboriginal cultures.)

**TABLE 2: CORRELATION BETWEEN VISITOR'S PLACE OF PERMANENT RESIDENCE AND THEIR LEVEL OF INTEREST IN ABORIGINAL TOURISM [CROSS TABULATIONS BETWEEN QUESTION 2 AND QUESTION 9].**

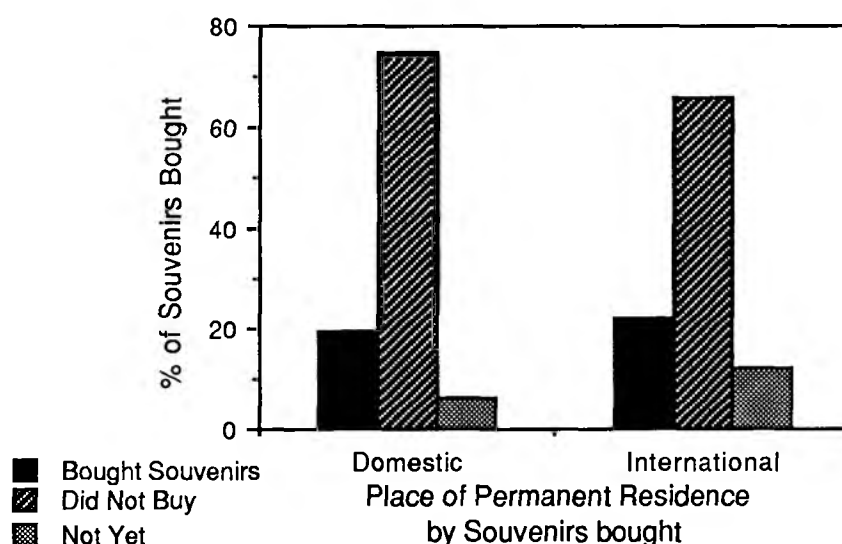


The 303 visitor responses were separated into domestic and overseas visitors. In both groups tourists showed a high degree of interest (around 80 per cent of responses) to Aboriginal culture. However, about 30 per cent of Australians were disinterested compared with a slightly smaller percentage of international tourists (about 20 per

cent). The greater number of domestic travellers who were not interested in Aboriginal culture was not unexpected. Indeed, the qualitative responses on the questionnaire showed the intensity of antipathy and prejudice amongst this group. In contrast, overseas visitors were likely to frame their concerns over cultural or racial differences with puzzled questions, rather than judgemental comments.

The Australia Council survey differentiated nationality by interest level in their survey of international tourists and found that visitors from North America and Continental Europe were most enthusiastic; whereas New Zealand and other Asian tourists showed least interest. Of Japanese tourists, the Australia Council found that 32 per cent of them expressed a high degree of interest in Aboriginal culture.

**TABLE 3: CORRELATION BETWEEN VISITOR'S PLACE OF PERMANENT RESIDENCE AND PURCHASE OF ABORIGINAL SOUVENIRS [CROSS TABULATIONS BETWEEN QUESTION 2 AND QUESTION 15].**



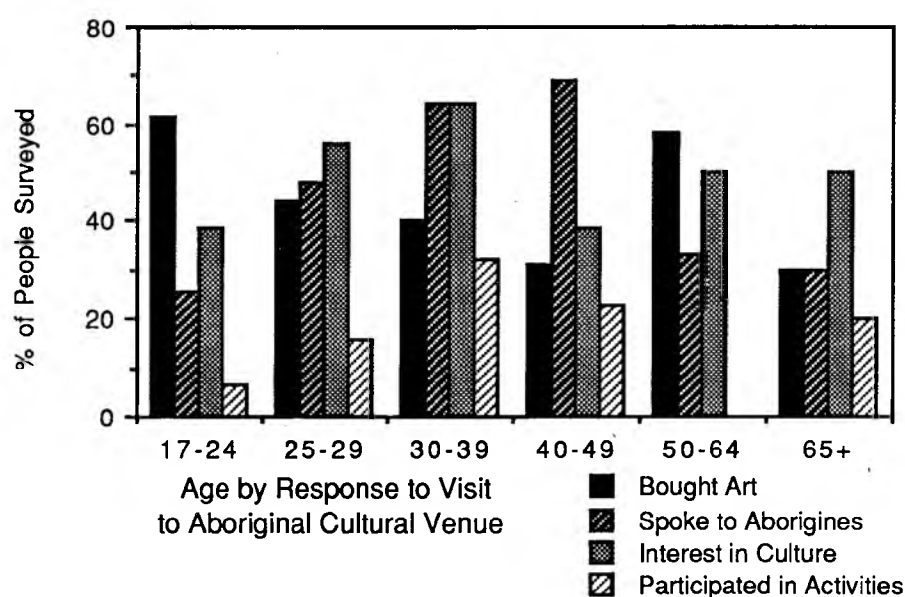
Respondents were separated into overseas and domestic visitors according to their place of permanent residence. In both groups most people had not bought Aboriginal souvenirs (75 per cent of Australian and 66 per cent of overseas travellers).<sup>39</sup> People who had made purchases tended to be overseas visitors more often than Australians.

39. A small percentage of respondents had not had enough time to make purchases of Aboriginal artefacts (60% of domestic travellers compared with 12% of overseas travellers). Some respondents mentioned that they would like to make a purchase but had not yet had the opportunity to do so.

These results are predictable as Aboriginal souvenirs for overseas visitors often represent exotic reminders of their trip. For Australian travellers the same items have less appeal, except perhaps for a small percentage of Australians with specialist interests (as in the fine art market).

The Australia Council survey confirms the high consumer interest in Aboriginal art, craft and souvenirs amongst overseas visitors, and include books and records as part of the range of goods purchased. The Australia Council estimated that 30 per cent of their respondents had a definite interest in buying Aboriginal goods. The Australia Council estimates the value of this industry at \$30 million per annum.

**TABLE 4: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN VISITOR AGE AND RESPONSE TO VISITS TO ABORIGINAL CULTURAL ENTERPRISES**  
[CROSS TABULATIONS BETWEEN QUESTION 1B AND QUESTION 13].



The following description of the survey results are given according to age groupings.

Amongst 17-24 year olds over half (61 per cent) had bought some object of Aboriginal art. This was most likely to be a small, inexpensive and easily transportable object, and probably a souvenir rather than a fine art piece. Close to 40 per cent of this same group felt they had learned more of Aboriginal culture; although only 6 per cent had participated in activities with Aboriginal people and 26 per cent had spoken to Aborigines.

In the 25-29 age bracket purchasing artefacts was not as significant as it was for the younger people and most tourists surveyed in this group expressed interests in Aborigines. They felt their visits to cultural tourism venues had met their need for information and satisfied their curiosity. A higher percentage of people aged between 25-29 years (48 per cent) had spoken with Aborigines and had been actively involved with them in some tourism venture (about 16 per cent).

Tourists aged between 30-39 years had both spoken to Aborigines and discovered more of Aboriginal culture in equal proportions (60 per cent of responses in both cases). Of all surveyed age groups, the 30-39 year olds had the highest degree of participation in activities with Aboriginal people (32 per cent).

Between the ages of 40-49 years tourists in this group showed most interest in speaking to Aboriginal people (69 per cent) with less than 50 per cent interest registered for other areas of response, such as buying art, participation in activities, and learning more about Aboriginal culture.

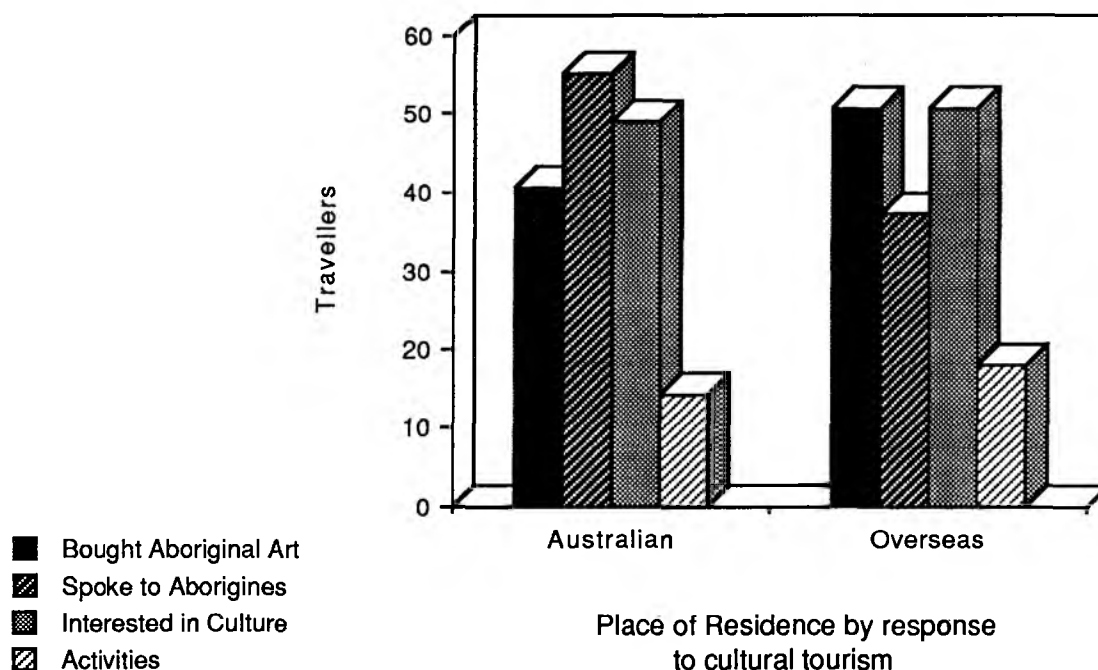
Amongst tourists aged 50-64 years old there was minimal participation in activities with Aborigines and a corresponding interest in passive pursuits. Hence 58 per cent of tourists in this group bought Aboriginal souvenirs as their principal form of interest in Aboriginal tourism. Although over half of them were interested in knowing more of Aboriginal culture they were not actively involved in doing so. Those who spoke with Aborigines were a relatively small percentage of the age group (33 per cent).

Visitors 65 years and over purchased souvenirs and spoke to Aborigines in the same proportions (30 per cent). Interestingly, they showed a higher level of participation in activities with Aborigines than did the 17-24 year olds (20 per cent as compared with 6.5 per cent). Over half of the group expressed interest in knowing more of Aboriginal culture.

In general terms tourists between 17-24 years and those between 50-64 years were most likely of all the age groups to purchase art, craft and souvenirs. The 17-24 year olds, surprisingly, had least interest in participating in activities with Aborigines, perhaps because they were already heavily involved in other leisure activities such as scuba diving, bush walking, rafting, and socialising with peers. They were also less interested of all the age groups in talking directly with Aborigines; again, this is a possible sign of their involvement with activities the tourist market directs at them

particularly. Many travellers in this age group are back-packers and the Cairns leisure market caters for them quite extensively. This response from the tourist industry is new and correlates with the realisation that back-packers have a good deal of money to spend, although they are discriminating about how they do so and prefer to spend money on activities and experiences rather than on accommodation or expensive eating.

**TABLE 5: CORRELATION BETWEEN PLACE OF VISITOR'S PERMANENT RESIDENCE AND RESPONSE TO ABORIGINAL TOURISM**  
[CROSS TABULATIONS BETWEEN QUESTION 2 AND QUESTION 13].



Visitors' responses were divided into international and domestic travellers.

Australian tourists (55 per cent) rated speaking to Aborigines as the most significant activity of their visit to an Aboriginal cultural enterprise. They also showed similar levels of interest in buying Aboriginal art and learning more about Aboriginal culture; although these figures were below 50 per cent of the recorded responses in those categories.

International visitors showed a high degree of interest in buying Aboriginal art and in learning more of Aboriginal culture (51 per cent of responses in both cases). Perhaps their lower scores on participation and speaking with Aboriginal people is due to the kind of holidays many of them have, namely, highly organised, whistle stop tours to conventional tourist facilities.

## CHAPTER 5. ATTITUDINAL RESPONSE OF ABORIGINAL GROUPS REGARDING CULTURAL TOURISM

1. No survey was undertaken in either Victoria or Queensland with regard to a quantitative assessment of Aboriginal attitudes to tourism. Instead I conducted informal interviews with Aboriginal people to elicit statements, impressions and comments which take account of their cultural proclivities about tourists and what they see as the benefits and disadvantages of tourism for the Aboriginal community.<sup>40</sup> Some literature is also available on Aboriginal attitudes to tourism and the impact of tourism on communities (see Sullivan 1984; Altman 1988; 1989; papers presented to Aborigines and tourism conference Halls Gap Victoria, 1988; CLC 1987).

2. In Victoria, the VTC is proposing amendments to the European names of Aboriginal rock art sites in the Grampians with names from Aboriginal dialects. This is a bold move and has resulted in heated regional debates about the merits of the proposal. Local Aboriginal groups like Goolum-Goolum Cooperative in Horsham have borne the brunt of adverse community feeling over the changes. However while Cooperative members were initially hesitant about the idea, they now welcome the possibility of name changes and the associated recognition of Aboriginal history.<sup>41</sup> Goolum-Goolum staff see the recent public debate over changes as helping them to present the Aboriginal dimension of local history, and simultaneously to maintain a continued cultural presence in the wider community. This is a common aspiration for Aboriginal tourism in the eastern Australian States and is often characterised as a 'cultural revival' on the false assumption that Aboriginal culture was defunct before present channels for public expression were available.

---

40. The Australia Council has conducted a survey on tourists' interest in Aboriginal culture in art and craft work and Aboriginal exhibitions in galleries. The Aboriginal National Theatre Trust is currently undertaking a survey of interest from Aborigines and non-Aborigines about Aboriginal involvement in theatre, film and performances.

41. See The Melbourne Sun, June 27 1989, when the idea of a name change was first raised publicly.

3. Aboriginal attitudes to tourism are diverse. In many cases Aboriginal people find it impossible to conceive of the impact tourism will have on their community or personal lifestyle, nor do they have any knowledge of how to monitor the changes tourism will impose on them. A typical response is the expectation of fabulous amounts of money they are likely to make in tourism. But few Aborigines have the necessary experience in the market to realise a successful tourist venture, project, nor what is involved. There is little appreciation of product marketing, sales promotions, and the importance of networking with other tourist ventures to generate the requisite conditions for success in sales and customer satisfaction. In fact the two to three year lead time for effective market development of tourist enterprises is often unappreciated by both Aborigines and bureaucrats.

In Victoria, the VTC tries to provide Aboriginal enterprises expertise in these areas, particularly with advice on marketing and enterprise promotion. In other States, Aboriginal ventures in tourism are left to handle these areas as best they can.

4. I interviewed an Aboriginal man in Kuranda who was about to complete a twelve month contract employment with a local tourist resort. He drove resort guests between Kuranda and Cairns in his own mini-bus and shared shift work with two other drivers hired by the same resort. His shift involved three return trips per day between Kuranda and Cairns of at least 60 kilometers. He was now thinking of starting out on his own once the contract with the resort expired. He wanted to provide a service to his local community. But he felt there was a potential market in short bus trips for backpackers wanting to visit local beauty spots.

The following comments on Aboriginal involvement with tourism are based on his experiences with tourism in Kuranda.

(a) He felt Aboriginal people in Kuranda lacked the necessary skills to participate fully in the local tourist industry. Aboriginal people are reluctant to get involved in such enterprises and he characterised them as 'looking from the background to see what's going on before they decide to take part'.

(b) He identified money as a basic drawback to Aboriginal involvement in tourism. Not only do Aborigines need a loan to start a business enterprise of any kind, but they are 'scared to get involved money wise'. Few Aborigines in communities where unemployment is chronic are confident or knowledgeable about financial matters. They

have no experience with budgeting or financial planning. This man was himself in need of financial advice and had sought help on how to develop a business plan from government organisations set up to offer enterprise support.

(c) In this man's opinion, one of the attitudinal benefits of tourism was the role models of Aboriginal people successfully operating business ventures. He felt the role model was especially important in Kuranda because several community schemes for enterprises had already failed, including the community farm to produce fruit for Aboriginal households and for local sale; and the community gardening scheme on the former mission land.

5. This individual perceptively recognised the potential for Aboriginal people to open small business ventures in cultural tourism. But throughout the field research the general lack of knowledge amongst Aborigines about how to initiate or maintain an enterprise was the rule rather than the exception. It seems that while Aborigines are 'looking from the background' that is exactly where they will remain. Tourists operators and travel agents in international tourist destinations like Cairns recognise the growing interest in Aboriginal culture amongst sections of the international travel market and as entrepreneurs are designing packaged holidays to cater for this demand. For some Aboriginal communities ignorance of tourism will result in uncontrolled development and unwanted social consequences. Already four-wheel drive tourist operators in Cape York Peninsula cite the area as a legitimate arena for their activities. Whether their activities are compatible with Aboriginal land use or in accord with the views of the estimated 65 per cent of Aboriginal people who live in the Cape is given little thought. Many promoters claim tourism in the more remote areas is inevitable and bound to happen irrespective of the Aboriginal response. They also claim Aboriginal communities refuse to consult or to engage with the issues tourism presents in social and environmental impact management.

6. For Aboriginal people in towns like Kuranda tourism directly affects Aboriginal daily life. Consumer prices in Kuranda are high in basic necessities such as food, petrol and the general cost of living. Aboriginal people in Kuranda commented that tourists had 'more money than local residents' and so could afford the expensive prices.<sup>42</sup>

---

42. I did some comparisons of basic food items between the Kuranda supermarket and a suburban supermarket in Cairns. The greatest differences, above 10 cents, were in items of daily use, i.e. soap powder, tea, soft drink, powdered milk, sugar, rice, etc, all items which would be standard fare in Aboriginal households. The price differences were not so great on

People further commented that the shopping facilities in Kuranda cater to tourists and not to local residents. The rail service for Kuranda and Mareeba districts for example, has closed while tourist services are up-graded. Rail was an inexpensive form of public transport for local people. Aboriginal people in Kuranda now rely on the taxi service or the local bus for transport between Kuranda and the outlying communities.<sup>43</sup> A local bus service makes daily trips to Cairns at a cost of \$4.40 per adult one way; compared with the cost of a one-way ticket on the tourist train at \$11.20 per adult.<sup>44</sup> The bus run between Kuranda and the outlying Aboriginal villages, operated by a local Aboriginal man, costs \$2.30 per adult one way even from the most isolated village into Kuranda.

7. In Kuranda, the success of the Tjapukai Dance Theatre and the Mona Mona Dancers is a vivid example of what tourism can positively offer Aborigines. Other members of the Aboriginal community are now actively considering business enterprises based on cultural tourism. One venture directly attributable to Tjapukai's influence is a proposal to develop a mixed sex dance troupe of Aboriginal children. The initiative is supported by a group of Aboriginal people in Kuranda, Cairns and Yarrabah who meet monthly to organise and practise. Teaching has already begun. The group has moral support from the Cairns City Council Community Arts Officer who is lobbying for government sponsorship. However the Aboriginal perception of the venture indicates the need for education in enterprise development and management. A key Aboriginal woman in the project spoke of her conception of the venture in the following terms:

The aim of the project in her mind, was to give young people something to do when they left school. The group hoped to dance in the annual Laura Dance festival in competition with other Aboriginal communities from Cape York. She said she 'did not want the dancing to be commercial'; while admitting she was unsure what the word 'commercial' meant.

8. Her understanding of how the project would unfold was hazy. But the prospect of dancers going overseas, as the Tjapukai Dancers do, certainly had appealed. Nor was it known where the new dance troupe would regularly perform. There was talk about

---

luxury lines. The price of meat at the Kuranda butchery was, however, cheaper than that sold in the supermarket on a per kilo price.

43. Few people have private transport or a driving licence.

44. The tourist train between Cairns and Kuranda with a spoken commentary costs more again \$14.00 per person one way.

dancing informally in the Kuranda markets. However the Mona Mona Dancers already perform there.

9. Opportunities certainly exist for other enterprises in cultural tourism in Kuranda. Yet too many Aboriginal people are thinking about the same kind of venture lines and not about the need to diversify their skills through broader tourism options. One group who realises the need for an integrated approach to cultural tourism is planning to develop a bushwalk and dance group as a family enterprise. But the question of who has authority to train dancers and stage performances have yet to be settled between this family and senior members of the community before any enterprise proceeds. The enterprise is still in the formative planning stages. Participants in the venture include the initiator and his wife, and a sister and brother-in-law. They plan a packaged cultural experience by combining a rainforest walk, and traditional dancing with the sale of locally produced Aboriginal artefacts.<sup>45</sup> The initiator is seeking government seeding funds to start the enterprise as a private business. He sees no point in continuing to wait for government grants and employment schemes for the Kuranda community; it is now time to 'step forward and do [my] own thing'. A business plan has been developed with help from a private consultant and a business name and logo decided on, together with details of the format of the enterprise, and the first steps in networking with tourist organisations. Coupled with the desire for a family business, the initiator wants to provide employment opportunities for Aboriginal youth.<sup>46</sup> Not everyone in Kuranda is receptive to the idea of increasing the number of Aboriginal dance groups in the town. A member of Tjapukai Theatre was said to have expressed his view that the market was not 'big enough for them both [i.e. both dance groups]'.<sup>47</sup>

10. It is unlikely that more than one or two of the proposed dance groups will eventuate as full-blown commercial ventures. The present enthusiasm merely illustrates the high level of interest in the wider Aboriginal community for tourism and how it has fired the imagination. Aboriginal people in Kuranda see tourism as a chance to take a proactive stance about their own culture and to capitalise on public displays of certain

---

45. This package is not unlike the kind of venture already operating in Mossman at the Gorge community.

46. Two of this man's sons are employed dancers with the Tjapukai Dance Theatre.

47. As a general statement this may well be true of the Cairns region; Aboriginal dance groups are planned in almost every community in the Tablelands district, and tourists, after all, can only visit so many. Ravenshoe community on the Tableland are interested in dancing, but the town hasn't a significant tourist trade which makes the idea questionable.

cultural forms (see also comments to the Halls Gap Conference by Aboriginal participants, 1988; Palmer 1985).

## CHAPTER 6. ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAMS IN CULTURAL TOURISM

1. Neither Brambuk nor Lake Condah dealt with their training requirements through learning institutions such as TAFE nor had they arranged specialist training courses through DEET. Both enterprises preferred an independent approach. This was in part attributable to their criticisms and doubts about the suitability of existing institutional courses and training packages to meet their particular purposes. The VTC's development strategies for Lake Condah will necessitate specialised training courses to suit the enterprise. The Koorie Unit had spoken of a training program for Koorie tourist guides run by a Melbourne TAFE college, but nothing has eventuated. It was not clear whether the Koorie trainees would participate in a special induction course or join a mainstream tourism and hospitality program.

2. There is an overwhelming choice in support schemes and training programs for Aborigines. But the appropriateness of employment training only makes sense in the context of identifying vocational needs. Employment trainee packages are often not developed in the field. Instead the educational strategies and objectives tend to be formulated and delivered by bureaucracies according to policy directives. Aboriginal contributions and consultations to employment training initiatives seem limited. These problems and others have been extensively canvassed in the Snowdon Report (1989):

...the general picture at the community level is one of ad hoc training programs which are not related to the goals of communities and which are only skimming the surface of the depth of the need which exists (Ibid.1989;19).

Although the report differentiates between training issues for community self-management and that required for service delivery and commercial enterprise development, the recommendations for policy changes are equally applicable to the situations seen during research for the present report. The Snowdon Report repeatedly stresses the importance to Aboriginal people of on-site training and on-the-job training. But they also identified areas where government agencies need to lift their game.

The failure in general to develop coordinated and cooperative approaches to education and training programs is not surprising given the number of agencies involved and the

presence of differing levels of government which do not always agree about their respective funding responsibilities and policy approaches. The wide range of programs being funded and the multiplicity of agencies involved is clear from an examination of the existing programs...What is lacking is a generally accepted policy approach, much better coordination of programs and cooperation between the agencies involved (Ibid.1989;17).

A further point mentioned was the need to see programs in terms of the diversity of Aboriginal culture and contexts. The point is relevant to employment training for cultural tourism where policies on vocational training need to be adaptable to be relevant.

3. A recent vogue in training approaches for Aborigines has been the emphasis on self-teaching manuals. Unfortunately, few Aboriginal people in communities are in a position to know how to deal with a teach-yourself manual nor to determine training/skills needs in industries they have no familiarity with. Independent learning approaches in employment training programs are inappropriate because they ignore the client's limitations in general education and literacy. Manuals are revivals of a popular notion of grassroots empowerment (people power), but deserve close scrutiny as sources of empowerment. Ironically self-help and empowerment strategies may deny the socio-economic contexts in which most Aboriginal people live. Disadvantaged groups characterised by long term unemployment and welfare dependence are not always equipped to discriminate between potential choices and support schemes for employment training. As late as 1986 Aboriginal residents in villages outside Kuranda lived without electricity, sewerage or water and few people were confident of their ability as a group to change these conditions without help from sympathetic whites. Employment training is basically a question of access to appropriate knowledge in order to participate in decision-making for their own benefit.

4. Gender differences play an influential role in Aboriginal employment and training programs. This is often unrecognised. Brambuk has employed Aboriginal men in work skills similar to that undertaken by park rangers, and the same pattern is repeated in Aboriginal men's contribution to tourism enterprises in North Queensland. On the other hand, it is Aboriginal women who are attracted to and retained in tourism vocations as clerical workers, and house-maids, in the kitchens, and table service. Irrespective of criticisms of Tjapukai's employment of male dancers, these are new employment options for men outside the shrinking range of semi-skilled occupations.

5. Gender also influences the attendance rates of Aboriginal men and women in training courses. The Kuranda Skillshare coordinator commented on the difficulty of retaining male participants in courses.<sup>48</sup> She felt that mixed groups of Aboriginal participants were never very successful, and that women were always in the majority and were the most vocal of the participants. Men who do begin a course eventually drift away. She further remarked that some Aboriginal men exhibited jealousy about a spouse or girlfriend working in the mainstream labor market; indeed in some cases the men actively subverted the woman's possibilities for continued employment. This was certainly the cause of one Aboriginal woman's poor performance in her work experience placement with a tourist resort in Kuranda.<sup>49</sup> Dynamics of this kind are largely hidden from non-Aboriginal employers who find Aboriginal attitudes to employment incomprehensible. Thus, employment training must accommodate gender differences, as well as cultural parameters.

6. Language in training programs is another neglected area in training. Aboriginal people, including those in urban environments, often speak non-standard forms of English. Self-teaching programs fail because manuals often assume cultural knowledge unfamiliar to the reader. The following example illustrates the point. The Cairns branch of the Queensland Small Business Development Corporation ran a basic clerical and business skills course with TAFE support for Torres Strait Islander students. They used a teach-yourself manual with a step-by-step learning process originally developed in Western Australia for use in Aboriginal communities and with enterprise development projects. Students found the book difficult to follow and were unable to complete the units in the suggested times. The course coordinator thought the material was inappropriate because it assumed a degree of specialist knowledge students did not have. The structure of the course was also too long and trainees were not able or willing to sustain their involvement in this kind of learning situation.

---

48. Skillshare is a DEET program under the Commonwealth Government's NEWSTART strategy to assist long-term unemployed people. It amalgamates a number of previous programs in an Australia-wide network. The aim is to help people unemployed for 12 months or more, and those considered as the disadvantaged unemployed. It is not a program solely for Aboriginal people, although they certainly qualify under the disadvantaged criteria. Training emphasises obtaining and retaining employment and skills acquisition (see DEET Programs 1989-1990;66 for further details).

49. Interestingly, the employer's version of the scenario with the same employee was her prejudice, now confirmed, that Aborigines are not reliable staff.

## **Brambuk Cultural Centre**

1. The Brambuk Strategy Plan of 1989 mentioned a general need for training skills:

- develop training...through TAFE (DEET working on this).
- must be on-going and be a major aspect after opening day.
- interpersonal skills important:
  - e.g. how to deal with antagonistic/ignorant visitors
- training should also incorporate cultural aspects.

But management and training at Brambuk, other than in areas such as the building trades, was handled within the project's training structure. Brambuk's idea of job training begins with the premise that the Aboriginal employee is unlikely to be an expert in all the fields required to successfully administer a major business enterprise. They opt for Aboriginal trainees to learn through practical experiences by working alongside experts hired for their particular skill or expertise. The only formal training programs Brambuk supported was training in building skills. Their general view is that training and management should not be considered in isolation from one another.

2. Enterprise development does not always follow an ordered path. Ideas of management, and fluctuations in government funding commitments, require a development plan which is flexible. The recent three year appointment of a centre manager in May 1990, together with shifts in staffing direction, contrast with Brambuk's earlier development projections.<sup>50</sup> The 1989 Strategy Plan is now seen as overly optimistic about predicted employment levels at the Centre. Presently there are only three Aboriginal men employed on contracts, funded in two cases through the ANPWS consultancy program but likely to terminate in the near future.<sup>51</sup> The centre manager estimates that a minimum of 12 staff will be needed by the official opening (now shifted from October to early December 1990). Immediate staffing is needed for the restaurant and artefact shop, and in administration. Other employment positions will be identified by Peat Marwick, Melbourne. This firm has a brief expected to

---

50. The appointment of the Centre Manager occurred after the facilitator's contract with the project finished at the end of April 1990.

51. The positions were funded for specific tasks such as the change to Aboriginal names and research on the rock art sites.

develop a business and enterprise management plan, including the necessary employment positions.<sup>52</sup>

3. Brambuk's centre manager is non-Aboriginal. He has a background in museum education and commercial retail. Despite minimal contact with Aboriginal people, many Aboriginal staff felt this was an advantage as relationships were not likely to be determined by pre-conceptions. The centre manager has already identified a dilemma with Brambuk's employment policy of finding the 'best person for the job': the most suitable employees may well be non-Aboriginal people and if this is so, their employment would contradict the original intention and spirit of the enterprise as an Aboriginal venture.

4. An immediate problem is continued employment funding. The guarantee of continued government funding is not water-tight and the present C&E budget has been halved since the manager began. This financial stringency provides a strong financial incentive for employing untrained or semi-trained Aboriginal staff who are eligible for wage subsidies through AEDP TAP programs. Brambuk will also need assistance from DEET with subsidies for training costs and wages once the business plan identifies additional employment positions.

5. Brambuk's funding details were discussed elsewhere (see chapter 2). Conservation and Environment, the Victorian Tourism Commission, and the Victorian State Division of Aboriginal Affairs continue to fund the venture.<sup>53</sup> Currently government assumes that the centre manager will reduce public subsidies to a negligible amount during his term of appointment. The business plan is expected to specify lucrative avenues for generating income. Additional government subsidies are subject to confidence in the centre's long-term ability to operating independently.

6. Administrative personnel from CFL involved with Brambuk conspicuously contrasted their ideas of Aboriginal training and management with attitudes adopted by other government departments. The Ministry of Planning and Environment and the VTC continue to deal with Aboriginal clients and Aboriginal enterprises with thinly disguised paternalism.

---

52. The management plan is expected to be available from Peat Marwick by the end of August 1990.

53. The latter is no longer part of the Ministry of Environment and Planning but a separate administration.

7. Other major points of attitudinal difference centre on ideas about Aboriginal enterprise development. The differences centre on issues and models of Aboriginal self-management and community development. Employment training was a contentious issue. Some CFL staff argued that employment training courses for Aborigines were unnecessarily long and the outcomes useless because many programs were basically paternalistic, discouraged independence and made little sense in community terms. As with welfare, such training cast Aborigines to be passive recipients. As an alternative to this, CFL staff at Brambuk advocated a flexible approach in training and enterprise development based on options for decision-making in contexts which empower people. They saw enterprise development in such contexts as directly educative. To them Brambuk represents a successful example of a model of regional responsibility in Aboriginal self-management and a business venture where decisions are kept at the local level. However, Brambuk's success may be exceptional. It had the advantage of a highly skilled and personable facilitator working with the management team over four years and personnel involved in daily consultations was small enough to foster consensus.<sup>54</sup>

8. Other branches of government involved with Brambuk were less enthusiastic about Aboriginal self-management. The former Aboriginal Affairs branch of MPE adopts a conservative approach to Aboriginal cultural tourism as an economic enterprise. Although the section has substantial funds available for Aboriginal projects, little strategic research seems to inform their sponsorship or choice of project. Decisions to sponsor cultural projects are said to be direct responses to local Aboriginal initiatives, although it was not clear how determinative their influence was in decisions.<sup>55</sup> MPE's approach to cultural tourism in Aboriginal communities reflected conservative bureaucratic considerations focusing on financial accountability as a central priority. The Snowdon report (1989) on remote community self-management issues recognised bureaucratic paternalism as a major problem for independence in management. While the specific contexts differ (community management from commercial enterprise management) it is interesting to see how the same issues and problems appear; indeed they seem to be manifest in the same forms:

...The knowledge and skills required to manage the responsibilities devolved were basically those needed to manage the facilities and infrastructure of any

---

54. Fewer than 10 people were involved.

55. They have field officers who spend a total of a possible 8 days in the field the size of Victoria each month.

small country town and consequently involved a fairly sophisticated European managerial and technical expertise. However, in no cases were comprehensive training programs implemented as a pre-requisite to the introduction of these structures or the devolving of responsibilities...

Those management problems.....reflect a limited perspective on Aboriginal self-determination and self-management in that they are primarily concerned with financial management and accountability. These management aspects are of particular interest to governments and auditors-general given their concern to ensure proper accountability for the funds they receive...(1989;7-8).

Accountability is important. But successful employment training should suggest *why* it is necessary and *how* it is achievable for Aboriginal administrators.

### Lake Condah

1. The Lake Condah project gives no indication of employment opportunities for district Aborigines. Portland CES records low unemployment rates for Aboriginal people in the district (ten registered males and one registered female), but this is likely to reflect only those persons officially registered for benefits. The district rate of unemployment was quoted as 5.9 per cent registered unemployed persons.<sup>56</sup>

2. Information about possible Aboriginal trainee positions in the Lake Condah project were not accessible to this researcher. The VTC offered no public statements on their employment policy in the project; at least none were offered to this researcher to explain their present approach.<sup>57</sup> What commitment the VTC has to Aboriginal employment equity policies is not publicly known. The Lake Condah project is however centred on Aboriginal culture. It is the structure of the enterprise and the lack of Aboriginal access and participation in the scheme which suggests that ultimately Lake Condah is merely a novel strategy in State tourism. Aboriginal participation in cultural tourism for economic independence is irrelevant in VTC plans for employment and training at Lake Condah.

3. Formal training courses for Aboriginal employees is not always the most suitable style of education for occupational competence. Yet government funding agencies pin their hopes on formal training as insurance for their financial investment assuming that trained staff are competent to accept full financial and managerial responsibility for a

---

56. Ref. Mr. Brendan Bowden, CES Portland, Victoria. 10/4/1990.

57. A formal request in writing was sent to the head of the Koorie Unit requesting information on Lake Condah's development plan for inclusion and accurate representation in the report. I received no reply or acknowledgement from the Unit.

project. Experience shows that Aboriginal enterprises demand skills training for particular jobs, together with broadly-based training programs progressively developing skills through practical involvement in business management and enterprise development.

## *Cairns: Case Studies*

### **Tjapukai Dance Theatre**

1. Tjapukai Dance Theatre employs thirteen full-time male dancers and three reserves. Dancers receive on-the-job training with dance routines and choreographed performances. Dance is regarded as both a cultural and 'natural' endowment. However, public dance performances require tuition in stage skills like dramatic presentation, voice projection, and so forth. The Theatre's Aboriginal stage manager and technician have also learnt their skills on-the-job; although a second stage manager receives formal training under a wage subsidy program organised through the CES. Tjapukai's employment costs for Aboriginal staff are subsidised through funding under the Commonwealth Government's TAP policy.

I mentioned elsewhere the work roles filled by Aboriginal women in the Tjapukai enterprise. A number of women enrolled in clerical courses with Cairns TAFE have had work placements at Tjapukai.

2. Tjapukai management recognised early that a potential hurdle in their commercial enterprise was different cultural understandings by Aboriginal employees of the social skills required to be successful in tourism. Sales and promotions in tourism demands a vivacious, direct interactional style, and clients expect service characterised by friendly, confident, interpersonal exchanges. Work in the gift shop demands staff engage with customers in order to sell merchandise. However, management commented on the diffidence of many Aboriginal staff in their interactions with clients and a shyness about talking confidently and freely with customers. Aware of these difficulties, management encourages staff to adopt more successful interpersonal styles for dealing with people. Management does not tackle the issue in any formal way, but relies instead on a quiet word of advice or direction to the individual concerned. Work experience is thus an educative process for the Aboriginal staff. It is crucial that in this enterprise Aboriginal people are highly visible to the visiting public; not only in the performances, but also at the booking office, the sales counter, and in advising customers

purchasing items from the range of Aboriginal souvenirs on sale. Many visitors to Tjapukai want to speak to Aboriginal people and their experience of doing so, as they can in the shop, may be the closest encounter many of them have to do this.

3. Understanding the personal demands of cultural tourism required of those involved in enterprises is not instinctive amongst Aboriginal people in Kuranda or elsewhere. From time to time local Aborigines approach Tjapukai management for employment. Unfortunately, the theatre has little work to offer other than the specific needs of the show. Unfamiliarity with the demands of a tourism enterprise are evident in other areas of community contact with Tjapukai. Members of the Kuranda Aboriginal community are always welcome to sit in as audience whenever there are unsold seats. But some people disturb performances by giggling at the sight of family or friends on stage. Such reactions are not the product of malice, but often a response of embarrassment or 'shame' at an individual's public displays of self-expression. Such audience reaction is predictable and familiar in Aboriginal social circles, but totally inappropriate in the context of the theatre and its endeavours. Similarly, talking or loud whispering by Aboriginal members of the audience has caused difficulties. The management has learnt to deal with these factors, but takes a strict line on inebriated persons who are never allowed into a show.

4. Tjapukai theatre has opened new employment options for Kuranda Aborigines. Men particularly have benefited, as I mentioned above. Dance offers men an alternative career outside conventional employment in forestry, the railways or national parks, all of which has in fact contracted over the last ten years and forced men into long term unemployment and loss of skills. Dance is a prestigious form of employment with undreamt-of material rewards. Ironically, this has caused problems with some individuals finding it difficult to balance their personal success with their role as a member of the dance team.

#### **Jabiru Cabaret Theatre**

1. Jabiru Cabaret employs a large staff, apart from the dancers. Staff for the kitchen, bar, and table service are needed and although Aboriginal people may be employed in one or other of these areas, there is no deliberate policy of racial preference to fill these positions in particular ways.

2. Jabiru dancers are professionally trained and qualified prior to joining the cabaret. Technical versatility is important because the show demands dancers perform competently in both traditional and contemporary formats. Management recruits at

least one untrained male and female dancer of promise each year in recognition of the pool of talent in many of the northern communities, and to provide an alternative for aspiring dancers which doesn't require training in a southern city. Such sponsorship makes good sense as public relations. It also ties in with a future proposal for a school of dance under the administrative umbrella of the Aboriginal and Islander Access program at Cairns TAFE. In this forum the immense local interest and talent for dance, now left to languish through lack of opportunity, could be fulfilled and new employment generated.

3. Jabiru management describes their working relationship with staff as akin to that of a 'family'. Staff have organised a scheme pooling tips to provide funds for group outings to local tourist venues such as a day trip to the reef, or white water rafting. Both staff and management participate in the scheme.

4. According to management, the dancers are paid above the Award wages, relative to the pay scales set by Actors Equity. Formal employment contracts are not standard practice and conditions and terms of employment are subject to direct negotiation between employee and management. Additional employment regulations are formulated as needed and on the basis of consultation and consensus between management and staff. Lateness, for instance, is penalised by a \$10.00 fine for every half hour a performer is overdue for rehearsals. The money collected is sent to a local charity.

5. Training does not feature strongly in work relations at Jabiru because dancers are hired as fully trained professionals. Recruitment for new cabaret dancers is most successful through word-of-mouth contacts, although auditions for new dancers are held locally, and advertisements appear in the national newspapers. Successful applicants usually have formal training in classical or modern dance and receive selection preference.

Individual dancers sometimes accept engagements for 'out work' with educational groups, tourism promotions, or charity organisations. Decision to accept extra work is left to the individual concerned and earnings made are kept by them.

6. Jabiru management complained that employment training programs and wage subsidies for dancers are not available. This is not the case where Aboriginal staff employed in mainstream hospitality or tourism work such as food and beverage service

or catering. The management was especially concerned over the lack of training subsidies and funding support available to their enterprise on the grounds that the enterprise is neither wholly Aboriginal nor wholly non-Aboriginal, and therefore anomalous in terms of present funding policies. This statement was offered by the management and may not reflect the whole story since according to Cairns CES Jabiru participate heavily in the wage subsidies program for Aboriginal employees under EEA.

#### **Kuku-Yalanji Rainforest Walk**

1. The Kuku-Yalanji enterprise receives assistance from the Queensland Government through the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. DEET currently funds courses in administration for the directors of the enterprise and the training is on-going given the frequent changes amongst directors. Staff from the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs help with accounting and auditing of the venture.

2. Aboriginal people who participate in the Gorge enterprise receive no wages as they are all in receipt of welfare benefits; recipients are entitled to make \$20-\$30 per week over their benefit. Work is voluntary, whether it involves the men acting as guides or the women serving tea and damper. This arrangement will change with the introduction of CDEP to the Gorge. There is a future possibility of on-going wage subsidies under EEA (Enterprise Employment Assistance).

3. Employment training programs for people in the Gorge community will fail in the first instance unless they are held on-site. Mossman people are reluctant to travel any distance from familiar territory, even to Cairns (about 70 kilometers away). Training programs must also recognise that there are two different and separate Aboriginal communities in Mossman; those who comprise the Gorge reserve community and those in the town proper. These communities do not always share cultural or political commonalities. Presently, they are trying to work together on projects of mutual benefit under the guidance of a youth worker funded by ATSIC and employed at the Goobidi-Bamanga Co-operative. She has organised training courses in tourism and hospitality (kitchen work, housemaid, food and beverage) with work experience and opportunities for future employment in restaurants in Mossman and in major hotels at Pt. Douglas.

4. The youth worker identified a need for education in life skills, literacy and specific job training. Aboriginal people in the Mossman area in her experience are generally

disadvantaged in competitive employment through poor education, lack of transport and problems caused by alcoholism. Employment training is designed to take account of gaps caused by these social problems. But specific skills training for the Gorge's tourism enterprise is also directly addressed. Cairns TAFE college organised a tour leadership course to assist with the practical aspects of operating a tourist venture and offered units covering details such as pricing schedules for artefact sales; planning rainforest walks; organising bookings for visiting groups; catering; and so on. Future training courses include a ranger training program for Aboriginal men to complement the present enterprise.

5. Training courses are important occupational and social priorities for Aboriginal people both at the Gorge and in Mossman, especially since the demise of full-time seasonal work. Restructuring of the sugar cane industry and mechanisation has limited work options for Aboriginal employment. In this context tourism looks like a very attractive option.

The youth worker at Goobidi-Bamanga Cooperative sees Aboriginal women as the success stories of formal training courses. Women have high attendance rates and usually complete programs. They often suggest additional courses. The attrition rate for men on the other hand, is high and is attributable to factors as diverse as a football injury, to shame and guilt at having missed several lessons. The youth worker is attempting to redress the gender imbalance by looking at courses which capture the male imagination and desire for education. She is directing her attention to training courses in basic car mechanics, and programs to further literacy skills for non-readers and part-readers.

6. The youth worker commented that success in community-based education has to reflect community interests and programs must be developed in consultation with the students in order to correlate with client needs. Consultation also enables the discerning teacher to isolate some of the cultural parameters by which they must work. For example, the reluctance of Mossman people to travel far from their homes was a consideration when training courses were organised by the Cairns TAFE. The college decided to bring the school to Mossman rather than expecting people with no transport to travel outside their home territory.

### **Warrama Living Culture Centre**

1. Training schemes at Warrama are funded through DEET and AEDP programs which provide additional access to wage subsidies and enterprise employment assistance grants for Aboriginal enterprises. As the Centre develops and more staff are required, Aboriginal and Islander trainees will enroll in hospitality and tourism courses offered by the Cairns TAFE. In April-May 1990 there were only two trainees at the centre; one in clerical work and the learning curatorial/conservation skills.<sup>58</sup> A number of men are training in landscape gardening while preparing Warrama's grounds and work under direction from a qualified landscape consultant. Cairns CES sponsors six Aboriginal people at Warrama under TAP funding.

2. The implementation of further training schemes are currently limited at Warrama. The project employs a limited number of qualified people who, because of pressure of work are not in a position to effectively provide on-the-job employment training. No Aboriginal apprentices are involved with Warrama at this stage, and indeed they will not be required until facilities open. When this happens Warrama intends training their staff through the Cairns TAFE and with financial assistance from DEET.

3. Some problems with the existing training structure were already evident. Pressure to open in August 1990 leaves little time to teach trainees. One staff member felt it would be more appropriate to employ qualified assistants at this stage in the project, but this option is unlikely given a policy commitment to train and employ local Aborigines.

4. Warrama's administrators expect to employ 70 Aboriginal people through DEET programs by the August 1990 opening. They did not mention which areas of the project would absorb such massive staff numbers. Clearly, Warrama will have to rely on continued wage subsidies to employ people in these numbers.

---

58. I was told there were actually three trainees, but I have not been able to associate the third member with a specific area of work.

## CHAPTER 7. CASE STUDY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following points stand out as points for recommended changes in development of Aboriginal involvement with tourism. There are several levels on which the issues of Aboriginal tourism should be clarified, but which presently tend to merge. First, the issue of enterprise development must be identified and separated from issues of training in tourism skills for full-time employment in the formal labor market. The differences between these activities is mirrored at the policy level, DEET's programs as compared with ADC's emphasis on commercial enterprises or DAA's support for cultural programs.

Secondly, these differences are found in policy implementation with Aboriginal projects like cultural centres, and are compounded by lack of coordination between State and Commonwealth Government policies in support of Aboriginal participation in the tourist industry through various avenues such as employment, enterprise development, small businesses, management, cultural and arts centres, and so forth. Moreover, the definition of cultural as opposed to commercial has in the past, at least, had some bearing on the application of support funding to particular ventures. It is apparent that criteria which discriminates between ventures is applied in some situations (see comments about funding from the Jabiru management) and not necessarily in other contexts (see the discussion on funding for Warrama Living History Centre).

Thirdly, this report offers less data than expected on the details of funding programs adopted by commercial and government-sponsored cultural projects involving Aboriginal people in Queensland and Victoria. Publications from DEET and AEDP programs indicate the wealth of support schemes available to Aboriginal communities and to individual Aboriginal entrepreneurs and the general flexibility in options for skills training, employment-based training, enterprise development initiatives and funding support. However, irrespective of problems (e.g. the short-term EEA funding when long-term support is essential) within these schemes, and in fact their limited capacity to assist with viable commercial development, the principal obstacle to Aboriginal clients is access to information. As it happens this is not a problem confined to Aboriginal people. Many of the enterprises surveyed made use of only those programs

at a State or Federal level which their bureaucrats knew of. But since Aboriginal people tend to rely on bureaucrats from government bodies to assist with financial support and management in their projects they are vulnerable to lack of adequate information. The fact that few government project administrators or private project administrators had much knowledge of the kind of funding and industry support available to their project shows up in the limited reportage on this subject. Better communication within bureaucracies, especially for bureaucrats directly involved with cultural projects, and accessible information through personally communication, perhaps via a government field officer, is essential in Aboriginal contexts. Literacy in Aboriginal contexts is a problem for effective communication, quite apart from the issue of specialist jargon. Further, publications about funding programs are sent to the community organisations and tend to stay there (see the problems of disseminating information about the Lake Condah project amongst the Kerrup-Jmaras).

Fourthly, the tourism industry tends to regard Aboriginal involvement as some government must assume responsibility for its development. This is true in both Queensland and in Victoria, despite the different approaches adopted by the State Governments.

### ***DEET: Department of Education, Employment and Training***

There is a plethora of support schemes in job training, economic incentive schemes, mainstream skills training, enterprise management and community management programs, to name a few of those available to Aborigines under AEDP. Some of the Aboriginal tourism ventures interviewed in this study were aware of these programs; however, many Aboriginal-run enterprises remain ignorant of government financial assistance available to them.

### ***TAP: Training for Aborigines Programs***

TAP offers various options for training schemes through the CES and every effort is made to devise appropriate courses to specific needs. There is provision for training through formal courses, or on-the-job training. All TAP programs endeavour to make Aboriginal people 'work ready' in terms of a particular industry and its occupational requirements.

## ***AEDP: Aboriginal Employment Development Policy***

This is a comprehensive policy and set of strategies formulated in response to the recommendations contained in the Miller Report (1985). The focus in policy recommendations and strategic development is Aboriginal employment, training, education and support for economic enterprise development. Tourism and hospitality are two of the designated industrial areas for re-structuring under AEDP initiatives and guide-lines:

A strategy geared towards...an increased emphasis on enterprises enabling Aboriginal people to participate in the growth of tourism in many rural and remote areas of Australia; and increased emphasis on enterprises servicing the tourist industry, particularly with respect to artefact production and marketing (AEDP Series P3 Commonwealth of Australia 1987:5).

### ***Main Issues: Enterprise Development***

1. Outside mainstream labour markets the quest for Aboriginal employment equity is a matter of identifying the most appropriate means to enhance potential economic options for Aboriginal communities. The Miller Report highlighted tourism as a potential source of employment opportunity for Aborigines, although experience suggests caution is warranted. The social impacts of tourism are not fully understood by many Aboriginal communities. Moreover, there are pressures from within the industry to standardise all social and cultural parameters and such uniformity may not be acceptable or desired by many Aboriginal communities who wish to retain their cultural autonomy and integrity. Too often valid reasons to hesitate over proposals for ventures in cultural tourism are swept aside in a rush to embrace the hopes of easy wealth. With care and forethought, cultural tourism may indeed be lucrative for some Aboriginal communities. For example, broad-based enterprises combining several tourist facilities such as a bush walk with camping facilities and a store, is more likely to be successful than an enterprise which pins all hopes on one attraction or service. Integrated ventures allow people to specialise in labour and skills they are most comfortable with, while accommodating Aboriginal proclivities into the enterprise structure. Communities need to decide whether their skills are best suited to an enterprise based on diversification or specialisation; both approaches have merit,

although an enterprise should identify an appropriate mix of skills for their particular situation.

2. A fundamental question in Aboriginal tourism is whether government policy is fostering cultural tourism within the tourism industry or whether cultural tourism is another name for enterprise development. The differences are not always clear in policy initiatives. Yet there are certainly different implications for those involved. Community-based employment and enterprise strategies under AEDP initiatives has earmarked tourism and hospitality for employment equity and enterprise development. As yet the policy which best serves these ends is unidentified: AEDP strategies within an industry (such as implementing an EEO policy) or assistance for the separate development of Aboriginal enterprises within a particular industry. If tourism is expected to provide economic panaceas to dependency then a long hard look at the economics of tourism for long-term community employment and economic viability is essential. Many of the projects examined in this study were unlikely to fulfill such expectations long-term.

3. The concept of the Aboriginal 'community' as a monolithic social group of common concerns and interests is over-worked. It is not especially useful as a model for Aboriginal community development (see Sullivan, 1987). In practice community projects are usually run by an organisation responsible to the community; just as the term 'community' may be loosely applied to individual enterprises within a community which benefits the whole group (for example, Hobbler's Bus Service in Kuranda is a private venture but has community benefits in cheaper transport for local Aborigines). There are thus different perspectives of community development. However policy rarely articulates the finer distinctions.

4. Aboriginal involvement in cultural tourism is largely the domain of government sponsorship and not an area of commercial investment.<sup>59</sup> Several explanations are possible for this state of affairs. Aboriginal tourism is a publicly sponsored forum for Aboriginal cultural revival while implementing a potentially viable solution to communities now lacking any economic base. Secondly, government sponsorship keeps faith with a political concern and responsibility for Aboriginal culture. A further

---

59. A recent article on a proposed major resort development in *The Australian*,; August 18-19, around the Trinity Inlet, listed the facilities it will offer guests and included an Aboriginal cultural centre. This is one of the first private commercial developments in Aboriginal cultural tourism I am aware of in the Cairns area. It will undoubtedly cause some concern to centres like Warrama if the development goes ahead.

explanation is ideological. Cross-cultural enterprises are accused of being exploitative and morally corrupt by their critics. Privately financed enterprises reviewed in this study were criticised by both public administrators and Aboriginal people alike as exploitative of Aboriginal people and their culture. These ventures were certainly under pressure to be financially successful; none of them were in the position of other ventures I saw which were often rescued from difficulties by on-going government grants. Yet Aboriginal bureaucrats argued that private investment in Aboriginal cultural tourism was a form of racial exploitation by non-Aborigines, especially if the business was successful. Exploitation is an interesting, although emotive issue. Despite the rhetoric, there may be little actual difference between Aborigines accepting funding from government and accepting funding from the private sector of the tourism market. Whatever the funding source, in the ventures I surveyed for this study the determining factor on cultural exploitation and appropriation was the structure of the power involved at the personal and administrative level. Power in a venture impinged on Aboriginal participation, consultation processes, financial decision making, employment policies, accountability, and so forth. Moreover, one might argue that cultural enterprises beholden to government budgets are no more independent or free from exploitation and manipulation than ventures sponsored through private money. In either context the power relations are issues of access, management and the structure of the social relations involved. Often Aboriginal people do not have equality with non-Aborigines or governments on these points, even in enterprises ostensibly for their benefit.

5. The objectives of cultural tourism must be determined initially through a consultative process and built into the concept of the enterprise and into subsequent training programs. Tourism ventures I saw followed one of two paths; either the enterprise is planned and implemented by a government department with minimal Aboriginal consultation and managed according to administrative goals; or an enterprise is a response to demands for Aboriginal economic betterment through self-management. In either case, Aborigines may be expected to establish an economic base, without necessary knowledge or experience, and little continued support to manage projects over the five year establishment period estimated for tourism ventures.

6. Aboriginal tourism exposes social and cultural disparities between Aboriginal aspirations and those of the funding body. The two perspectives may be compatible, but this is not necessarily so. Brambuk management, for example, noted that their project aspirations were often unrecognised by associated administrations. Similarly,

Aboriginal groups associated with Brambuk had diverse views of the project's objectives. Brambuk's management was expected to balance the discrepancies and arrive at workable compromises. The appointment of staff is one area where different goals for a venture often arise.

7. Cultural tourism is yet another area for debate over Aboriginal self-determination and self-management. Tourism in its broadest definition is an issue of resource management, whether as control over forms of cultural expression and symbolism, or in issues related to land management. Control and management of cultural tourism ultimately depends on the ability of Aboriginal people to make decisions according to the needs of their own communities, although they may also make decisions on behalf of the wider community. Tourism in national parks (as in Uluru or Kakadu) or areas like Cape York, North Queensland, concerns both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Responsible decisions about the development of exploitative or extractive industries in these areas, whether in mining or tourism may be decided by the majority populations (in this case Aboriginal) resident in the areas. Hence there is a wider political and social responsibility to include Aboriginal communities in proposed commercial tourist developments which utilise non-renewable resources in areas where cultural interests in land are paramount. Not all Aboriginal communities nor individuals share similar attitudes to conservation perspectives, especially where they may be asked to forgo an opportunity for some independent economic base. Clearly, this is one of the most difficult dilemmas to resolve in Aboriginal tourism.

8. Aboriginal people need time to identify, consider and articulate their socio-economic needs in cultural tourism and a process to help them achieve such objectives. Learning through practice has the advantage of situating issues in specific, concrete contexts. Critics pan such educational processes as slow and without formal accreditation, unlike training courses with measurable outcomes available from institutions such as TAFE and CAE. But for many Aboriginal students formal learning situations provide no bridge by which to translate their academic experience into appropriate situation-specific responses. Sensitive to such mismatches Brambuk deliberately kept Aboriginal staff out of formal training programs during the Centre's early development. However, on the eve of Brambuk's opening staffing remains a problem. They are actively seeking qualified staff and now place importance on unqualified staff completing formal training. Brambuk identifies successful management relations as relaxed non-hierarchical relationships amongst personnel in the project, and flexibility in the work

place. Jabiru describes their work place as operating 'like a family'. Other ventures follow more conventional management models.

9. Patience from funding bodies is necessary if Aborigines are to manage their own enterprises according to their social vision of the outcomes. In many cases communities are grappling with issues of commercial enterprise development for the first time and discovering how tourism operates. Thus, project success requires administrative flexibility too. Without these qualities Aboriginal powerlessness is once again institutionalised as communities are marginalised from effective involvement; a situation likely at Lake Condah. Kerrup-Jmaras concerned over the direction of the Lake Condah development feel frustrated and impotent to change conditions which exclude them from the Elders Corporation negotiations with VTC and from access to the Lake Condah property. Those who live locally realise the potential conflict within their own community caused by the lease arrangement. However they are unsure of how to respond because it is unclear to them who holds the power to make such arrangements and how decisions are made. Within the Kerrup community knowledge about the new arrangements at Condah are fragmented. Consequently, some Kerrups from Portland and Heywood continue to visit Lake Condah and Darlot Creek for recreational fishing and camping without realising the lease prohibitions.

10. Aboriginal communities embarking on business ventures need the same help as other groups embarking on a commercial enterprise. However, although 60 per cent of all small businesses in Australian society fail within the first three years of operation this is often a deliberate business strategy during financial difficulties.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, public tolerance of financial failure in Aboriginal enterprises backed with public money, rejects failure as acceptable. The question of conditions for success need a realistic approach rather than expecting people with limited experience of handling money other than a fortnightly welfare cheque to deal easily and quickly with the financial responsibilities required in commercial ventures.

### *Training: Tourism Hospitality*

1. Attracting Aboriginal or Islander staff to the hospitality sector of tourism is not easy, despite many hotels adopting Aboriginal EEO policies. The Aboriginal Liaison

---

60. It should also be noted that these businesses are backed by private capital, not public money.

Officer for the Southern Pacific Hotel chain commented that the hospitality industry's desire for Aboriginal staff was not met by interest within the Aboriginal community. Reasons for poor interest levels vary from Aborigines finding the working environment culturally foreign and alienating; to pressure for constant good humour and affability. Tourism hospitality demands shift work but offers little financial security as a business subject to market pressures and seasonal fluctuations. Careers are not glamorous. Aspiring staff soon realise this when they are expected to work their way up the occupational ladder with stints at various levels in the trade.

Personal factors which have an origin in cultural proclivities also influence career decisions. Hotel and CES staff both commented on the tentativeness of many Aboriginal employees to present themselves as well groomed and confident.<sup>61</sup> Such problems are resolvable, but the cultural prohibition on personal adornment or ostentation in dress and behaviour, known as 'acting flash' is an inhibition to be addressed. Cultural inhibitions like this impinge directly on employment but trainers may not be aware of the need to deal with it. A training program which did acknowledge the limitations of students' experiences in the wider society took trainees to major tourist attractions around Cairns to promote appreciation of the nature of tourism and tourists' interests. Such an employment training course was considered radical; yet it uncovered a basic fact that Aboriginal trainees had never visited such venues.

2. Other five star hotels in Cairns have expressed interest in employing Aboriginal staff. The Radisson Hotel chain with hotels in Cairns and Pt. Douglas deliberately sought Aboriginal staff during their recruitment drive.<sup>62</sup> Preparation for work in mainstream hospitality is provided by Cairns CES in conjunction with the hotels. Their six week introductory course for Aboriginal recruits is followed by classes within mainstream hospitality education. Aboriginal employees tend to slot into the industry at the operator level; in areas such as food and beverage service, as receptionists, night porters and kitchen hands. There are few openings for Aboriginal staff in management or supervisory roles.

---

61. Tjapukai management mentioned the same problem with their counter staff.

62. Radisson Hotels are American-owned and have a stated employment policy of recruiting staff from disadvantaged groups, including physically handicapped people. They also try to employ locally resident staff when possible, as they have done at Mossman. They are not a 5 star hotel, but probably best described as a 3-4 star chain.

3. Officers in the Cairns CES felt their training schemes could be improved if additional skills-based courses were available some time after the initial training program. Evaluation procedures to assess courses and provision of follow-up support services for Aboriginal trainees would improve retention rates after Aboriginal staff entered the industry. Specific criticism of hospitality training programs were made by a number of CES staff. They felt programs overemphasised course objectives without first targeting or identifying the special needs of particular Aboriginal groups involved. Staff were unable to address these issues themselves because of administrative workloads which kept them desk bound and limited post-program monitoring and counselling. Further, staff were of the opinion that the Cairns CES needs to develop closer links with the hospitality industry and to counsel employers about wider employment options for Aboriginal staff, aside from placements at the lower end of the career ladder.

4. CES staff were equally critical of the government tendering system for CES funded Aboriginal training schemes. The best training staff were not always employed because tendering favoured the lowest estimated costs, rather than favouring the most suitable consultants. Training courses needed consultants with proven records of successfully working with the cultural proclivities of their clients. This highlighted the feelings of many staff that cultural factors played an important role in successful training, yet this dimension was often under-estimated in the choice of trainer and the development of training programs.

5. An issue which has yet to be confronted by the tourism industry and government training agencies is the broad question of cross-cultural service industry employment. If Cairns is an example for Aboriginal employment in the service industry of tourism it is clear that few changes have been made to the Aboriginal employment position. Those Aboriginal staff who are employed are generally in non-supervisory roles and often in support roles such as kitchen staff, house-keeping positions and so forth. This is partly a response by the tourism industry itself who, on the basis of comments made during the research, retain conservative opinions of the potential of Aboriginal people to participate in the industry outside of a narrow spectrum of roles. Hotels which have tried to address the issue do not represent a general trend within the industry and tend to be isolated attempts. Nevertheless, the Commonwealth Government through DEET offers financial incentives for Aboriginal enterprise development and employment in the private sector under JST (Job Skills Training); WIP (Work Information Tours); WIP (Work Information Programs); AEIS (Aboriginal Enterprise Incentive Scheme);

EEA (Enterprise Employment Assistance); and EMTS (Enterprise Management Training Scheme) to name a few. One difference between these programs is that some are designed to encourage the development of Aboriginal small businesses in the private sector and others are to help sponsor Aboriginal employment in the formal labor market.

# APPENDIX 1: THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL QUESTIONNAIRE, JUNE 1990

## CULTURAL TOURISM IN THE CAIRNS REGION NORTH QUEENSLAND: APRIL, 1990

The Commonwealth government's Office of Multi-cultural Affairs is vitally interested in your answers to the following questions. This questionnaire is part of a larger research project on cultural tourism in Eastern Australia.

We are especially keen to understand your experience of cultural tourism. Your contribution is particularly important to the study.

### How to fill out this questionnaire.

To answer most of the questions you only need to place a tick (✓) in a box. Please tick the answer which is closest to your view. Sometimes you are asked to write in an answer... in that case, simply write your answer in the space provided.

We hope you enjoy the questionnaire. Thank you very much for taking part in this study.

### 1. Background information.

a) What is your sex? Male ☐ Female ☐

b) When were you born? Just the year will do: 19 \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Where is your permanent residence?

☐ Northern Territory ☐ Western Australia  
☐ Victoria ☐ ACT  
☐ Queensland ☐ Tasmania  
☐ New South Wales ☐ South Australia  
☐ Overseas: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Have you visited the Cairns region before?

Yes ☐ No ☐

### 4. Who else is visiting with you?

☐ Partner/Spouse  
☐ Friend  
☐ Spouse and children  
☐ No-one  
☐ Other: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?

☐ No formal schooling  
☐ Primary  
☐ Secondary/form 4, year 10  
☐ Secondary/form 6, year 12  
☐ Technical College or TAFE  
☐ University, CAE

### 6. Where are you staying? In a ...

Hotel ☐ Hostel ☐ Caravan Park ☐

### 7. Are you planning to stay in the Cairns region (in total)

☐ One night  
☐ 2-3 nights  
☐ 4-7 nights  
☐ more than one week.

### 8. What is the primary purpose of your trip to the Cairns region? (tick as many choices as you wish)

☐ To see the tropical rainforest  
☐ To visit friends or relatives  
☐ Conference/seminar  
☐ Other business  
☐ Pleasure/holiday  
☐ To have contact with Aboriginal people  
☐ Other: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

### 9. How interested in Aboriginal culture are you?

Very ☐ Mildly ☐ Not very ☐ Not at all ☐  
interested interested interested interested

### 10. Which of the following aspects of Aboriginal culture are you interested in? (tick as many as appropriate)

☐ Arts and craft works  
☐ Dancing  
☐ Bush foods and hunting  
☐ Religion and mythology  
☐ Ceremonies  
☐ Aborigines today

☐ Rock art  
☐ Aboriginal history  
☐ None of the above  
☐ Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_

### 11. Have you visited any of the following cultural tourism enterprises? (tick more than one box if necessary)

☐ Tjapukai Dance theatre  
☐ An Aboriginal arts and crafts shop  
☐ Jabiru cabaret restaurant  
☐ Mossman Cultural Centre  
☐ Wirrama Cultural Centre  
☐ Aboriginal rock art in Cape York  
☐ None of the above  
☐ Other: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

### 12. Have you been to any of the above on a guided tour? Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes, please specify which of the above you saw \_\_\_\_\_  
the name of the tour company \_\_\_\_\_

### 13. From your visit to one or more of the above, did you ...?

☐ Buy some art or craft work?  
☐ Speak with Aboriginal people?  
☐ Find out more about Aboriginal culture?  
☐ Participate in activities (eg dancing, bush foods tour),  
☐ Aboriginal people?

### 14. What experience from the following list would most interest you as part of your

contact with Aboriginal people in the Cairns region?

Please put the appropriate number in the box. ☐

1 Bush food tours with Aboriginal guides.  
2 Chance to speak directly with Aboriginal people.  
3 Walking tours of local rainforest with Aboriginal guides.  
4 Aboriginal Cultural centre with displays.  
5 Videos/films on Aboriginal history and culture of the region.  
6 See local Aboriginal artefacts manufactured.  
7 Tours of Cape York rock art.  
8 See regional Aboriginal dances.  
9 Other: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

### 15. Did you buy any Aboriginal souvenirs?

Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

### 16. Are there any activities with Aboriginal people you would have liked during your stay which were not available?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 17. What was the best thing about your stay in the Cairns region?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 18. What was the worst thing about your stay in the Cairns region?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aboriginal Culture and Tourism. 1988. *Papers and Reports of the Conference presented by the Victorian Tourism Commission, Halls Gap 20-21 July 1988.*
- 1987(a). *The Economic Impact of Tourism on the Mutitjulu Community, Uluru (Ayers Rock-Mount Olga) National Park.* Working Paper No.7. Department of Political and Social Change. Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra.
- 1987(b). *The Impact of Tourism on the Warmun (Turkey Creek) Community East Kimberley.* ANU: CRES. Canberra. East Kimberley Working Paper No. 19.
- Altman, J.C. 1988. *Aborigines, Tourism and Development: the Northern Territory Experience.* Australian National University North Australia Research Unit Monograph. Darwin.
- Altman, J.C. 1989(a). Tourism Dilemmas for Aboriginal Australians. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 16, pp 456-476.
- Altman, J. (Chairman). 1989(b). *The Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Industry. Report of the Review Committee:* Department of Aboriginal Affairs. July 1989. Canberra: AGPS.
- and Taylor, L. 1989(c). *The Economic Viability of Aboriginal Outstations and Homelands.* A Report to the Australian Council of Employment and Training. Canberra, AGPS.
- Blanchard, C.A. (Chairman). 1987. *Return to Country: The Aboriginal Homelands Movement in Australia.* Report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, March 1987. Canberra: AGPS.
- Brady, M. 1985. The Promotion of Tourism and its effect on Aborigines. In Palmer, K. (ed.) *Aborigines and Tourism: a study of the impact of tourism on Aborigines in the Kakadu Region, Northern Territory.* Northern Land Council, Darwin. pp 10-51.
- Bradbury, B. (Chairman) 1988. *Tourism shopping in Australia.* Report of the Committee of Inquiry. Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories. Canberra: AGPS.
- Brynes, J. 1988. *Enterprises in Aboriginal Australia: 50 Case Studies.* The Rural Development Centre, Armidale.
- Come Share Our Culture. A Guide to Northern Territory Aboriginal Tours, Arts and Crafts.* Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureau. Valid 1 May 1990 to 30 April 1991.
- Commonwealth of Australia. 1987. *Aboriginal Employment Development Policy: Community-Based Employment, Enterprise and Development Strategies.* Series P1-5. Canberra: AGPS.
- Coombs, H.C. Mc Cann, H. Ross, H. and Williams, N. M. (eds) 1989. *Land of Promises: Aborigines and Development in the East Kimberley.* AIATSIS and CRES, Canberra.

- Coutts, P.J.F., and Frank R.K. and Hughes, P. 1978. *Aboriginal Engineers of the Western District, Victoria*. Records of the Victorian Archaeological Survey, No. 7. June. Ministry For Conservation, Melbourne.
- Department of Aboriginal Affairs. *Annual Report 1988-89* Australian Canberra: AGPS
- Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories. *Annual Report 1988-89*. Canberra: AGPS.
- Department of Community Services and Ethnic Affairs. *Annual Report 1988-89*. S.R. Hampson, Government Printer, Brisbane.
- Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands. 1988. *Far East Gippsland Tourism Strategy*. Jean Gordon, Government Printer, Melbourne.
- Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1989-90 Programs: August 1989, Canberra: AGPS.
- Department of Employment, Education and Training. *Annual Report 1988-89*. Canberra: AGPS.
- Draft Report on Travel and Tourism. 1989 Industries Assistance Commission, Canberra.
- Gale, F. and Jacobs, J.M. 1987. *Tourists and the National Estate: Procedures to Protect Australia's Heritage*. Special Australian Heritage Publication Series No. 6, Canberra: AGPS.
- Hawkins, G. 1989. *Cultural Tourism*. NSW Branch Museums Association of Australia. December 1989. Issues 3 & 4.
- Hughes, K. A. 1990. *Tourist Satisfaction and One-Day Guided Tours*. Unpublished MA thesis. James Cook University, Townsville.
- Jafari, J. 1990. Research and Scholarship: the Basis of Tourism Education. *The Journal of Tourism Studies*, Vol.1, No.1. May 1990. pp 33-41.
- Johnson, J. 1990. *Annotated Bibliography: Tourism and Aborigines in Queensland and Victoria*. Unpublished manuscript. AIATSIS, Canberra.
- Langford, R. 1988. *Don't Take Your Love to Town*. Ringwood, Victoria.
- Marcus, J. 1988. The Journey Out to the Centre: the Cultural Appropriation of Ayers Rock. In Rutherford, A. (ed.) 1988. *Aboriginal Culture Today*. Dangeroo Press, Sydney.
- Mathieson, A. and Wall, G. 1982. *Tourism: Economic, Physical and Social Impacts*. Longman, London.
- Miller, M. (Chairman). 1985. *Report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs*. Canberra: AGPS.
- Ministry for Planning and Environment. *Annual Report 1988-89* Jean Gordon, Government Printer, Melbourne.

- Morley, C.L. 1990. What is Tourism? Definitions, Concepts and Characteristics. *The Journal of Tourism Studies*, Vol. 1, No.1. May 1990. pp 3- 8
- National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia.....Sharing Our Future*. July 1989. Canberra: AGPS.
- Palmer, K. (ed.) 1985. *Aborigines and Tourism: a study of the impact of tourism on Aborigines in the Kakadu region, Northern Territory*. Northern Land Council, Darwin.
- Paper and Proceedings of a Seminar on The Environmental Impacts of Travel and Tourism*. March 1989. Industries Assistance Commission.
- 'Reaching a New Audience'. *Arts Policy in Queensland Under a Goss Government*. Policy Paper Prepared by the State Parliamentary Labor Party. September, 1989.
- Report of the Australian Government Inquiry into Tourism 1986*. Canberra: AGPS. 1987.
- Report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs*. August 1985. Canberra: AGPS.
- Rutherford, A. (ed.) 1988. *Aboriginal Culture Today*. Dangeroo Press, Sydney.
- Sharing the Park: Anangu Initiatives in Ayers Rock Tourism. A Tourism Impact Study*. Central Land Council, Pitjantjatjara Council, Mutitjulu Community, Alice Springs, 1987.
- Smith, V.L. (ed.) 1978. *Host and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
- Snowden, W. (Chairman) 1989. *A Chance for the Future: Training in Skills for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Community Management and Development*. Report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs. Canberra: AGPS.
- Sullivan H. (ed.) 1984. *Visitors to Aboriginal Sites: access, control and management*. Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, Canberra.
- Sullivan, P. 1988. *Aboriginal Community Representative Organisations: Intermediate Cultural processes in the Kimberley Region, Western Australia*. ANU: CRES. Canberra. East Kimberley Working Paper No. 22.
- The Australian Way*. June 1990. Australian Airlines In-flight magazine.
- Tourism Trends in the Cairns Region*. January 1990. Research and Regional Development Division. The Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. Brisbane.
- Warrama The Concept: Warrama and Tourism*. 1990. Pamphlets on Warrama Living History Centre Pty. Ltd.
- White, I. 1986. *Annotated Bibliography on Tourism and Aborigines*. Prepared for the East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project and the Central land Council. ANU:CRES. Canberra. East Kimberley Working Paper No. 13.

Ziegelbauer, W.M. 1988. *The affects of Tourism on Aborigines: Economic, Social and Cultural Aspects*. Unpublished research paper for Final Year of Bachelor of Arts in Aboriginal Affairs Administration, School of Aboriginal and Islander Administration, Adelaide.

## WORKING PAPERS ON MULTICULTURALISM

1. Metropolitan Ghettos and Ethnic Concentrations *James Jupp, Andrea McRobbie and Barry York*
2. The Global Milkbar and the Local Sweatshop: Ethnic Small Business and the Economic Restructuring of Sydney *Stephen Castles, Jock Collins, Katherine Gibson, David Tait and Caroline Alcorso*
3. Ancestry Groups in Australia: A Descriptive Overview *Frank L. Jones*
4. Non-English Speaking Background Immigrant Women in the Workforce *Caroline Alcorso*
5. Government Service Delivery to People of Non-English Speaking Background in Remote and Rural Areas *Allbrook Cattalini Research*
6. The Pathfinders: Women of Non-English Speaking Background in White Collar Occupations in the Public Sector *Kate Barnett*
7. Ethnic Business in South Australia: A Sociological Profile of the Italian Business Community *Robert Holton and Rosario Lampugnani*
8. Different Agenda: Economic and Social Aspect of the Ethnic Press in Australia *Phillip Bell, Sandra Heilpern, M. McKenzie and J.Vipond*
9. Immigrant Access to Small Business Support Services *Ken W. Strahan and Karen E. Luscombe*
10. Immigrants and Occupational Welfare: Industry Restructuring and Its Effects on the Occupational Welfare of Immigrants from Non-English Speaking Communities *Adam Jamrozik, Cathy Boland and Donald Stewart*
11. Cultural Differences and Conflict in the Australian Community *Linda Fisher and Jeremy Long*
12. Sadness is Losing Our Country, Happiness is Knowing Peace: Vietnamese Social Mobility in Australia, 1975-1990 *Tran My Van and Robert Holton*
13. Focused Study of Non-English Speaking Background Immigrants in Remote and Rural Areas of Australia *Nicholas Conner and Sandra Heilpern*
15. Australian Aborigines and Cultural Tourism: Case Studies of Aboriginal Involvement in the Tourist Industry, *Julie Finlayson*
16. Ethnic Minorities and Equity Strategies in Tertiary Education *Helen Meekosha, Andrew Jacubowicz and Esther Rice*
17. Public Disorder in Australia 1985-1989 *Robert Holton*

*Reports available from the CMS. Price \$20.00 each. Mail, phone or fax orders to:*  
 The Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of Wollongong  
 P.O. Box 1144 Wollongong NSW 2500 Australia  
 Ph. (042) 21 3780 Fax. (042) 28 6313

## THE SERIES

*Working Papers on Multiculturalism* is a joint venture between the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of Wollongong.

By publishing research projects commissioned by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the series aims to promote a wider understanding and appreciation of multiculturalism in the Australian community.

## THE OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS



The Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) is a division within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. It was established in March 1987 primarily to advise the Prime Minister, the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Multicultural Affairs and the Government on policy issues relating to multiculturalism and to co-ordinate the development and implementation of Government policies relevant to meeting the needs of a multicultural society.

## THE CENTRE FOR MULTICULTURAL STUDIES



The Centre for Multicultural Studies was established as an independent research centre within the University of Wollongong in 1978. It is the oldest and largest research centre in its field in Australia. Its charter is to investigate the social policy issues that arise from immigration and ethnic diversity. In meeting the intellectual and practical challenge of an era of ever-growing linguistic and cultural pluralism, the CMS has made a significant contribution to policy development, research and analysis, and tertiary teaching, both nationally and internationally.

ISSN 1035-8129