Ord Bonaparte Program

'ABORIGINAL MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING FOR COUNTRY'
Sub-program

PROJECT 5.1

SCOPING STUDY REPORT

Stuart Cowell and Kylie Pursche
2002

Plants and Animals Project Workshop, Halls Creek. 2001 LtoR: Archie Tanna (KLC), Joe Blythe (Linguist), Bonny Deegan, Peter Tamba, Des Darby, Vera Cox, Stan Brumby, Lorraine Stretch, Rosie Malgil, Rose Stretch.

Kimberley Land Council

Contents

CONTENTS **1**

TABLES **2**

FIGURES **2**

INTRODUCTION **3**

RATIONALE BEHIND PROJECT 4

REGIONAL DESCRIPTION **7**

GEOGRAPHY 7
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND ABORIGINAL GOVERNANCE 8

SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE **16**

POPULATION 17
SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE 17
LABOUR FORCE 22
Occupation *23*
Industry of Employment *26*
BRINGING IT TOGETHER: SEIFA 29
Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage *30*
Index of Economic Resources *30*

EXISTING PLANNING / MANAGEMENT PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES **32**

PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT BY ABORIGINAL PEOPLE 33
Aboriginal Organisational Framework *34*
Government Agencies *36*
Native Title *39*
Property Planning *41*
Protected area management *42*
Use of Natural Resources *43*

CONSULTATION WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLE FROM THE OBP REGION **45**

MEETINGS 45
KEY THEMES AND ASPIRATIONS 48
Project Outputs *48*
Establishment of regional network for Aboriginal participation in Ord Bonaparte Program *49*
Development of a communications strategy *50*
Establishment of linkages OBP projects and other projects to Sub-Program 5 ..... *52*
Report on liaison/interaction with other projects within the OBP *54*
Data Access and Management *54*
Plan(s) for subsequent project(s) based on the results of the scoping study for 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2003. ..... *55*

WHICH WAY NOW? **56**

ASPECTS OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS 57
COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH AND PARTICIPATORY PLANNING 58
NO SIMPLE SOLUTION 60

BIBLIOGRAPHY **61**

Tables

TABLE 1: ABORIGINAL POPULATION IN THE EAST KIMBERLEY IN 1996. 17
TABLE 2: ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL POPULATION CHANGE IN THE KIMBERLEY 20
TABLE 3: ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL POPULATION CHANGE IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY 21
TABLE 4: ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL POPULATION CHANGE IN THE ORD-BONAPARTE REGION 22
TABLE 5: OCCUPATION AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ABORIGINAL PEOPLE WITH OCCUPATION IN ATSIC REGIONS 24
TABLE 6: OCCUPATION AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL PERSONS WITH OCCUPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS 25
TABLE 7: INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN EMPLOYMENT IN ATSIC REGIONS 27
TABLE 8: INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL PERSONS IN EMPLOYMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS 28

Figures

FIGURE 1: PROJECTS IN SUB-PROGRAM 5 AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE OBP. 7
FIGURE 2: MAP OF OBP REGION SHOWING SETTLEMENTS, CATCHMENT AND SHIRE BOUNDARIES 12
FIGURE 3: ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES, ATSIC ZONES AND NTRB BOUNDARIES IN THE REGION. 14
FIGURE 4: STATISTICAL BOUNDARIES IN THE REGION. 15
FIGURE 5: ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AS A PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION IN COLLECTION DISTRICTS 19
FIGURE 6: OCCUPATION FOR OBP STATISTICAL AREAS AND ATSIC REGIONS. 25
FIGURE 7: INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT FOR OBP STATISTICAL AREAS AND ATSIC REGIONS. 29
FIGURE 8: CORRELATION BETWEEN ABORIGINAL POPULATION IN COLLECTION DISTRICTS AND INDEX OF DISADVANTAGE 30
FIGURE 9: CORRELATION BETWEEN ABORIGINAL POPULATION IN CDS AND INDEX OF ECONOMIC RESOURCES ... 31

Introduction

This constitutes the **Scoping Study Report** as part of Project 1: Planning for Country of Subprogram 5: *Aboriginal Planning and Management for Country* in the Ord-Bonaparte Program (OBP). A full description of the OBP and its structure, including Subprogram 5, can be found in related OBP Research and Development Plan and on the internet at the Land and Water Australia homepage. The objective of this Scoping Study was to identify areas for the development of research projects for implementation within Subprogram 5.

This report highlights that:

- The Aboriginal cultural landscape of the OBP Region is complex and multi-layered. The historical, social, economic and environmental realities of Aboriginal people is accordingly diverse. Over simplification, presumption and assumption of Aboriginal peoples aspirations for participation and involvement in natural resource management and planning within the region would be naïve.

- Aboriginal people are still, statistically and in reality, experiencing extreme poverty, poor health and education levels, and their impacts. This is despite previous and ongoing regional development and planning activities aimed at better economic and social outcomes for the region. Although care needs to be taken when applying statistics as measures of well being, it is clear that regional development is still not focusing on the needs of the Aboriginal community. The OBP, and its sub-programs, with its focus on sustainable natural resource management, can only address issues in relation to this. The projects will aim to include through participatory planning processes the better involvement of Aboriginal people in regional natural resource management decision making and future planning.

- Aboriginal relationships to the region, and therefore Aboriginal involvement in the future of the region, are not restricted to people that live in the area encompassed by the Ord and Keep River catchments, but includes people from Kalumburu, Timber Creek and Port Keats. Planning for the management of the region should therefore allow for the involvement not only of resident populations, but also non-residents with responsibilities for the management of *country*.

- Maps and statistics suggest that Aboriginal people in the region of the OBP live in the towns of Kununurra, Wyndham, Warmun and Halls Creek however there are also many smaller Aboriginal communities throughout the region. Although not all of these are used throughout the year they show that Aboriginal people live on *country* throughout the region. There has been a significant shift toward outstations as living areas (Taylor 1991:2). This demonstrates the active and ongoing cultural responsibility and association with *country* and the need for 'dispersed' ways of working with communities in any approach to developing regional management strategies.

- Aboriginal people in the region are already carrying out management and planning for *country*, and have done so for millennia. A key task is the development of a regional *lingua franca* for communication between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal natural

resource users. For example an integral component of traditional land management techniques is the conservation and passing on of knowledge to future generations.

It is critical to note that this Report does not attempt to explain, nor propose to represent, the views of all Aboriginal people of the Ord-Bonaparte region. The six month timeframe of the Scoping Study has allowed for thorough consultation with some groups and preliminary consultation with others. Aboriginal peoples have a fundamentally different view about the role, nature and relationships between society and natural resources than non-Aboriginal people. The full nature of this relationship can only be explored in detail with Aboriginal peoples themselves. This report proposes projects to facilitate the process of better understanding and practical application.

An additional aim of the work was to identify ways to ensure Aboriginal people would have input and participation in the way Subprogram 5 would operate. The initial project was developed in discussions between the CSIRO and Kimberley Land Council, with some input from the Northern and Central Land Council, and the Balangarra Aboriginal Corporation.

This report is set out as follows.

- A background to the rationale behind the Aboriginal sub-program.
- Presentation of Census data comparing the position of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the region according to the main measures of social function and wellbeing.
- Discussion of the current approaches to natural resource management and planning undertaken by Aboriginal people in the region.
- Establishment of regional network for Aboriginal participation in the OBP
- Development of a communications strategy
- Establishment of linkages to other projects
- Report on liaison/interaction with other projects within the OBP
- Plans for subsequent projects based on the results of the scoping study for 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2003 and 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2005
- Key areas proposed for further investigation.

Rationale behind project

Subprogram 5 was developed as a project with three key components – Planning for Country, Living on Country and Using Country. These represented a linear progression of working with the region's traditional owners to explore the development of land management plans for their *country*, and in developing ways that Traditional Owners' aims would be a core part of natural resource management decision making.

The aims of Project 1: Planning for Country were:

- *For Aboriginal people to give informed consent for their involvement in OBP and its processes, and access to their country for research*
- *For Aboriginal people to express what they want for their country (marine, aquatic and terrestrial) and the region, now and into the future (people's aspirations)*
- *To identify options that allow those aspirations to be expressed in decision-making about the region*

- *For Aboriginal people to plan for their country and participate in making plans for the region (Communities develop capacity to be involved in regional planning)*

In achieving these aims the project needed to:

- *Allow for initial identification of communities and ways to ensure effective communication strategies are established between communities and OBP, and will scope out existing activities that can be linked to, and can link from, the OBP.*

The aim of this paper is to:

- *Compile social and demographic profile of Aboriginal population at community and regional scale using public and institutional record … to characterise the relationship of communities to the region, and to identify communities to work with. Patterns of current land use and tenure will also be summarised.*[1]

  and

- *Review existing planning and management processes and activities being undertaken by Aboriginal communities and agencies in the region. Review of existing information on land use aspirations (eg reports prepared for EIA)*

The aims of the Scoping Study were to undertake an initial primarily desktop identification of who the Aboriginal communities in the region are and link them to different resource uses in the region; and set out planning and management activities already being undertaken in the region.

This second task is critical in acknowledging that even where those plans are not written there are already management and planning activities in place.

This work has its origins in a Scoping Study undertaken in 1999 by CSIRO (Johnson et al 1999) for Land and Water Australia and Fisheries Research and Development Corporation. The Scoping Study outlined research and development needs for the sustainable use of natural resources in North Australia. Among its many recommendations, the Scoping Study concluded the:

- *"… importance of addressing the relevance of human and cultural context and diversity in values within planning and management.*
- *… need for decision-making to integrate planning and management across terrestrial and marine environments*
- *… critical importance of negotiation and conflict resolution strategies for future natural resource planning and management activities.*
- *… need for active and effective community involvement in planning and management activities.*
- *… need to enhance transfer of information between researchers, managers and key stakeholders across catchments, estuary and marine systems.*" (p ii, 1999).

The Scoping Study also noted that:

[1] A consequence of subsequent changes in the OBP, particularly in resource availability and project structure, is that no work has been completed in relation to patterns of current land use and tenure.

- *"In most jurisdictions, there appears to be strong political resistance to indigenous aspirations being addressed in mainstream natural resource planning and management activities.*
- *Indigenous people have to date largely been marginalised in economic and natural resource planning, management and decision making, despite the demographic reality of tropical Australia.*
- *There is a lack of effective recognition of indigenous aspirations and rights in resource management in the region, particularly the lack of incorporation of native title into broad land use objectives.*
- *Communities and indigenous agencies are poorly resourced for participation in planning and management processes.*
- *There has been poor integration of indigenous knowledge in resource planning and management practice, in part due to a lack of appropriate mechanisms to do so.*
- *Stakeholders identified the need for parity between indigenous tenure systems and agency management boundaries, or recognition of the distinction between them at a management and jurisdictional level.*
- *There is a need for development of multiple use strategies on indigenous controlled land so as to achieve viability in landowner's terms.*
- *There is a need for capacity building to assist in planning and management was seen to be urgently needed among Aboriginal landowners.*
- *The lack of cohesion between State, Territory and Commonwealth agencies on indigenous resource management issues remains a serious constraint. (Johnson et al 1999, p iii)*

In responding to this, the subsequent Research and Development Plan for the OBP identified the need for collaborative research, community participatory planning and capacity building projects to support the involvement of Aboriginal people. These projects were to be spread throughout the OBP but were to have specific focus in an identified Aboriginal research program – Subprogram 5: *Aboriginal Management and Planning for Country*. It was argued that, as well as full involvement in all aspects of the research across the OBP, a specific and focused investment was required to allow for the effective involvement of the region's Aboriginal people. Thus recognising that whilst Aboriginal people have an interest in all research there are also specific research needs that Aboriginal people have that are different to non-Aboriginal peoples research priorities.

Subprogram 5 was built around the need to identify the Aboriginal communities and what involvement, if any, they would want with the OBP. From this point the aim was to engage in a process of collaborative research development, community-based planning and management, utilising the method of participatory processes for planning for country. The Subprogram was to operate across three projects – Planning for Country (community based planning and capacity building), Living on Country (fundamental ethnoecological research to identify the range of values applicable to *country* for used in later management planning), and Managing Country (the application of the planning skills and subsequent knowledge – including outputs from other OBP Subprograms – to the management of *country* and enterprises on *country*).

Subsequent events and issues have, inevitably, curtailed the comprehensive scope of the work originally proposed. Some steps remained fundamental - to better understand who the communities are and what existing planning and management approaches currently existed.

Two paths have been followed for each task – desktop and community based. These reflect twin goals of building bridges across the divide between participatory processes and more technically focused approaches, and across the cultural divide between the whitefella proposal of the OBP and the communities to whom it was focused.

An illustration of where this subprogram and the projects fit within OBP is shown in Figure 1.

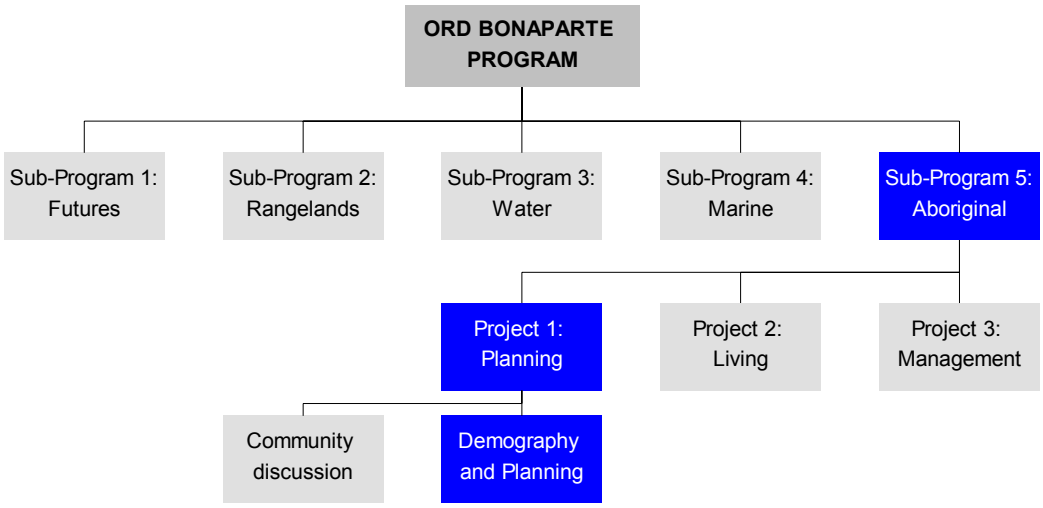


Figure 1: Projects in Sub-Program 5 and their relationship to the OBP.

Regional Description

Geography

The Ord-Bonaparte Program region is centred on the catchments of the Ord and Keep Rivers, at the southern end of the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf in northwest Australia. It is surrounded by the Great Sandy Desert in the South, the Timor Sea in the north and the Indian Ocean in the west.

There are four main townships within the catchment area – Halls Creek, Wyndham, Kununurra and Warmun. Two others are closely associated with the region – Oombulgurri and Kalumburu. In terms of administrative areas the region incorporates two local government areas in Western Australia (Wyndham-East Kimberley and Halls Creek), and one in the Northern Territory (Victoria).

This is illustrated in Figure 2 (p 11).

Cultural Landscape and Aboriginal governance

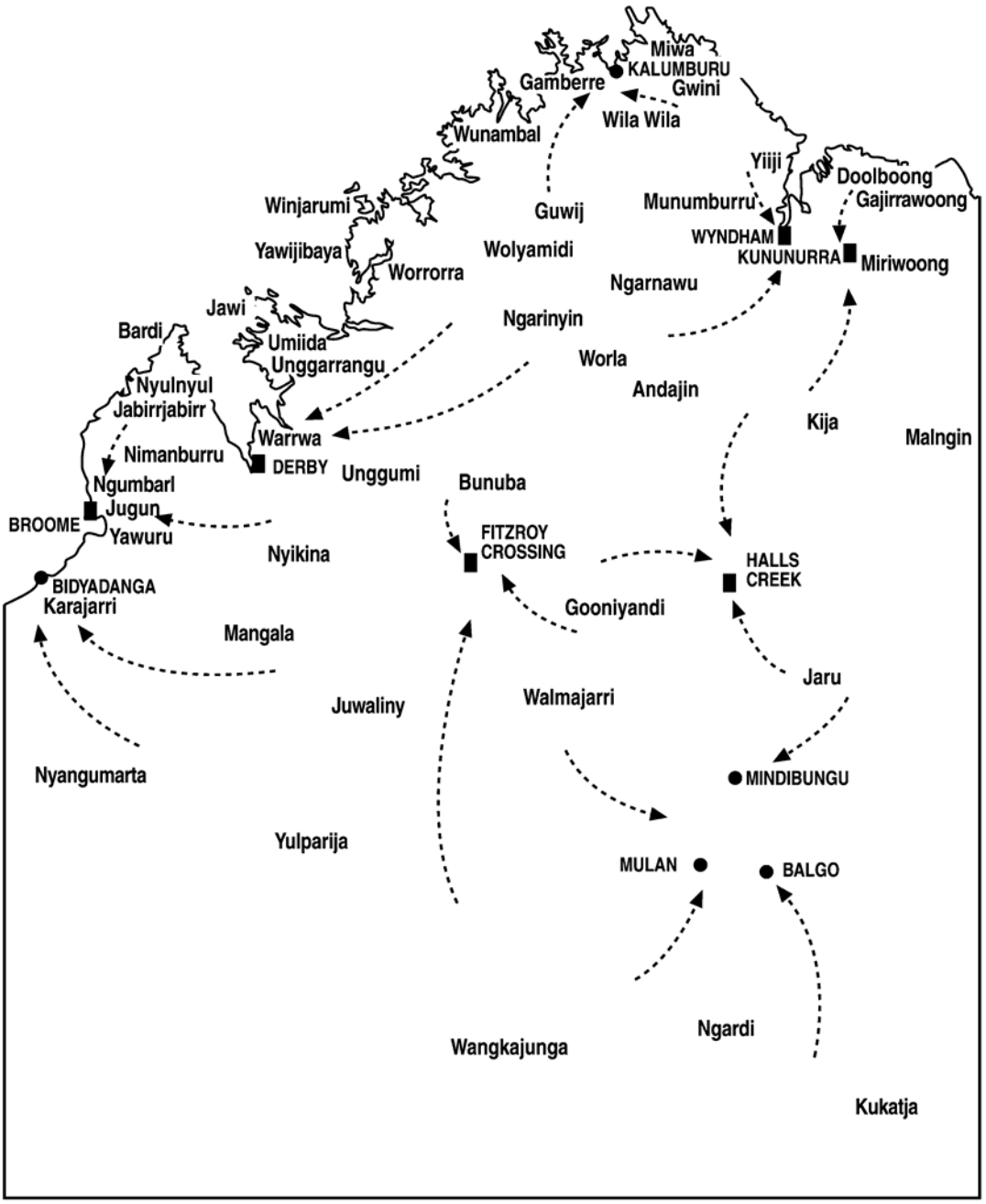
A basic overview is provided here of the cultural landscape of the OBP region. To provide a thorough and comprehensive description and discussion of the cultural make up of this region would take many books and is more responsibly held in the hands of anthropologists or linguists that have worked in the region for a long period of time (K.Barber, J. Bornmann, K. Doohan, F, Kofod, M.Langton, K. Palmer, H. Rumley, P. Sullivan, T. Tsunoda, N. Williams).

The OBP region is part of the traditional country estates of the Balanggarra, Gajirrawoong, Jaru, Kija, Malngin / Gurindji, Miriwoong, Ngaringman and Woola speaking peoples. As an example the Kija language group extends from Halls Creek to Warmun and encompasses different family groups and traditional country estates. Throughout the East Kimberley a complex web of Aboriginal customary familial relationships exist. Many Aboriginal people identify through language. For example a person will refer to themselves as Kija or Miriwoong or Jaru. Please see map of language groups produced by Kimberley Language Resource Centre on the following page.

But even this identification is not straightforward as Sullivan points out the complexity of the issue:

> *" Where these relationships are expressed as language relations we still have to deal with the question of members of language owning groups speaking several languages, or no non-English language, or dialects and regional variants of a language. And even here the production of language and languages varies according to social and spatial context" (2001, p21).*

The growth of native title claims has made the identification of people responsible for specific areas of land more tangible in some cases. As Sullivan points out the claim group is 'usually familiar with discussing and negotiating land issues' and 'are necessarily formulated on the grounds of a system of law and custom held by a community of native title holders' (2001, p22). Of course there are areas where conflict amongst parties as to who the correct native title holders exist. Sometimes these exist because of long standing conflicts between family groups or the pressure of proving connection to country through processes of the western legal system.



Kimberley Languages show where they were traditionally spoken. Since non-Aboriginal people came to the area there has been considerable change. The arrows indicate the general trend of movement (Courtesy of Kimberley Language Resource Centre).

Many regions are described in terms of their non-indigenous social structures. In many parts of Australia this may be more appropriate than in the OBP region. However, in this region the role of Traditional Owners and their supporting institutions, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and Native Title Representative Bodies (NTRB's) in

particular, creates another governance perspective. It would be incorrect to identify these as entirely separate perspectives, but they provide a different view of the region.

There is one ATSIC Regional Council in Western Australia (Wunan). Wunan Regional Council consists of 3 wards: Wunan ward (northern, coast and Kununurra), Yarleyel ward (central, Halls Creek and Turkey Creek) and Kutjungka ward (southern, desert area). There are 10 councillors including the Chairman and Deputy Chairman. In the Wunan Regional Council area there are over 80 Aboriginal communities and outstations. There is also one Regional Council in the Northern Territory (Katherine). There is one Native Title Representative Body (the Kimberley Land Council) in Western Australia, and two in the Northern Territory (the Northern and Central Land Council). There are currently eleven Native Title determination applications (KLC 1995:Map 1) in the region.

Taylor (1991:1) describes five categories of Aboriginal communities as used by the Commonwealth Aboriginal affairs portfolio in the 1980s. This still provides a useful point of reference when seeing the regional community as one based around Aboriginal rather than non-Aboriginal structures. These are:

1. "Discrete Aboriginal townships in remote areas often located on Aboriginal land and likely to be responsible for their own municipal-type services
2. Outstations [average size 30 people] and other small groups in remote areas linked to a resource organisation in a nearby Aboriginal township or other regional centre
3. Aboriginal communities in State or Territory capital cities and major urban areas
4. Aboriginal communities whose members are residents of country towns mixed in with a predominantly non-Aboriginal population
5. Groups of Aborigines living in an identified location or camp site near or within an urban area and having different arrangements from the town for municipal services or no such facilities at all" (Taylor 1991:1-2)

The Ord-Bonaparte region encompasses all of these other than category 3. Using this typology the communities in the region can be described as:

- Discrete Aboriginal townships – Oombulgurri, Kalumburu, Warmun
- Outstations - various
- Residents of country towns – Kununurra, Wyndham, Halls Creek
- Identified location or camp site – Kununurra particularly

It could be argued that Halls Creek may fit within both the first and third category.

This is illustrated in Figure 3.

It is likely that the existing residential pattern in the region will continue into the future. Coombs et al (1989) identify that some Aboriginal people will continue to live near or on *country*, others in town camps or identified locations and others as part of the regional centres entirely. Aboriginal people will move between these locations both temporarily visiting and on more permanent bases.[2]

[2] For a more detailed analysis see Williams and Kirkby (n.d.)

Outstations are seen as "critical operational bases for land management" that allow people to live on *country*, an important precursor to being able to manage it (ILC n.d). In the 1980's the Western Australian government began a program of excising small areas of land from vacant Crown land and some from pastoral leases and leasing these to Aboriginal people (Sullivan, 2001, p14). The establishment of outstations or living areas is still being negotiated with the stage government in parts of the OBP region.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) identifies there are two Statistical Divisions (Kimberley and Northern Territory-Balance) for the region, 3 Statistical Local Areas (Halls Creek, Wyndham-East Kimberley and Victoria) the general scale used for the reporting of statistical information, and 37 collection districts – the basic unit of data collection for census and other statistics. These boundaries are illustrated in Figure 4.

Ord River, Kununurra (photo OBP)

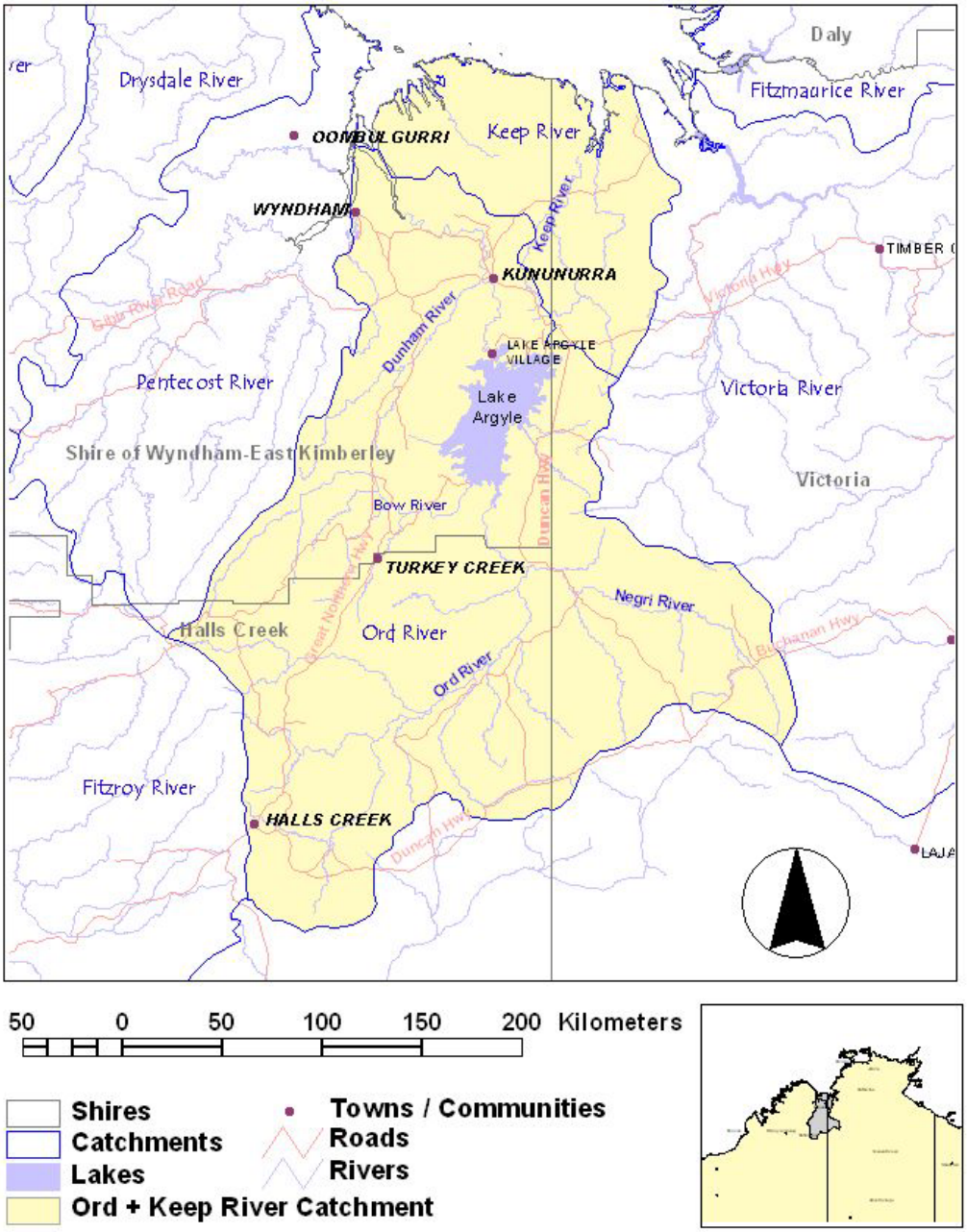
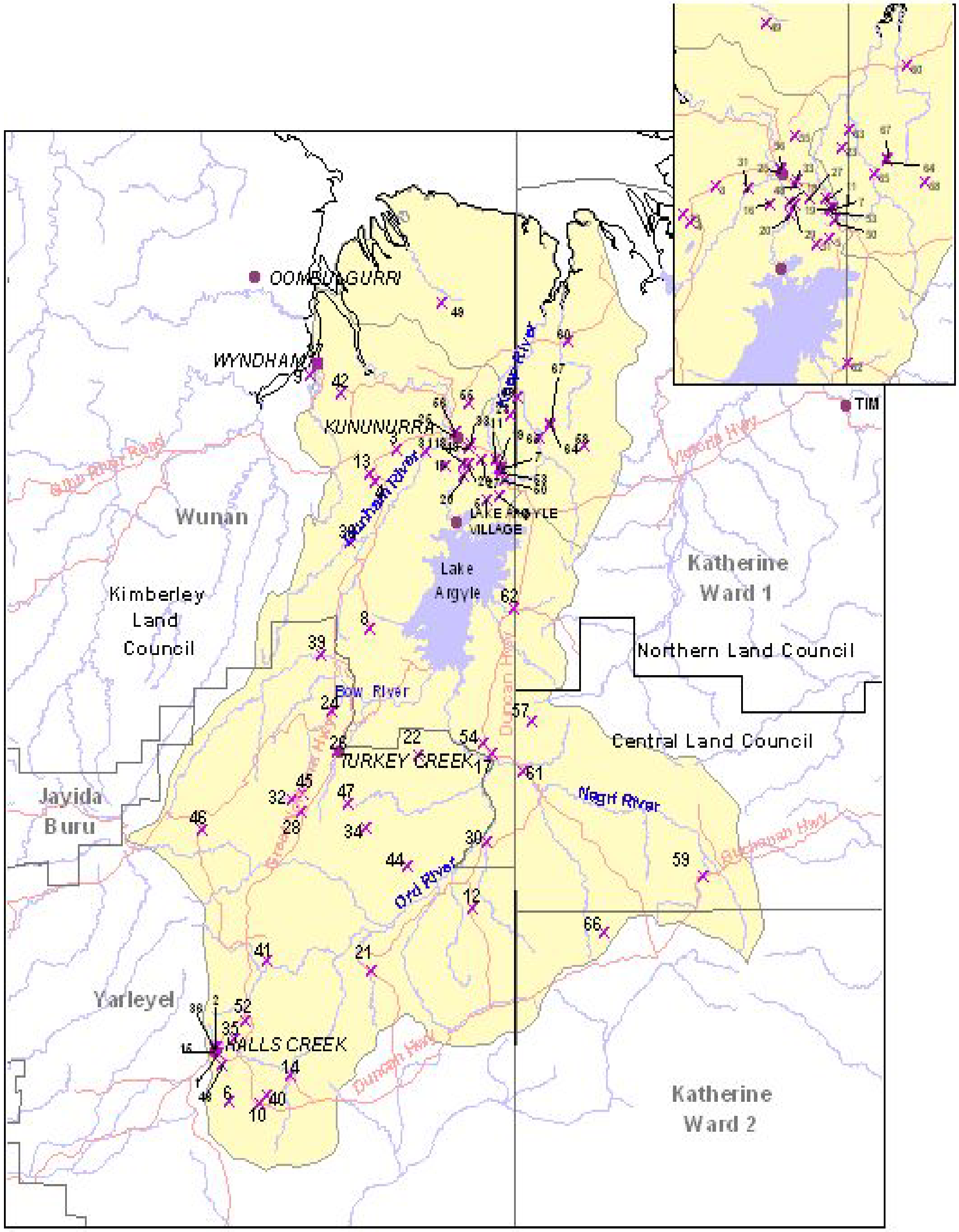


Figure 2: Map of OBP region showing settlements, catchment and Shire boundaries


OOMBULGURRI
WYNDHAM
KUNUNURRA
LAKE ARGYLE VILLAGE
Lake Argyle
TURKEY CREEK
HALLS CREEK
TIM
Wunan
Kimberley Land Council
Jayida Buru
Yarleyel
Katherine Ward 1
Northern Land Council
Central Land Council
Katherine Ward 2
Bow River
Ord River
Negri River
Duncan Hwy
Victoria Hwy
Buchanan Hwy
Gibb River Road

No.	Community
1	NICHOLSON CAMP
2	RED HILL
3	MOLLY SPRINGS
4	WUGGUBUN
5	DINGO SPRINGS
6	NGYALAWILLI
7	FOUR MILE
8	GLEN HILL
9	GUDA GUDA
10	BARANGYA
11	RED CREEK
12	CATTLE CREEK
13	DILLON SPRINGS
14	WUNGU
15	YARDGEE
16	YIRRALALLEM
17	RB RIVER JUNCTION
18	MUD SPRINGS
19	NGULWIRRIWIRRI
20	GEBOOWAMA
21	KARTANG RIJA
22	KAWANYPUNJAI
23	KUMBRARUMBA
24	BOW RIVER
25	NULLEYWAH
26	WARMUN
27	HOLLOW SPRINGS
28	WURRENRANGINY
29	BELL SPRINGS
30	MALANGAN
31	FLYING FOXHOLE
32	BAULU WAH
33	YUNA SPRINGS
34	KAWARRE
35	MILBA
36	MARDIWA LOOP
37	WARRAYU
38	WOOLAH
39	CROCODILE HOLE
40	LINGA
41	CHINAMAN GARDEN
42	GOODARL
43	WUNKUL
44	MINDI MINDI
45	KALUNGKURRIJI
46	JANTERRIJI
47	LUMUKU
48	EMU CREEK
49	NIMBING
50	COCKATOO SPRINGS
51	ALLIGATOR HOLE
52	FLETCHER FAMILY
53	EIGHT MILE
54	DARLU DARLU
55	WAWULM
56	MIRIMA
57	BAMBOO SPRINGS
58	BUBBLE BUBBLE
59	LIMBUNYA STATION
60	MARRALUM
61	MISTAKE CREEK
62	ROSEWOOD
63	SPIRIT HILL STATION
64	BUCKET SPRINGS
65	POLICEMANS HOLE
66	MT MAIYO
67	DOOJUM

Figure 3: Aboriginal communities, ATSIC zones and NTRB boundaries in the region.

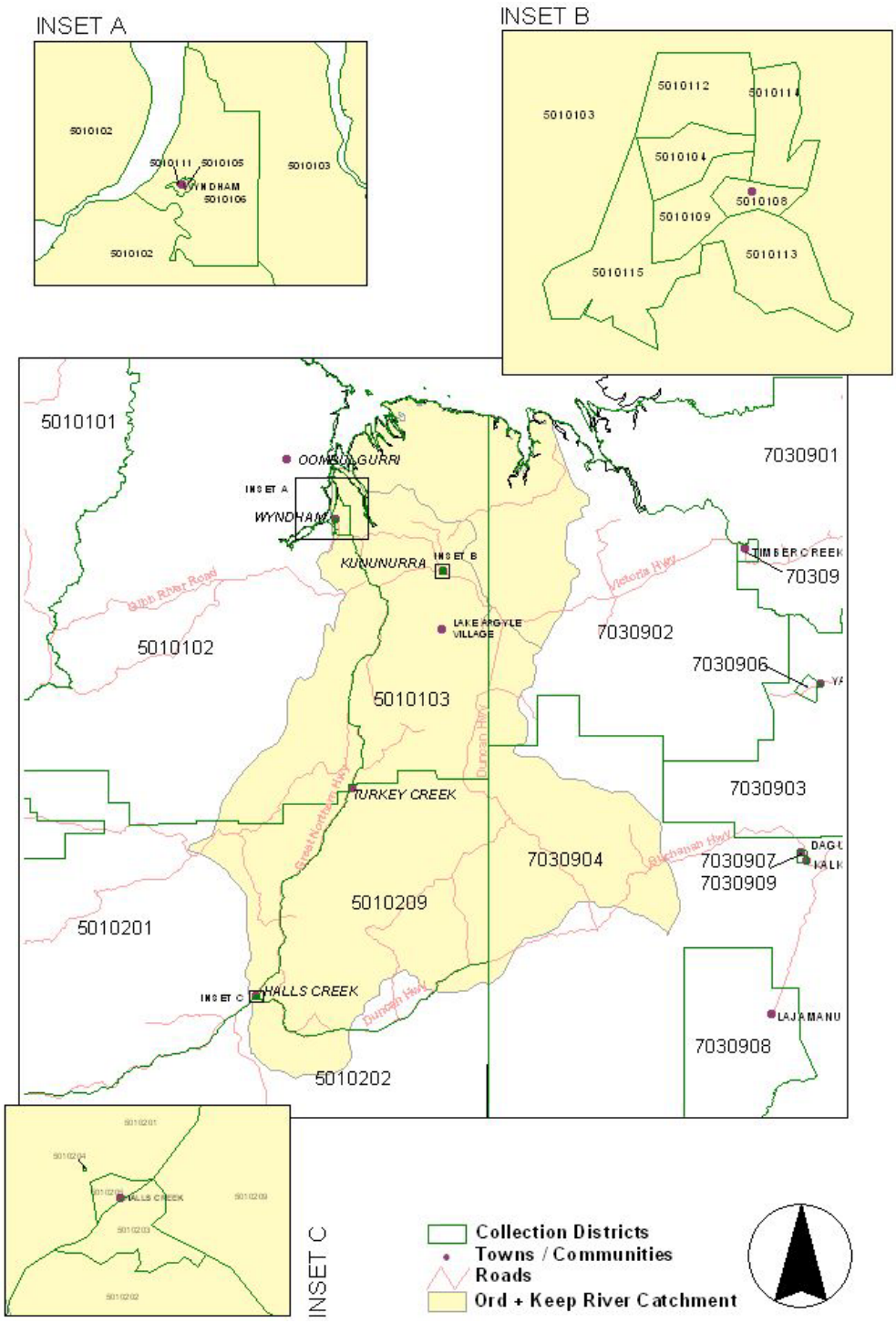


Figure 4: Statistical boundaries in the region.

Social and demographic profile

This section presents a basic set of summary statistics relating to Aboriginal people in the region and across a range of scales. The picture that is painted reinforces the recognised marginalisation of Aboriginal people from the regional economy and any benefits that economy may generate. This reflects the regional manifestation of a national phenomenon (see, for example, Yencken and Porter, 2001). However, as noted by Altman (1987) these indicators of apparent poverty are somewhat ameliorated by "…subsistence income, culturally different material aspirations[3], [and] different expenditure patterns."

The primary and most easily accessible social dataset available for social and demographic analyses is the ABS Census of Population and Housing and the various products that have been developed around it. These are useful for initial broad indications of regional characteristics and the identification of some communities within a given region. However, they are limited by their general nature, and by the statistical artefact that patterns in the community tend to be defined by the unit of measurement, rather than by actual social patterns.

Similarly, there are no straightforward and readily available 'institutional' data sets (organisational, legislative function, social networks). Nor are there cultural, attitudinal, values-based (community 'feeling' and preference), dependency (community with natural resource, community with community), or historical (social history, landscape change, values shifts) data available. The development of this data in building a basic picture of communities and their relationships with natural resources and natural resource users is a critical need that was identified by the OBP, but has, unfortunately, not been undertaken.

Effective planning exercises, primarily at the 'local regional' and perhaps at the 'regional' (bioregion, catchment, basin, departmental region) scales requires a finer scale of social and institutional understanding than can be provided through the readily accessible Census data. They require *substantial* investment in the gathering of effective socially and community (biophysical / social / geographic / interest) relevant data for decision-making.

The first national census to be undertaken that explicitly tried to account for Aboriginal people was in 1971, with a particular focus on the Northern Territory and Western Australia (Altman and Gaminiratne 1992, p 3). The national census appeared to under-estimate the population by approximately 25% compared to State based figures (Altman and Gaminiratne 1992:3). For the 1976 Census an improvement was made in procedures, including separate mapping of areas with high numbers of Aboriginal people and special procedures to encourage community involvement (Altman and Gaminiratne 1992, p 3). This resulted in a significant overall improvement in the population estimate, although some states (e.g. Victoria) were still significantly different. Gradual improvements subsequently have been made to increase the accuracy of the census data.

[3] Altman (1987) also notes that "…Aboriginal economic development aspirations may not be substantially different from those in the major society, but may also differ between Aboriginal groups."

Population

Populations and its rates of change are among the most basic of the descriptive statistics needed when developing a picture of the community – how many people are there? How fast is this changing? What is the direction of change?

As shown in the table below about one third of the Kimberley population is Aboriginal (ABS: IRDB2001). In Wyndham-East Kimberley one quarter of the population (24 per cent) are Aboriginal whereas in Halls Creek Shire more than half the population (56 per cent) are Aboriginal.

Social and demographic profile

	Total Population	Aboriginal Persons	Proportion Aboriginal (%)
Wyndham-East Kimberley (S)	8757	2096	24%
Halls Creek (S)	3301	1839	56%
Ord (SSD)	12058	3935	33%
Fitzroy (SSD)	20968	7228	34%
Kimberley (SD)	33026	11163	34%

(source: Greiner et al 2001)

Table 1: Aboriginal population in the East Kimberley in 1996.

Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4 show the comparison between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Population

Lake Argyle dam wall. Water from the dam is used for irrigation in the lower Ord around Kununurra and also for hydro electricity for Kununurra township and Argyle Diamond Mine.

Three quarters of the Kimberley non-Aboriginal population reside in the six main urban centres of Broome, Kununurra, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Wyndham and Halls Creek. In contrast, more than half (53 per cent) of the Aboriginal population live in communities and out-stations away from these urban centres. There are currently around 250 Aboriginal communities and outstations in the Kimberley region, with around 60 in the Ord-Bonaparte Region (Kimberley Land Council 1995).

As can be seen from Figure 5, the proportion of Aboriginal people in the population is lowest around Kununurra, with the exception of one collection district in the township itself. The Aboriginal population increases proportionally outside Kununurra, reflecting Aboriginal people's residence in outstations and discrete Aboriginal townships.

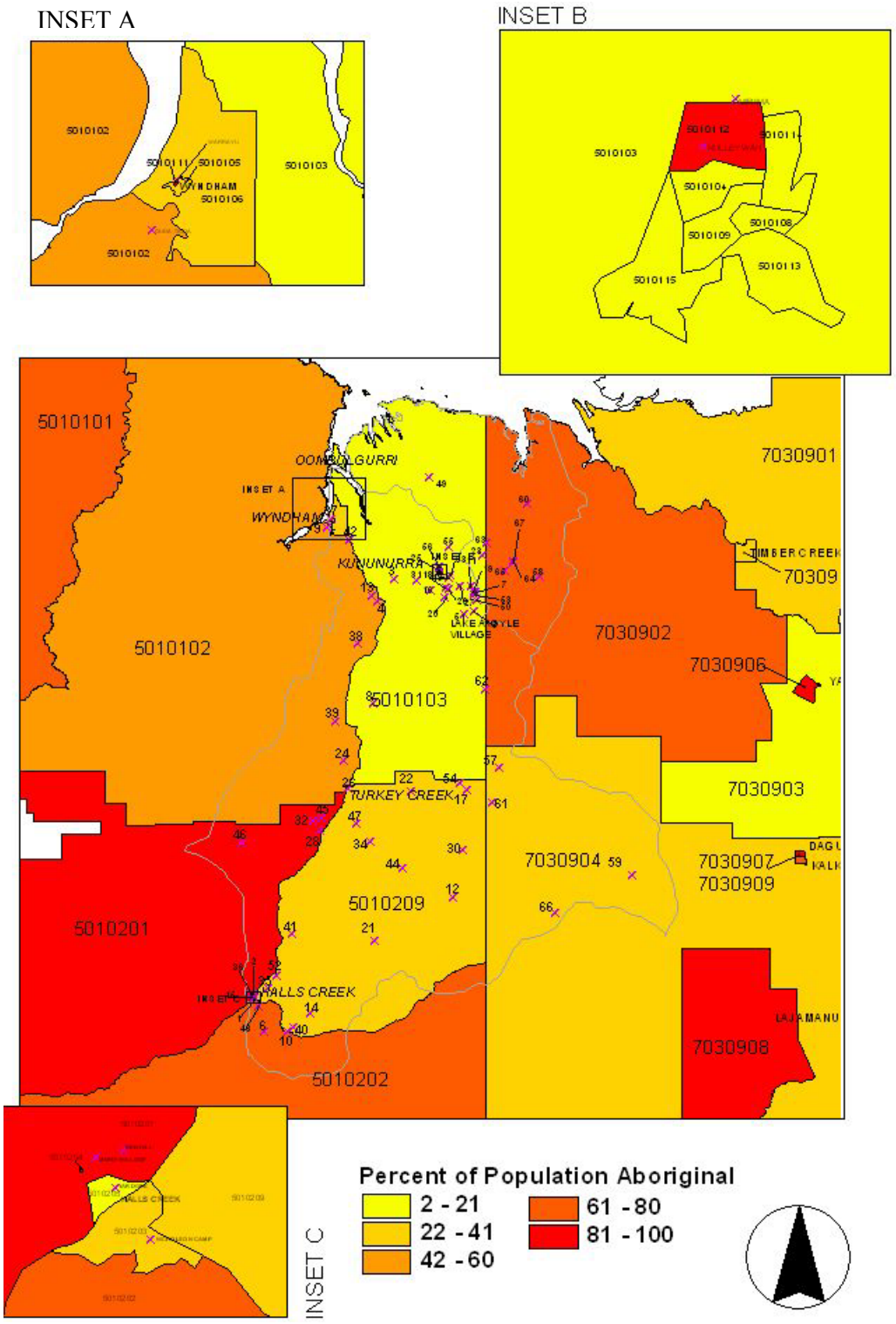
For the period 1971 to 1991 there has been, in Western Australia, a slight trend toward increasing urbanisation of the Aboriginal population, at least as a proportion of the total Aboriginal population, from 65.4% urban in 1986 to 66.5% in 1991 (Taylor and Roach 1994:3). Some caution should be exercised interpreting this trend, particularly in predominantly rural regions such as the Kimberley where the division between urban and rural populations is not easily ascertained (Taylor and Roach 1994:4).

Between 1971 to 1991 the average national natural rate of increase in the Aboriginal population was calculated to be between 2.0% and 2.5%. Regional variations would be expected due to difference in birth and death rates, but it is likely that the significant variation, particularly for Wunan, is probably due to poor coverage during the 1976 Census, but also due to some migration between regional council areas (Altman and Gaminiratne 1992:8).

In Western Australia the proportion of non-Aboriginal people in urban centres also increased in the intercensal period from 85.5% (1986) to 86.1 (1991). Significant is the difference between the proportions of non-Aboriginal people in urban as opposed to rural areas when compared with the Aboriginal population - 66.5% (Aboriginal) (Taylor and Roach 1994:4-5).

Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4 show the comparison between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Population Change in the Kimberley, Northern Territory and Ord-Bonaparte Region respectively in the period 1986 to 1996. These show that the Aboriginal population according to the ABS Census has stayed relatively stable (increasing only by 4% in that period) whereas the non-Aboriginal population has increased significantly (18% in the same period). The population change rate for Aboriginal people in the region differs remarkably from that of the whole Aboriginal Australian population (a 52% increase in the same period). It is likely that the dramatic increase in the whole Australian population is due more to social and political factors that would impact little in the Kimberley.

(Source: ABS CDATA96)



(Source: ABS CDATA96)

Figure 5: Aboriginal people as a Percentage of population in Collection Districts

		Halls Creek	Wyndham-East Kimberley	East Kimberley	Broome	Derby-West Kimberley	Kimberley	Western Australia	Australia
1986	Total Population	2,886	6,963	9,849	7,932	7,289	25,070	1,406,929	15,601,532
	Aboriginal Population	2,077	1,975	4,052	2,439	2,951	9,442	37,108	205,908
	Percent Aboriginal	72%	28%	41%	31%	40%	38%	3%	1%
1991	Total Population	3,029	7,712	10,741	11,152	7,720	29,613	1,586,825	16,849,561
	Aboriginal Population	1,919	1,873	3,792	3,111	3,734	10,637	40,994	238,329
	Percent Aboriginal	63%	24%	35%	28%	48%	36%	3%	1%
1986-1991	Total Population Change	143	749	892	3,220	431	4,543	179,896	1,248,029
	Percent Population Change	5%	11%	9%	41%	6%	18%	13%	8%
	Total Aboriginal Population Change	-158	-102	-260	672	783	1,195	3,886	32,421
	Percent Aboriginal Population Change	-8%	-5%	-6%	28%	27%	13%	10%	16%
1996	Total Population	3,302	8,760	12,062	13,717	7,249	33,028	1,726,095	17,889,100
	Aboriginal Population	1,839	2,096	3,935	3,308	3,920	11,163	48,996	313,933
	Percent Aboriginal	56%	24%	33%	24%	54%	34%	3%	2%
1991-1996	Total Population Change	273	1,048	1,321	2,565	-471	3,415	139,270	1,039,539
	Percent Population Change	9%	12%	11%	19%	-6%	10%	8%	6%
	Total Aboriginal Population Change	-80	223	143	197	186	526	8,002	75,604
	Percent Aboriginal Population Change	-4%	12%	4%	6%	5%	5%	20%	32%
1986-1996	Total Population Change	416	1,797	2,213	5,785	-40	7,958	319,166	2,287,568
	Percent Population Change	14%	26%	22%	73%	-1%	32%	23%	15%
	Total Aboriginal Population Change	-238	121	-117	869	969	1,721	11,888	108,025
	Percent Aboriginal Population Change	-11%	6%	-3%	36%	33%	18%	32%	52%

(source: ABS: IRDB2001)

Table 2: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Population Change in the Kimberley

		Victoria	Northern Territory	Australia
1986	Total Population	2,703	154,848	15,601,532
	Aboriginal Population	1,706	34,197	205,908
	Percent Aboriginal	63%	22%	1%
1991	Total Population	2,949	175,891	16,849,561
	Aboriginal Population	1,799	39,271	238,329
	Percent Aboriginal	61%	22%	1%
1986-1991	Total Population Change	246	21,043	1,248,029
	Percent Population Change	9%	14%	8%
	Total Aboriginal Population Change	93	5,074	32,421
	Percent Aboriginal Population Change	5%	15%	16%
1996	Total Population	2,805	195,101	17,889,100
	Aboriginal Population	1,873	44,486	313,933
	Percent Aboriginal	67%	23%	2%
1991-1996	Total Population Change	-144	19,210	1,039,539
	Percent Population Change	-5%	10%	6%
	Total Aboriginal Population Change	74	5,215	75,604
	Percent Aboriginal Population Change	4%	13%	32%
1986-1996	Total Population Change	102	40,253	2,287,568
	Percent Population Change	4%	26%	15%
	Total Aboriginal Population Change	167	10,289	108,025
	Percent Aboriginal Population Change	10%	30%	52%

(source: ABS: IRDB2001)

Table 3: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Population Change in the Northern Territory

		Halls Creek	Wyndham-East Kimberley	Victoria	Ord-Bonaparte Region	Australia
1986	Total Population	2,886	6,963	2,703	12,552	15,601,532
	Aboriginal Population	2,077	1,975	1,706	5,758	205,908
	Percent Aboriginal	72%	28%	63%	46%	1%
1991	Total Population	3,029	7,712	2,949	13,690	16,849,561
	Aboriginal Population	1,919	1,873	1,799	5,591	238,329
	Percent Aboriginal	63%	24%	61%	41%	1%
1986-1991	Total Population Change	143	749	246	1,138	1,248,029
	Percent Population Change	5%	11%	9%	9%	8%
	Total Aboriginal Population Change	-158	-102	93	-167	32,421
	Percent Aboriginal Population Change	-8%	-5%	5%	-3%	16%
1996	Total Population	3,302	8,760	2,805	14,867	17,889,100
	Aboriginal Population	1,839	2,096	1,873	5,808	313,933
	Percent Aboriginal	56%	24%	67%	39%	2%
1991-1996	Total Population Change	273	1,048	-144	1,177	1,039,539
	Percent Population Change	9%	12%	-5%	9%	6%
	Total Aboriginal Population Change	-80	223	74	217	75,604
	Percent Aboriginal Population Change	-4%	12%	4%	4%	32%
1986-1996	Total Population Change	416	1,797	102	2,315	2,287,568
	Percent Population Change	14%	26%	4%	18%	15%
	Total Aboriginal Population Change	-238	121	167	50	108,025
	Percent Aboriginal Population Change	-11%	6%	10%	1%	52%

(source: ABS: IRDB2001)

Table 4: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Population Change in the Ord-Bonaparte Region

Labour Force

A Kimberley Land Council report released in 1995 estimated that 75% of the Kimberley Aboriginal work force was employed in publicly funded or publicly subsidised organisations or enterprises – (CDEP) Community Development Employment Projects. While bringing a guaranteed cash flow into the region or community, reliance on CDEP may tend to discourage individual or community enterprise initiatives (ILC 2000).

The report identified the existence of two parallel labour markets in the Kimberley; the conventional labour market in which non-Aboriginal people enjoy high employment rates and a secondary labour market, generated largely by CDEP, comprising the majority of the Aboriginal working-age population. The rate of unemployment for Aboriginal people was 20% compared to 7.6% of the non-Aboriginal population.

Out of the total Aboriginal population of 10,707 for the Kimberley, the labour force was estimated to be 5,230 or 88% of the Aboriginal working-age population. Around 75% of the labour force was employed through the CDEP.

Seven per cent were employed in the public sector and an estimated 250 Aboriginal persons or 4.5% of the Aboriginal labour force were employed by the private sector. The ABS census classifies people working in Aboriginal organisations, enterprises and community corporations as 'private sector workers' although these bodies are largely Government funded.

Much of the employment, particularly in tourism and agricultural production is seasonal, limiting cash flow to certain periods of the year, while the CDEP is ongoing throughout the year, guaranteeing an income base (ILC 2000). Indigenous people in the Kimberley are recognising the need for education and skills to be involved in successful enterprises (ILC 2000).

Capital, infrastructure and a range of economic activities are needed in indigenous communities to generate enterprise and employment. Communities are becoming increasingly aware of the need for diverse economic development to generate indigenous ownership of businesses and enterprises (ILC 2000).

Occupation

Table 5 shows the proportion of Aboriginal people in numerous occupations. Aboriginal people as a Percentage of the total number of Aboriginal people with an occupation in the two ATSIC Regions covered by this study – Kununurra and Katherine. A relatively high percentage (37.1% in Kununurra and 49.8% in Katherine) of Aboriginal people employed as Labourers or related workers, particularly when compared with Western Australia (9.1%), the Northern Territory (11.1%) and Australia (8.7%). This is reflected in the relatively low percentage of representation in other occupations.

		Kununurra	Western Australia	Katherine	Northern Territory	Australia
Total Aboriginal Population		3,935	48,997	6,857	44,486	314,118
Managers and Administrators	Number	25	71,383	26	6,773	709,794
	Percent	2.1%	9.4%	1.5%	8.2%	9.3%
Professionals	Number	71	122,515	109	14,227	1,309,245
	Percent	6.0%	16.1%	6.4%	17.1%	17.1%
Associate Professionals	Number	58	86,467	71	10,210	860,931
	Percent	4.9%	11.3%	4.1%	12.3%	11.3%
Tradespersons and Related Workers	Number	28	108,361	110	11,149	996,708
	Percent	2.4%	14.2%	6.4%	13.4%	13.1%
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	Number	20	32,769	24	2,913	329,820
	Percent	1.7%	4.3%	1.4%	3.5%	4.3%
Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service	Number	107	120,015	191	13,341	1,222,470
	Percent	9.1%	15.7%	11.1%	16.1%	16.0%
Intermediate Production and Transport Workers	Number	49	67,763	104	5,955	661,287
	Percent	4.2%	8.9%	6.1%	7.2%	8.7%
Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	Number	79	65,058	105	6,359	677,309
	Percent	6.7%	8.5%	6.1%	7.7%	8.9%
Labourers and Related Workers	Number	437	69,400	854	9,246	667,119
	Percent	37.1%	9.1%	49.8%	11.1%	8.7%
Inadequately described	Number	254	7,065	67	1,013	71,486
	Percent	21.5%	0.9%	3.9%	1.2%	0.9%
Not stated	Number	51	12,411	55	1,790	128,570
	Percent	4.3%	1.6%	3.2%	2.2%	1.7%
Occupation (Persons)	Number	1,179	763,207	1,716	82,976	7,634,739

(source: ABS: IRDB2001)

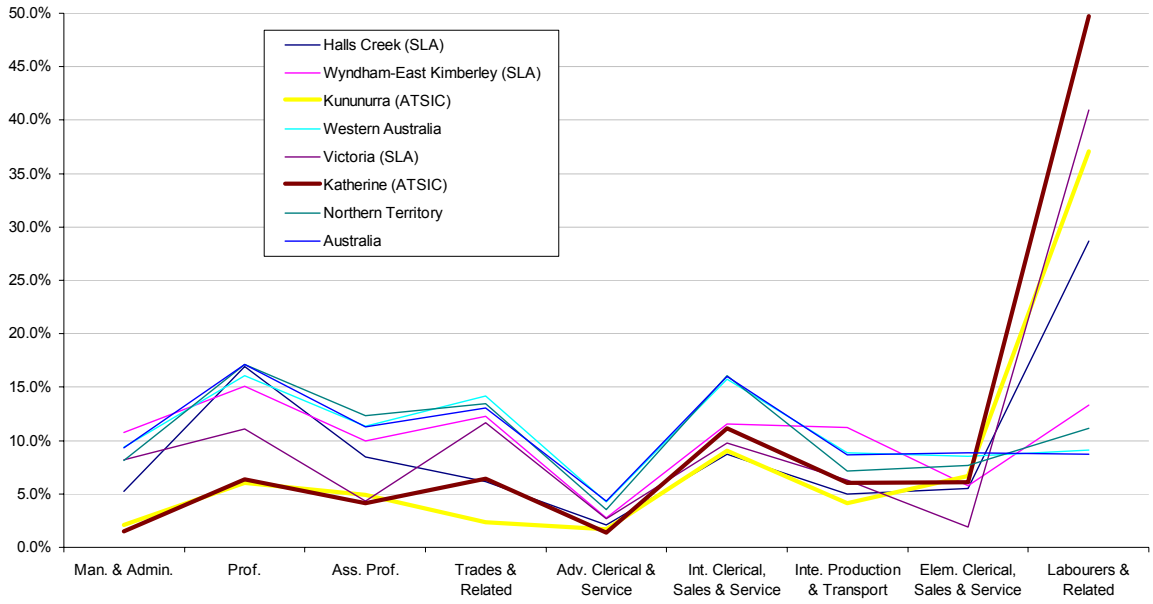
Table 5: Occupation as Percentage of Total Aboriginal People with Occupation in ATSIC Regions

A similar picture emerges for Aboriginal people in the Local Government Areas of the region, as shown in Table 6 and Figure 6.
(source: ABS: IRDB2001)

		Halls Creek	Wyndham-East Kimberley	Victoria	Ord-Bonaparte Region	Australia
Total Aboriginal Population		1,839	2,096	1,873	5,808	314,118
Total Population		3,302	8,760	2,805	14,867	17,889,100
Managers and Administrators	Number	62	390	83	535	709,794
	Percent	5.2%	10.7%	8.2%	9.2%	9.3%
Professionals	Number	200	549	112	861	1,309,245
	Percent	16.9%	15.1%	11.1%	14.8%	17.1%
Associate Professionals	Number	100	363	44	507	860,931
	Percent	8.5%	10.0%	4.4%	8.7%	11.3%
Tradespersons and Related Workers	Number	73	445	118	636	996,708
	Percent	6.2%	12.3%	11.7%	10.9%	13.1%
Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	Number	25	99	27	151	329,820
	Percent	2.1%	2.7%	2.7%	2.6%	4.3%
Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service	Number	103	419	99	621	1,222,470
	Percent	8.7%	11.5%	9.8%	10.7%	16.0%
Intermediate Production and Transport Workers	Number	59	408	64	531	661,287
	Percent	5.0%	11.2%	6.3%	9.1%	8.7%
Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers	Number	65	209	19	293	677,309
	Percent	5.5%	5.8%	1.9%	5.0%	8.9%
Labourers and Related Workers	Number	339	484	414	1,237	667,119
	Percent	28.7%	13.3%	40.9%	21.2%	8.7%
Inadequately described	Number	130	151	14	295	71,486
	Percent	11.0%	4.2%	1.4%	5.1%	0.9%
Not stated	Number	26	113	17	156	128,570
	Percent	2.2%	3.1%	1.7%	2.7%	1.7%
Occupation (Persons)	Number	1,182	3,630	1,011	5,823	7,634,739

(source: ABS: IRDB2001)

Table 6: Occupation as Percentage of Total Persons with Occupation in Local Government Areas



(source: ABS: IRDB2001)

Figure 6: Occupation for OBP statistical areas and ATSIC regions.

Industry of Employment

Table 7 shows the industry of employment for Aboriginal people as a percentage of the total number of Aboriginal people in employment in ATSIC Regions in 1996. Two key statistics stand out. The first is the relatively high proportion of employment in the Health and Community Services sectors in Kununurra (49.8%) and Katherine (23.2%) when compared to Western Australia (9.4%) and the Northern Territory (11%) respectively. The second is the very high proportion of employment for Aboriginal people in the Katherine region in Government Administration and Defence (46.6%) compared with Kununurra (6%), and the Northern Territory (15.1%). This could be partly explained by the higher proportion of defence activity in the Katherine region. It may also be an artefact of interpretation of categories by people completing the census, and may reflect confusion between the Health and Community Services and Government Administration categories.

This is shown in different ways by both Table 8 and Figure 7.

Sugar Mill in Kununurra

		Kununurra	Western Australia	Katherine	Northern Territory	Australia
Agriculture Forestry Fishing & Hunting	Number	51	37,364	96	2,439	324,321
	Percent	4.3%	4.9%	5.6%	2.9%	4.2%
Mining	Number	20	28,486	42	2,904	86,156
	Percent	1.7%	3.7%	2.4%	3.5%	1.1%
Manufacturing	Number	3	77,355	7	3,612	965,014
	Percent	0.3%	10.1%	0.4%	4.4%	12.6%
Electricity Gas & Water	Number	3	6,756	3	533	58,685
	Percent	0.3%	0.9%	0.2%	0.6%	0.8%
Construction	Number	7	54,713	23	6,148	484,003
	Percent	0.6%	7.2%	1.3%	7.4%	6.3%
Wholesale Trade	Number	6	43,484	4	3,095	446,535
	Percent	0.5%	5.7%	0.2%	3.7%	5.8%
Retail Trade	Number	16	103,274	37	9,158	1,036,563
	Percent	1.4%	13.5%	2.2%	11.0%	13.6%
Accommodation, Cafes & Restaurants	Number	8	32,647	10	5,093	355,074
	Percent	0.7%	4.3%	0.6%	6.1%	4.7%
Transport & Storage	Number	9	30,582	11	4,062	332,022
	Percent	0.8%	4.0%	0.6%	4.9%	4.3%
Communication Services	Number	3	12,630	3	1,285	150,182
	Percent	0.3%	1.7%	0.2%	1.5%	2.0%
Finance & Insurance	Number	0	24,855	0	1,631	296,442
	Percent	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	2.0%	3.9%
Property & Business Services	Number	36	75,819	30	6,342	750,153
	Percent	3.0%	9.9%	1.7%	7.6%	9.8%
Government Administration & Defence	Number	71	31,607	800	12,504	372,923
	Percent	6.0%	4.1%	46.6%	15.1%	4.9%
Education	Number	55	55,704	112	6,175	539,952
	Percent	4.7%	7.3%	6.5%	7.4%	7.1%
Health & Community Services	Number	588	71,467	398	9,135	725,102
	Percent	49.8%	9.4%	23.2%	11.0%	9.5%
Cultural & Recreational Services	Number	15	16,403	11	2,480	178,916
	Percent	1.3%	2.1%	0.6%	3.0%	2.3%
Personal & Other Services	Number	147	30,242	35	3,278	277,863
	Percent	12.4%	4.0%	2.0%	4.0%	3.6%
Non-classifiable economic units	Number	22	11,657	14	901	103,128
	Percent	1.9%	1.5%	0.8%	1.1%	1.4%
Not stated	Number	121	18,162	80	2,201	151,705
	Percent	10.2%	2.4%	4.7%	2.7%	2.0%
Industry of Employment	Number	1,181	763,207	1,716	82,976	7,634,739

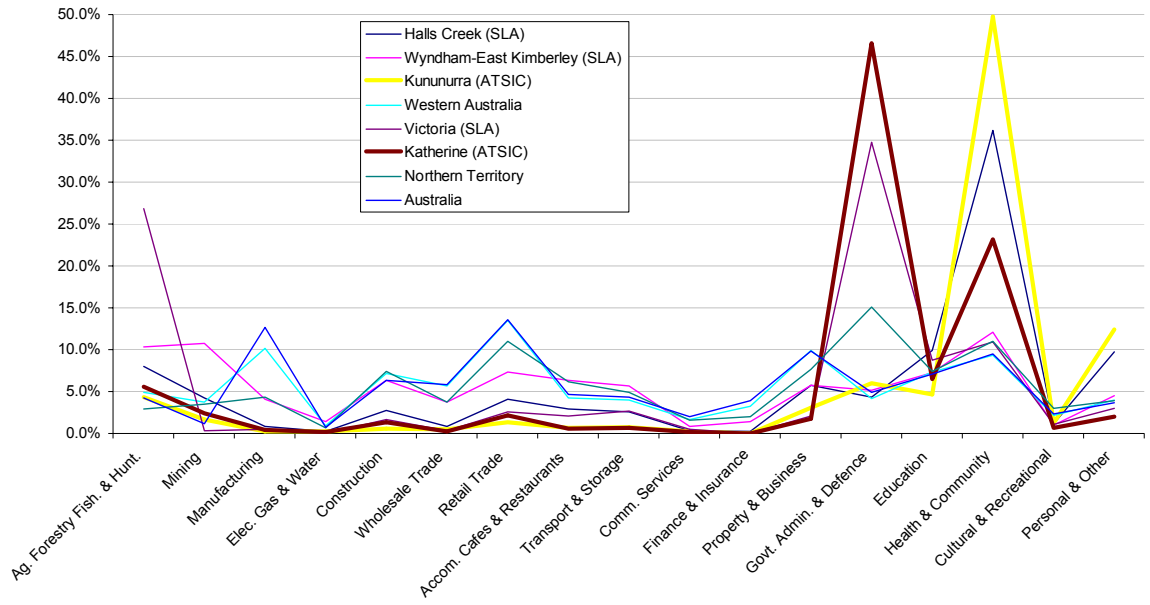
(source: ABS: IRDB2001)

Table 7: Industry of Employment as Percentage of Total Aboriginal people in Employment in ATSIC Regions

		Halls Creek (S)	Wyndham-East Kimberley (S)	Victoria	Ord-Bonaparte	Australia
Agriculture Forestry Fishing & Hunting	Number	95	374	271	740	324,321
	Percent	8.0%	10.3%	26.9%	12.7%	4.2%
Mining	Number	50	390	3	443	86,156
	Percent	4.2%	10.7%	0.3%	7.6%	1.1%
Manufacturing	Number	10	149	5	164	965,014
	Percent	0.8%	4.1%	0.5%	2.8%	12.6%
Electricity Gas & Water	Number	3	50	0	53	58,685
	Percent	0.3%	1.4%	0.0%	0.9%	0.8%
Construction	Number	33	230	17	280	484,003
	Percent	2.8%	6.3%	1.7%	4.8%	6.3%
Wholesale Trade	Number	10	136	3	149	446,535
	Percent	0.8%	3.7%	0.3%	2.6%	5.8%
Retail Trade	Number	48	265	26	339	1,036,563
	Percent	4.1%	7.3%	2.6%	5.8%	13.6%
Accommodation, Cafes & Restaurants	Number	35	229	21	285	355,074
	Percent	3.0%	6.3%	2.1%	4.9%	4.7%
Transport & Storage	Number	31	207	27	265	332,022
	Percent	2.6%	5.7%	2.7%	4.6%	4.3%
Communication Services	Number	4	29	5	38	150,182
	Percent	0.3%	0.8%	0.5%	0.7%	2.0%
Finance & Insurance	Number	3	52	0	55	296,442
	Percent	0.3%	1.4%	0.0%	0.9%	3.9%
Property & Business Services	Number	68	209	21	298	750,153
	Percent	5.7%	5.8%	2.1%	5.1%	9.8%
Government Administration & Defence	Number	51	187	351	589	372,923
	Percent	4.3%	5.2%	34.8%	10.1%	4.9%
Education	Number	117	263	88	468	539,952
	Percent	9.9%	7.2%	8.7%	8.0%	7.1%
Health & Community Services	Number	428	438	110	976	725,102
	Percent	36.1%	12.1%	10.9%	16.8%	9.5%
Cultural & Recreational Services	Number	14	36	11	61	178,916
	Percent	1.2%	1.0%	1.1%	1.0%	2.3%
Personal & Other Services	Number	115	162	30	307	277,863
	Percent	9.7%	4.5%	3.0%	5.3%	3.6%
Non-classifiable economic units	Number	6	65	3	74	103,128
	Percent	0.5%	1.8%	0.3%	1.3%	1.4%
Not stated	Number	63	159	17	239	151,705
	Percent	5.3%	4.4%	1.7%	4.1%	2.0%
Industry of Employment	Number	1,184	3,630	1,009	5,823	7,634,739

(source: ABS: IRDB2001)

Table 8: Industry of Employment as Percentage of Total Persons in Employment in Local Government Areas



(source: ABS: IRDB2001)

Figure 7: Industry of employment for OBP statistical areas and ATSIC regions.

Bringing it together: SEIFA[4]

In recent years a number of indices have been developed to illustrate and capture the notion of 'locational disadvantage' with their implicit assumption that distance from key population centres generates "socio-economic detriment" (Taylor 1991:4). Such an index is the Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA).

The SEIFA index is based on the premise that, while information on individuals, such as employment, education and income, allows for some analysis across time and regions, they do not provide much information about communities. To overcome this limitation, and seek a way of describing communities, the ABS developed SEIFA to summarise different aspects of the socio-economic conditions of communities. They reflect the population profile of communities and aid social and economic investigations (ABS: SEIFA 1996).

The SEIFA relate to socio-economic aspects of geographic areas. Each index summarises a different mix of census variables for a specified area. The indices have been obtained by summarising the information from a variety of social and economic variables contained in the census, each index using a different set of underlying variables.

The five indexes are:

- Urban Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage
- Rural Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage
- Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage

4 The following section on SEIFA is summarised from another OBP Research Paper, Greiner et al (2001), *A socio-economic profile of the natural resource-based industries in the (East) Kimberley*. That paper explains in greater detail the structure and limitations of these indices.

- Index of Economic Resources
- Index of Education and Occupation

A full discussion of the make up of the SEIFA Indices can be found in Greiner et al (2001).

Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage

The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage is derived from attributes such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment and jobs in relatively unskilled occupations. High scores on the Index of Relative Disadvantage occur when the area has few families of low income and few people with little training and in unskilled occupations. Low scores on the index occur when the area has many low-income families and people with little training and in unskilled occupations.

There is a close correlation between the Aboriginal proportion of a collection district population and the index of relative socio-economic disadvantage. Figure 8 depicts the relationship. The graphic clearly shows that collection districts with a higher proportion of Aboriginal population have a lower index, meaning they are at a greater disadvantage. The percentage of the population of Aboriginal descent is a key variable for the index.

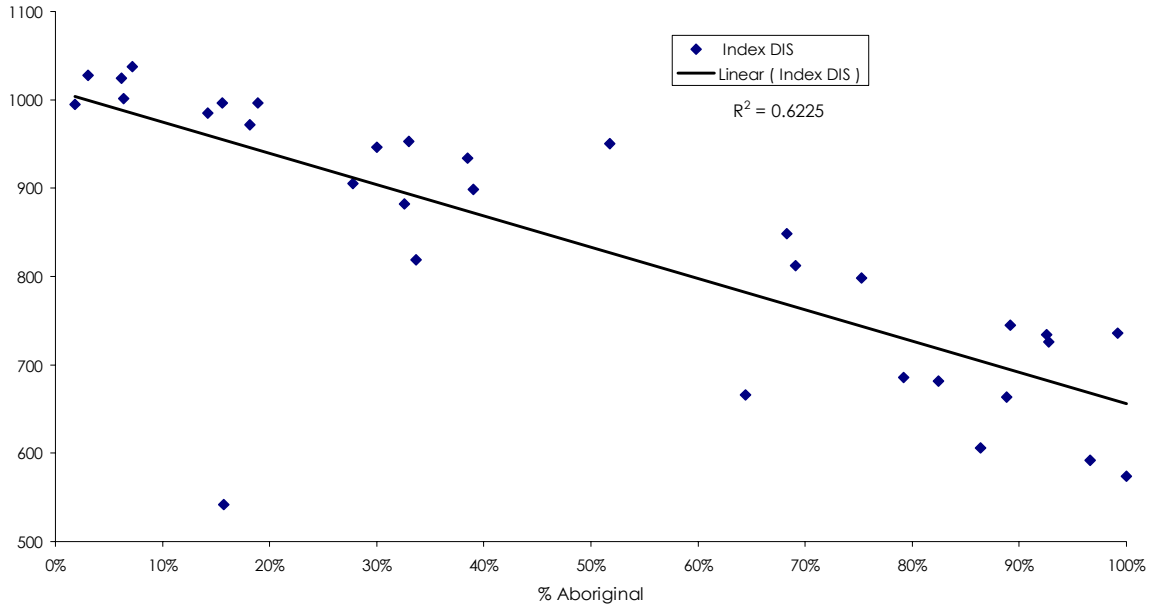


Figure 8: Correlation between Aboriginal population in collection districts and Index of Disadvantage

Index of Economic Resources

The Index of Economic Resources reflects the profile of the economic resources of families within the areas. The Census variables that are summarised by this index reflect the income and expenditure of families, such as income and rent and home ownership. Additionally, variables that reflect non-income assets, such as dwelling size and number of cars, are also

included. The income variables are specified by family structure, since this affects disposable income (Greiner et al 2001).

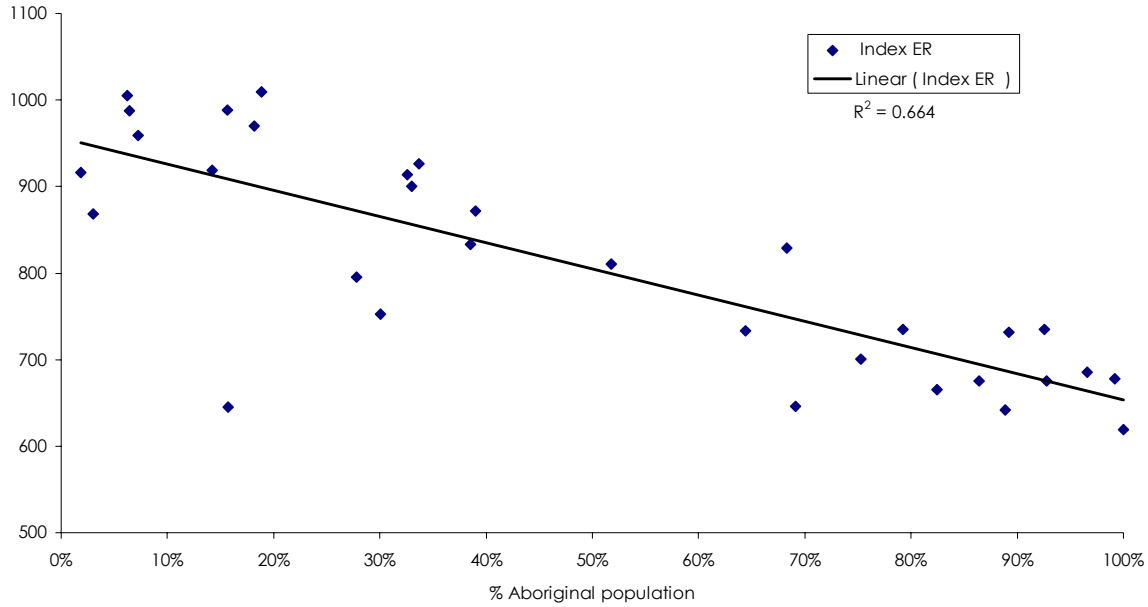


Figure 9: Correlation between Aboriginal population in CDs and Index of Economic Resources

The estimation of population in any community, particularly the outstation or fringe camps, and consequently associated towns, will always be a very general estimate given the mobility of the population. However, with some care the information can be used to at least discuss the direction and magnitude of population trends over time.

In the OBP region all forms of Census geography have significant limitations in enumerating difference in population, particularly for Aboriginal people. Most small communities in the region are simply too small to be counted as individual Collection Districts, meaning Aboriginal populations are subsumed into the general population even at the finest scale. Further, Census boundaries largely ignore social patterns (Taylor 1991:9).

A critical question to be answered is, given the increasing shift by some Aboriginal communities to more 'remote' parts of the region, or toward increasing 'isolation', what is the relevance of these indices for regional Aboriginal people. As discussed by Taylor (1991:4-5), many 'outstation' communities would be seen in a very negative light, as they tend to be:

- Physically detached from the region
- Poor training and employment opportunities
- Poor connection to transport infrastructure
- Widely dispersed and small
- Limited market for goods / services
- "typified by outmigration (particularly of the young and most able), chronic undercapitalisation and economic stagnation" (Friedmann 1966 in Taylor 1991:4).

Taylor argues that the evidence actually points to the isolation of many outstation communities being far more positive (1991:4-5). He suggests the move toward outstations does not represent a passive response to dispossession, but rather an active response by the community seeking greater self-determination and control over country. People in outstation communities trade off reduced access to "labour market, educational and training opportunities as well as township-based housing and other social facilities" against gains in living in more accepting social environments, access to traditional pursuits and country and more direct access to government grants, even though these might be smaller (Taylor 1991:5).

Existing planning / management processes and activities

There is extensive literature that has identified and analysed the nexus between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal resource use aspirations. Some of that work has argued for the involvement of indigenous people in natural resource management, planning and ownership. However, "It is important that this perspective is seen in its proper context. While Aboriginal perspectives and interests have not been central to regional planning, Aboriginal people have not been "passive actors" in the resource management landscape" (Johnson et al 1999).

There are increasingly frequent calls to recognise the positive actions of Aboriginal people and organisations in redressing the imbalance. As stated by Riddett (1985) in Dixon (1989):

> *"Historians have come only recently to view Aborigines as conscious actors, active participants in their contact with non-Aboriginal settlers and colonizers. For too long it has been convenient to see Aborigines as mere victims being done to by whites and as mere pawns in another culture's game".*

The reality of marginalisation or exclusion should not be ignored but it must also be recognized that Aboriginal people should not be seen as passive 'victims', waiting for 'outsiders'. Through the increasing number of community-based planning approaches, or the continuation of a long tradition of stewardship, Aboriginal people are actively engaged in natural resource management through traditional and contemporary land management techniques.

As can be seen in the East Kimberley, "Indigenous organisations involved in supporting land management activities operate to very different agendas than mainstream agencies" (ILC n.d.). Organisations are primarily focused on meeting the aspirations of Aboriginal people to get country back, facilitate agreements with government, industry or other organisations, obtain grants or funding, provide essential service delivery functions, health needs, CDEP programs, housing, employment and training needs.

From an Aboriginal perspective '*land management'* can be viewed as one part of a holistic framework of meeting customary obligations to country. Essential to this is securing title to land that will enable access, control, and the meeting of economic, social and community aspirations. A key role of government, non-government organisations, industry, research and

development is to facilitate the understanding of these aspirations into local, sub-regional and regional planning framework initiatives.

Refinement of projects needs to acknowledge the clear perspective put by Aboriginal people that they are undertaking natural resource management and planning, but not always using the formal mechanisms recognised by Government. The issue is one of the recognition of these activities in regional decision-making, rather than the incorporation of these into non-Aboriginal processes, or the learning of the need for integrated resource management and planning by Aboriginal people.

The understanding of Aboriginal land management processes and approaches is an essential foundation for regional management initiatives and sustainable land management. For example the conservation, maintenance and transmission of traditional ecological knowledge is an integral part of both traditional and contemporary land management techniques.

Planning and Management by Aboriginal People

The involvement of Aboriginal people in resource management and planning for the region comprises both contemporary participation and a long and ongoing history of resource use. Aboriginal people are engaged, directly or indirectly, in a wide range of regional industries, including tourism, pastoralism and aquaculture. The outcomes of the recognition of Native Title in the Kimberley and the application of land rights legislation in the Northern Territory, as well as the acquisition of non-Aboriginal tenures, have dramatically increased both the areas where Aboriginal people are principal managers and the areas where there are shared management responsibilities.

Aboriginal use of resources is a core part of ongoing cultural maintenance and management of *country* and forms a critical link between the regional economy and resource management. The lines drawn between "utilisation of wildlife, tourism, conservation and primary production are indistinct and all of these have, or potentially have components of the others as components of sound management" (Langton et all, n.d.: 104).

The need to work with Aboriginal people in achieving this outcome in the Ord River region was recognised and acted upon as far back as 1971, with a proposal to develop a support program for assisting the Mirima Council with Social, Cultural and Economic Development (Beeton, 1971). As part of that proposal it was recognised that:

> *...land is an indivisible part of the aboriginal* (sic) *identity. For the Miriwoong people and related groups at Kununurra this nexus between land and identity is of particular significance in that the sacred is still a part of the existing culture and tradition. The social development ... cannot be separated from the maintenance and redevelopment of culture and tradition in a meaningful sense (Beeton, 1971).*

Planning and natural resource management activities, not including economic development strategies or plans, in the OBP region by, for and with Aboriginal people, or that have sought to work with or include Aboriginal people in the Ord-Bonaparte Region include:

- Support Program for Assisting the Mirima Council with Social, Cultural and Economic Development (1971) (Aboriginal project)
- East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project (1986)
- Kimberley Aboriginal Pastoralists Project (1994) (Aboriginal project)
- Ord Stage II Impact Assessment (2001)
- Kununurra – Wyndham Area Development Strategy (2000)
- Kimberley Beef Plan (ILC / KAPA) (2001)
- Balangarra country planning (1999 – 2000) (Aboriginal project)
- Native Title Determination Applications (post 1993) (Aboriginal project)
- Kimberley Regional Plan (1990)
- Property plans (ad hoc)
- Purnululu Management Plan (nd)
- Indigenous Protected Area planning for Lake Gregory (2001) (Aboriginal project)
- Projects under the Tropical Savannas CRC – Fire, Land Use and Management

Aboriginal Organisational Framework

There is no Aboriginal organisation in the East Kimberley that concerns itself primarily with land management. The Kimberley Land Council (KLC) is funded for the progression of native title claims, Indigenous Land Use Agreements, Future Act Notices and mining issues and has limited resources to address land management issues and concerns. The KLC recognizes that there is a great level of support and need for this type of work to be done and actively seeks external funding to support on ground land management initiatives. This point is also recognized by government agencies such as the Indigenous Land Corporation (Dougan pers comm.) and the Department of Indigenous Affairs (Moulton pers comm.).

Below is a list of Aboriginal organisations and government agencies in the region with brief descriptions of their role and responsibilities.

Kimberley Land Council (KLC)

The Kimberley Land Council was established as a community based association in 1978 to be an advocate for Kimberley Aboriginal people dispossessed of their lands and to lobby for land rights (Sullivan, 2001, p 14). The KLC is incorporated under the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act, 1976* and is also the Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) for the Kimberley region. Section 203B of the *Native Title Act 1993* sets out the functions of NTRB's. These functions include: facilitation and assistance; certification; dispute resolution; notification; agreement making; and internal review. The KLC was established in 1978 to work for the protection of traditional country and to gain ownership and recognition of traditional rights to Kimberley land and waters. The KLC Executive has 32 members

The KLC Land and Sea Management Unit established in 1998 primary strategies are applied collaborative research, knowledge conservation, participatory planning, interagency cooperation, management planning, and policy reform. The Unit aims to support traditional owners in the sustainable occupation of their country.

The Unit comprises of an Indigenous Land Management Facilitator funded by Environment Australia, a project officer coordinating the "Healthy Country" project, a Coordinator for the

Waterbank IPA project and the Research Coordinator for this OBP Subprogram 5 *Aboriginal Management and Planning for Country Program*. The Unit receives external funding from a variety of sources including Environment Australia, CRC Savanna, CSIRO and Land and Water Australia.

Mirima Dawang Woorlab Gerring Language and Culture Centre (Mirima)

The language centre is based in Kununurra for the Miriwoong and Gajirawoong people. Mirima teaches Miriwoong and Gajirawoong language and culture only unlike the Kimberley Language Resource Centre that works on a variety of languages – Bunuba, Kija, Jaru (Newry, 2001). Mirima runs cross-cultural courses, teaches language, provides tutoring to students enrolled in Batchelor college, language recording, and employs language workers and interpreters.

Waringarri Aboriginal Resource Centre

Waringarri is a community service organisation. Amongst its various responsibilities it is involved in the following: Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), community and outstation services, lawn mowing, grading, garbage collection, water supply, alcohol project.

Wunan Foundation

The Wunan Foundation focuses on pursuing commercially viable investments for Aboriginal people and communities. The rationale behind the establishment of the Foundation is investment to establish a capital base of $10 million. Each investment will need a minimum return of 10% to achieve this goal. With the accomplishment of $10 million this will provide a self-perpetuating funding source for Aboriginal people. Wunan has invested in two buildings in Kununurra and is also involved in a joint venture with Kimberley Wilderness Adventures. Through this venture the foundation has an interest in economically and environmentally sustainable tourism and the employment of Aboriginal people as tour guides.

Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC)

The KLRC is a regional organisation that focuses on the maintenance, preservation and transmission of Kimberley Aboriginal languages. The KLRC employs language workers, language specialists, linguists, archivists and CDEP workers. There are two main offices; one in Fitzroy Crossing and the other in Halls Creek. The KLRC has an important role in ensuring that language and knowledge is kept alive. The KLRC also provides the service of advising on materials developed for dissemination to Aboriginal people by non-Aboriginal organizations and ensuring that they are culturally appropriate.

The Language Centre produces books, CD-Roms, audio tapes and other audio visual tools for learning languages.

Kimberley Region Economic Aboriginal Corporation (KREAC)

KREAC uses CDEP workers to undertake civil and earthmoving projects throughout Kununurra. Income from KREAC projects is channeled back into other similar projects.

Kimberley Group Training (KGT)

The KGT is an initiative of Wunan Regional Council and was established to capitalise on growth sectors in the Kimberley region (Wunan Regional Council Annual Report, 2000-2001). KGT focuses on securing traineeships and apprenticeships for both indigenous and non-indigenous people and placing them with host employers.

Ngoonjuwah Aboriginal Corporation

Ngoonjuwah is based in Halls Creek and is similar to Waringarri Aboriginal Corporation in that it is a community service organisation with its primary focus being the employment of CDEP workers and community and outstation support and services.

Aboriginal owned Pastoral stations

Doon Doon, Glen Hill, Bow River, Lamboo, Koongie Park, Violet Valley (Reserve).

Aboriginal owned pastoral stations are not always acquired for their commercial cattle operations alone but because they provide cultural, social and economic benefits to Aboriginal people. Many stations are purchased or acquired because they are the traditional homelands of Aboriginal people. The buying back of properties is primarily the domain of the Indigenous Land Corporation and the Aboriginal lands trust is responsible for Aboriginal land transfers.

Aboriginal pastoral stations such as Violet Valley (Reserve), Bow River, Doon Doon, Glen Hill and Lamboo are involved in the cattle industry to varying degrees. There is interest from some people that live on these stations to have access to information regarding soil and vegetation types, water quality testing, alternative economic opportunities, training and education and capacity building.

Government Agencies

Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA)

DIA's key role is in the facilitation and co-ordination of Aboriginal affairs at all levels and assisting indigenous people to protect and promote their heritage and culture (DIA website, 2002). DIA promotes Aboriginal social and economic development and is responsible for the following legislation: *Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act 1972; Aboriginal Communities Act 1979; and Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*. The Aboriginal Lands Trust currently holds some 27 million hectares of land in trust for Aboriginal people in WA, either freehold, leasehold or reserve. It is intended that the control of this land and management/ownership will be handed back to Aboriginal people. Recent changes have also seen DIA with an increasing responsibility for land management. The Kununurra DIA office is concerned with capacity building with Aboriginal people across all areas of service delivery and self governance.

The Kununurra office consists of two staff, a Regional Manager and a Field Officer. There is also an office in Halls Creek

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)

ATSIC is a Commonwealth department responsible for addressing the social and economic disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people. ATSIC is also focused on the revival, maintenance and transmission of Aboriginal law and culture. Wunan Regional Council consists of 3 wards: Wunan ward (northern, coast and Kununurra), Yarleyel ward (central, Halls Creek and Turkey Creek) and Kutjungka ward (southern, desert area). There are 10 councillors including the Chairman and Deputy Chairman. ATSIC is primarily a grants administration body and funds housing, women's projects, heritage and culture, economic development, native title and new business initiatives. ATSIC also funds the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) which began in 1976 as a pilot project to provide work opportunities for indigenous people in remote areas. CDEP funds are used to employ people to work on the following activities: repair and maintenance, horticulture, civil and earthmoving projects, language workers (Wunan Regional Council Annual Report 2000/2001).

Department of Land Administration (DOLA)

First established in 1829, DOLA is Western Australia's leading provider of land administration products, services and information (Website 2002). DOLA provides the legal, geographic and administrative base for land use in WA. It administers land title in WA including the administration of Crown land for conservation, recreation, roads, residential, industrial and commercial development and is responsible for the following legislation *Land Act 1933; Land Administration Act 1997 and Acts Amendment (Land Administration) Act 1997; Titles (Validation) and Native Title (Effect of Past Acts) Act 1999*. DOLA also works with the Pastoral Board and a Native Title Unit also provides advice where native title may exist on Crown land being considered for release (website 2002).

Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC)

The ILC is an independent Commonwealth statutory authority established in 1995. Its two main functions are to assist indigenous peoples to acquire land and to manage indigenous held land in a sustainable way to provide cultural, social, economic or environmental benefits. The 'emphasis of the ILC's work in land management is on cooperation between landholders and the ILC to manage land in an environmentally sustainable way' (ILC website). One of the major issues facing Aboriginal landholders is that land acquired may have been degraded by inappropriate land use or management in the past. Even though the ILC clearly has the capacity to fund land management it has not done so to its full capacity in the East Kimberley and funding is restricted to activities such as fencing and the repair and maintenance of stock yards (Dougan pers comm.). The key focus of the ILC in the region has primarily been on cattle operations and more recently some tourism developments in the Northern Kimberley. Recent activities include consultations for the latest Land Acquisition and Access Strategy for the Kimberley throughout September, 2001.

There is only one ILC staff member in the Kimberley and they are based in Broome.

Kimberley Development Commission (KDC)

The KDC is a statutory authority of the Government of Western Australia. Its role is to promote the 'economic and social development of the region' (KDC website 2002). The Commission undertakes research into potential economic development and growth of the region. KDC also employs an Aboriginal Economic Development Officer who is working with individuals and groups on potential tourism ventures. The focus for the organisation is on economic development and there is no articulated goal of ecologically sustainable development nor have any reports been produced of this nature. The Commission's economic development activities are focused on the expansion of irrigated agriculture, aquaculture development, fishing, mining, horticulture, tourism and pastoralism.

Western Australia Department of Agriculture (Agwest)

The Department of Agriculture assists the State's agriculture, food and fibre industries to be sustainable and profitable (Annual report 2000 - 2001). The Agriculture Department is responsible for a variety of areas including livestock and livestock products, environment, field crops and pastures, quarantine, horticulture, diseases and pests and weeds, agribusiness markets and trade, research and education and extension. The department works with industries and communities and one of its key objectives is the 'sustainable management of natural resources affected by agriculture' (Annual Report 2000 – 2001). The Sustainable Rural Development program looks at salinity management, water management and drainage, vegetation management, rangeland management and environmental management systems.

In the East Kimberley region no Aboriginal people are employed by the Department of Fisheries.

Department of Conservation and Land Management Offices (CALM)

CALM manages national parks, conservation parks, regional parks, nature reserves, state forests and timber reserves. In the East Kimberley there are only two national parks: Mirima Hidden Valley National Park and Purnululu. Purnululu has been a national park since 1987 and is within the country of the Kija language group. Mirima is the traditional country of Miriwoong people. Purnululu has recently been nominated for World Heritage listing and Kija people have aspirations for the cultural values of the area to be recognised in listing. Living areas have recently been established and recognised within Purnululu. Joint management of both national parks is a key aspiration of Aboriginal people, with both areas being culturally significant with the potential to provide economic opportunities for local communities. Native Title claims exist over both parks. In Kununurra a CALM scientest is conducting research into riparian vegetation along the Ord river and is interested in working with Aboriginal people on documenting histories of environmental change.

Department of Fisheries

The Department of Fisheries is responsible for the management of the State's fish resources and aquaculture industries. Fisheries administers four separate acts including the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994; Fisheries Adjustment Scheme Act 1987; the Pearling Act*

1990; and the Fishing Industry Promotion Training and Management Levy Act 1994. The Department is also responsible for compliance with the *Commonwealth Fisheries Management Act (1991*) in the Australian Fishing Zone that extends 200 nautical miles (370kms) from State coastal borders (Website 2001). Key objectives of the Department include upholding the harvesting and fishing of the fisheries resources at ecologically sustainable levels and minimising the adverse human impacts on the aquatic environment.

In the East Kimberley region no Aboriginal people are employed by the Department of Fisheries.

Waters and Rivers Commission (WRC)

The Waters and Rivers Commission was established by the *Waters and Rivers Commission Act 1995* as a management and research organization for water resources in WA. The WRC is involved in management and research into both ground and surface water resources. In the Kununurra area the WRC is involved in the Water Allocation Plan for Ord Stage II. They are also involved in the Ord River Waterways Management Group which is a collaborative group established to guide future management whilst maintaining environmental, social and cultural values of the river. This group includes membership of: the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley, Water Corporation, CALM, DOLA, DIA, Department of Fisheries, Ord Land and Water.

In the East Kimberley region no Aboriginal people are employed by the Waters and Rivers Commission.

Native Title

The recognition, or potential for recognition, of Native Title in the region is a significant cultural, political, social, legal and economic driver for re-evaluation of approaches to planning for the use and management of natural resources in the region.

An indication of natural resource management applications and aspirations of the region's Traditional Owners can be found when looking at the rights and interests they seek to have recognised through the Native Title process. Typically, 'claimants' set out a number of practices, customs, usages and beliefs that define them as peoples, including activities that could be considered as land management or economic such as[5]:

- Possession, occupation and use of *country*
- Decision making about the use and enjoyment of *country*
- Control of access by themselves and others to *country* and to the resources found there
- Caring for *country* through spiritual obligations, environmental requirements, harvesting produce
- Sharing and exchanging resources derived from *country*

[5] The list is a summary of the "Native title rights and interests claimed" from the Claimant Application Summary following Determination Applications: WC 94_002 Miriuwung Gajerrong, WC94_11 Purnululu, WC95_078 Balanggarra 2, WC96_075 Ngarrawanji, WC99_011 Wanjina Wunggurr Willinggin, WC99_031 Ningi Bingi, WC99_032 Pamela Simon, WC99_033 Ivy Bindale, WC99_040 Djaru, WC99_044 Malarngowem, WC00_06 Balanggarra 3. This information is on the public record, and was acquired through the National Native Title Tribunal's public information process.

- Controlling, and controlling access to, information comprising and concerning Law Business in relation to *country*
- Hunting and gathering of food
- Building and using shelter
- Using water
- Digging for and using stones, ochres and minerals.

Each of these derives from specific social and cultural obligations Aboriginal peoples have to themselves and *country*. These are activities that are part of the ongoing tradition and heritage of Aboriginal peoples, and continue as part of contemporary management of *country*. They are a legitimate part of regional resource management activity, together with non-Aboriginal planning and management for activities such as aquaculture, tourism and rangelands development.

In this context, it is important to recognise the 'pre-existing' nature of Native Title in terms of its relationship to other land and natural resource planning and management obligations. This is stated succinctly by National Native Title Tribunal member, Graeme Neate:

> *Native title is something which groups of indigenous Australians already have. Native title laws exist to identify and protect what already exists. The Crown grants nothing, as native title is not the Crown's to grant* (Neate 1999).

In addition to the Native Title rights sought to be recognised through the determination application process, Aboriginal people are required by their own, and non-Aboriginal, law to participate in, and have an active say about, a number of resource management and planning activities. This arises from the 'future act' provisions of the *Native Title Act*. Future acts are those act which are not past acts, take place generally on or after 1January 1994 and affect native title[6]. The following categories of future acts may be valid only if the correct procedures are followed[7]:

(a) section 24FA (future acts where procedures indicate absence of native title);
(b) section 24GB (acts permitting primary production on non-exclusive agricultural or pastoral leases);
(c) section 24GD (acts permitting off-farm activities directly connected to primary production activities);
(d) section 24GE (granting rights to third parties etc. on non-exclusive agricultural or pastoral leases);
(e) section 24HA (management of water and airspace);
(f) section 24IA (acts involving renewals and extensions etc. of acts);
(g) section 24JA (acts involving reservations, leases etc.);
(h) section 24KA (acts involving facilities for services to the public);
(i) section 24LA (low impact future acts);
(j) section 24MD (acts that pass the freehold test);
(k) section 24NA (acts affecting offshore places).

The important implication of Native Title is that Traditional Owners are able to continue the application of their custodial responsibilities for country without necessarily owning the

[6] This is a highly simplified view of future acts – refer to s 233 of the *Native Title Act*.
[7] Future Acts may be validly done if authorised under an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA).

property, or being included through specific management planning or management reform. As has been noted, "aspirations regarding land management appear to extend beyond the land over which [Aboriginal people] have tenure, and include land and sea areas for which they have traditional custodial responsibilities" (ILC n.d.).

Property Planning

The increasing scope of land ownership, particularly through pastoral enterprises or pastoral holdings, steps beyond the more contentious ground of Native Title to the actuality of large-scale land ownership within a non-Aboriginal legal framework. This creates the opportunity for Aboriginal people to explore their own approaches to natural resource management and planning.

Aboriginal people in the Kimberley region currently hold 31 stations (34 leases) that cover an area of 6.70 million hectares. This equates to 30 per cent of the pastoral leasehold area (Kimberley Pastoral Industry Inquiry (KPII 1985) (Department of Regional Development and the North West 1985). With further acquisitions currently in progress, it is projected that early in the new century half of the Kimberley's 94 pastoral properties will be under Aboriginal management (Philpot 2001).

Seven of the Aboriginal held properties lie within the Shire of Wyndham East-Kimberley (SWEK), ten within Halls Creek Shire, ten within the Shire of Derby West-Kimberley (SDWK) and two within Broome Shire. Two properties straddle the boundary of SWEK and Halls Creek Shire and one stretches from Halls Creek Shire across to SDWK (Greiner *et al* 2001).

Importantly, Aboriginal pastoral stations are not only commercial cattle businesses. They are also home to communities with the land serving a range of cultural uses and non-commercial economic activities, including hunting and gathering (Greiner *et al* 2001).

The grazing industry provides the most significant contact point of Aboriginal people with the private sector economy of the Kimberley. Major benefits to the Aboriginal community from cattle stations arise (KAPPC 1994:2) through their:

- Contribution to greater economic independence on the part of Aboriginal communities
- Generation of employment and increased skill levels;
- Promotion of awareness of and interest in business activity; and
- Improvement of community morale and self-esteem (Greiner *et al* 2001).

The KAPAC study documented that, even after taking into consideration the generally poorer quality of land of Aboriginal stations, both the cattle population on and cattle turnoff from these stations was low in comparison to stations owned by corporations and non-Aboriginal owners/managers. Lack of a good working relationship of Aboriginal stations with government departments and agencies was identified as a major problem. At the same time, the report highlighted the significant scope for improvement in the performance of Aboriginal stations as commercial cattle properties.

Participation in property planning extends beyond both 'ownership' in the non-Aboriginal sense, and physical access. Aboriginal people are, and have been, willing participants in

sharing land and resources where rights are acknowledged, together with rights and cultural management obligations (Coombs 1989). The ILC has concluded that Aboriginal people believe they have openly shared their knowledge and resources for resource management with non-Aboriginal people and agencies, but do not feel that they have received appropriate recognition and benefit through reciprocal information and decision-making (ILC n.d.). In many ways they believe that this has simply served to undermine their traditional responsibilities for *country* and the management of *country* (ILC n.d.).

Protected area management

The East Kimberley, and Kimberley in general, contain a substantial conservation estate (see Greiner et al 2001 for a more detailed discussion of the nature of the conservation estate in the region). Protected area management, as the confluence between a number of competing interests for environmental protection and security, will increasingly be a specific focal point of management activity. In a 2000 speech, the then CEO of the Kimberley Land Council, Peter Yu, best summarised the issues surrounding protected area management for Aboriginal people of the Kimberley:

> *There is growing potential for indigenous people to carve out partnerships with non indigenous people. National Park management, and natural resource management generally, offers wide scope for strategic partnerships and collaboration.*
>
> *Sacred and significant sites have a range of restrictions associated with access and use of resources. Often there are tight restrictions close to the centre of the site, and less rigid ones moving away from the centres. This has parallels with contemporary western visitor management practices in parks and reserves.*
> *Traditional Owners want to regulate and manage visitors to their homelands, as these visitors are damaging country, littering, scaring and killing native animals, visiting significant sites and even endangering themselves. Traditional Owners feel they have been marginalised from the process of managing visitors* (Yu 2000).

The application of traditional land management principles and techniques can be a significant contributor in promoting broader 'caring for country' initiatives (ILC n.d). This is particularly the case in the Kimberley region where there is still very strong practice and application of traditional knowledge systems.

In the East Kimberley the two National Parks are Purnululu National Park in the upper part of the Ord catchment and Mirima National Park in the lower in the township of Kununurra. In both of these parks local Kija and Miriwoong respectively have articulated their aspirations for both ownership and joint management of the areas. Both parks have existing native title claims over them. There has been little inclusion of Aboriginal people in day to day management of these parks. Purnululu is to be nominated for World Heritage listing and recognised for both its natural and cultural values. It is hoped that the listing of the park for its cultural values will enable further involvement and possibly joint management of the park similar to arrangements established in Kakadu and Uluru. Kija people from the park would like to be able to reap benefit from the high visitation of the park and establish some form of tourism venture either within or adjoining the park.

Likewise Miriwoong people would like to be more involved in the Mirima National Park. The local CALM office runs bush tucker walks and these are carried out by non-Aboriginal

office staff. Local Miriwoong people have expressed interest in being more involved in these sort of activities and also in the management of the park. The area is significant culturally to people and the creation of the national park whilst intending to protect areas of natural significance has seen the further dispossession of people from their country and being able to carry out cultural responsibilities and obligations.

Use of Natural Resources

Langton et al (n.d.:104-109) make the following observations about the Aboriginal economy in northern Australia (that can be applied to the Ord-Bonaparte region):

- Pastoral – by area this is the most substantial economic use of land by Aboriginal people, allowing for the utilisation of land resources while also allowing people to 'care for country'. In purely financial terms pastoral enterprises operated by Aboriginal people are generally not viable due to: the quality of land available (also KLC, 1995:40, Young 1988:7); insufficient scale to support more than a single family (Hanlon and Philpot 1993:13 in KLC, 1995:55); acquisition of land only, and not the associated enterprises; degraded infrastructure at purchase (Jackson 1996:120); limited adoption of technology; poor financial management and problematic governance structures. However, poor financial performance is common across Australian rural enterprises, and not restricted only to Aboriginal controlled business (e.g. KLC, 1995:40).

  Importantly, the acquisition of pastoral leases fulfils community and social needs that may conflict with commercial imperatives. These include maintenance of *country*, cultural practices, subsistence as well as housing, education and health needs (Young 1998:ii).

  The use of more marginal properties for alternative resource management is an important challenge. Some uses being considered in the region are carbon credits forestry or wildlife restocking (ILC n.d.).

  A strong preference exists for "low input management systems" that redesign management approaches around natural barriers and water points, rather than high maintenance systems around fences and other 'hard infrastructure" (ILC n.d.). Similarly, where there are adjacent properties in Aboriginal ownership, "artificial lease boundaries" may be reconsidered and potentially abandoned (ILC n.d.).

- Wildlife utilisation – on and off *country* owned by Aboriginal people, utilisation of wildlife is fundamental to Aboriginal society and can include: crocodile egg harvesting; seed harvesting for regeneration; marine resource harvesting; use of subsistence by-products in craft; artefact production, and bush medicine. Significantly, with the increasing recognition of the 'value' of intellectual property, this knowledge may well prove to be the most significant economic resource available to Aboriginal people.

  To illustrate the acute links between ecology and economy for Aboriginal peoples, Jackson (1996:118) states that, in relation to the rangelands, the "ecological effects of feral animals, weed infestation (particularly of waterways…) and decline in vegetation as a result of over-grazing…directly affect bush-tucker harvesting…".

- Tourism – in remote areas the cultural resources necessary for a strong tourism industry are greatest and can form the basis of strong niche markets. In addition, Indigenous arts and crafts generate approximately $200 million / annum nationally.

Aboriginal people are increasingly looking at tourism as a means to gain economic benefit from their country. There are a small number of Aboriginal people employed in the industry. These positions include eco and cultural tour guides and localised fishing tours. Consultation conducted through this scoping project indicates that Aboriginal people in the area are also interested in establishing caravan parks (Purnululu, Lake Argyle) (Ward, Gallagher, Gordon pers comm).

The Art industry is also directly involved with the utilisation of natural resources with art groups in both Warmun and Kununurra accessing country to collect ochres. Painting is both a traditional and contemporary medium through which people can talk about their *country*. In fact many paintings can be seen as maps depicting important places in country with associated songs, dances and stories. A majority of the artwork relates to religious beliefs or stories to do with the dreamtime, recent history and local events. Some artists paint sections of the Ord river or creeks, tributaries running into it, important landscape features and animals associated with these places. The amount of knowledge about country reflected through artworks is enormous.

Tracey Ramsay, Charlie Cann, Rammy Ramsay, Chocolate Thomas, Mona Ramsay, Russell Gallagher (KLC), Ronny Ramsay, Michael Ramsay, Barry Anderson at Bow River, March 2002.

Consultation with Aboriginal people from the OBP region

The core component of the Scoping Study has been consultation with Aboriginal people from the OBP region. This consultation has been integral to the development of research proposals for the subprogram. It has facilitated a two-way process of getting information out to Aboriginal people, organisations and communities about the subprogram and for the Research Co-ordinator to talk with, listen and learn directly from Aboriginal people about their natural resource management aspirations.

The six month period of the Scoping Study has allowed for consultation to be thorough with some groups and superficial with others. It should be kept in mind that the Ord and Keep Rivers Catchment is a large geographical area. Aboriginal people like most people are wary of newcomers and only the passing of time and a record of delivery or tangible outcomes will determine your acceptance by individuals, families and the community as a whole. Most Aboriginal people are used to *government* style consultation that is usually once off, culturally inappropriate, misdirected and seeks for approval rather than listening to the needs of community members.

The process and method of consultation is important in the East Kimberley region where there is a diversity of language groups, different levels of English literacy, history of exclusion from mainstream society and Aboriginal people are culturally active and adhere to cultural practice, ceremony and ways of doing business.

The three research projects proposed have been developed with Aboriginal people and organizations and reflect the aspirations of Aboriginal people to be recognized in their own right as people who have important information about natural resources and who would like to be included in future decision making about land use of the East Kimberley region.

Meetings

Meetings have been held at the following places and with the following people. This does not include all meetings or discussions. See table below.

Area	Date	Issue/Concern
Regional		
KALACC Festival	28/8/ - 29/8/2001	KLC Executive.
Mulan	4/9/ - 6/9/01	Indigenous Protected Area Launch. Tjurabalan area. Meet Senator Hill and National IPA advisory committee.
Home Valley Station	23/10/ - 26/10/01	KLC Annual General Meeting. Update on OBP to members. Issues raised: pollution from mining, fishing, access to country, training with GIS, cultural mapping, ethnobotanical research, oral history work, preservation of the Ord River.

Halls Creek/Warmun		
KLC Halls Creek	17/8/01	Planning Meeting with Judy Butters
KLC Halls Creek	14/9/01	ILC/Land Acquisition and Access Strategy (LAAS). Patrick Sullivan Consultant to ILC.
KLRC Halls Creek	17/9/01	LAAS meeting Moola Bulla
KLRC Halls Creek	18/9/01	Meet Co-ordinator, Edgar Price.
KLRC Halls Creek	18/9/01	LAAS Land access and land use issues. Bedford Downs
KLRC Halls Creek	18/9/01	(LAAS). Land access and land use issues. Lamboo
KLC Halls Creek	18/9/01	Land Management Officer responsible for Central Land Council side.
KLRC Halls Creek	19/9/01	LAAS Land access and land use issues. Koonjie Park
Bow River Station	19/9/01	KLC ADM Mtg. Brief on OBP. Women interested in work with OBP. Access to information; cultural mapping work; ethnobotanical/ethnobiological work.
Halls Creek Radio	3/10/01	Brief on OBP and subprogram 5
KLRC Halls Creek	3/10/01	Meet Chair, Mrs Bonny Deegan and Co-ordinator. Discuss Plants and Animals Project.
Halls Creek	15/10/01	Tiny McCale from Inverway Station
Halls Creek Women's Centre with Rosie Stretch, Felicity Smith	16/10/01	Osmond Valley/Purnululu Alice Downs, Mabel Downs. Brief on OBP/SP5. Issues: conservation of Osmond Valley; oral histories; cultural mapping.
Halls Creek TAFE	16/10/01	Manager, Merv Wright. Issues – bush tucker, seed collection, TAFE courses.
Ngoonjuwah CEO, Judy Butters	16/10/01	Issues – Preservation and Conservation of river; fishing and hunting; biographies of people along Ord.
Wurngu	17/10/01	Field trip to Wurngu/Sturt Creek with Maggie Long, Charles Fox.
KLRC Halls Creek	17/10/01	Workshop Planning with KLRC
Warmun	18/10/01	ILC/KLC Malarngowem meeting. Brief on OBP. Issues: Fishing Nets – catfish and junk; mining and pollution; rubbish pollution on the lake and Ord.
Purnululu Aboriginal Corporation (Frog Hollow Community)	22 /10/01	Ian Kirkby. Access to digital information already collected by AG Dept, CSIRO, CALM. World Heritage issues – cultural values.
KLRC Halls Creek	20/11/01	Plants and Animals Workshop with approximately 30 Kija and Jaru people from Halls Creek.
KLRC Halls Creek	21/11/01	Post Workshop Session. Consultants and Staff. Planning research.
Warmun Community Council	12/2/02	Chair Max Thomas and Deputy Chair John Echo.
KLRC Halls Creek	18/2/02	Discuss Plants and Animals project and meet

		linguist
Warmun	7/3/02	Malarngowem native title claimants meeting. Discuss idea of having a workshop to talk about land use issues and aspirations
Frog Hollow	8/3/02	Meet with community members
KLRC	12/3-13/3/02	Plants and Animals project planning
Warmun	14/3/02	Workshop with 25 Kija people on subprogram 5. Issues raised – rubbish pollution, mining issues, chemicals in river, get kids involved, go out on country, work on plants and animals, feral weeds, signage at Ord and Bow River, ranger programs, produce communication tools.
Bow River station	19/3/02	Meet community members
Violet Valley station	19/3/02	Meet with Bruce Thomas. Issues – feral animals, feral weeds, interested in research on soils, appropriate crops.
Kununurra		
Miriwoong Gajirrawoong	11/9/01	KLC Mtg/Brief on OBP with Miriwoong native title claimants.
Kimberley Development Commission	13/9/01	Role of Aboriginal Economic Development Officer/OBP Brief
Mirima Language Centre	21/9/01	Mr David Newry Chairperson and Co-ordinator, Ms Keeley Palmer.
Daniel Suggitt	24/9/01	Linguist/Anthropologist currently working with NLC – Mistake Creek. Previously worked for KLC and Mirima Language Centre.
ATSIC Regional Council	11/10/01	Brief on subprogram with OBP CEO to Regional Council meeting.
Mirima Language Centre	17/12/01	Scott Goodson (WRC) and Keeley Palmer to discuss potential collaboration on projects.
Mirima Language Centre	19/2/02	Co-ordinator and Chairperson to discuss working with the community.
Miriwoong Gajirawoong	31/12/01	Ben Ward would like to start a tourism project at Cockatoo Spring community.
Mirima Language Centre	25/2/02	Organise to take language workers out to meet Miriwoong women
Emu Creek, Cockatoo Spring	27/2/02	Meet with community members
Miriwoong Gajirawoong	6/3/02	Miriwoong and Gajirawoong native title claimants meeting. Issues chemicals in water, change to rivers from dams, no consultation from government agencies, no access to river or country, no respect shown to us.
Wyndham		
Joorook Ngarni	7/2/02	Met Chair, Co-ordinator, Committee members.
KLC Kununurra	various	Darryl Smith, Chair, Balangarra

Key themes and aspirations

The following key themes have been identified in meetings with Aboriginal communities:

- Tenure resolution. Getting title to land in the East Kimberley. There are Native Title claims in the area: Malarngowem (EG Green properties – including Springvale, Alice Downs, Mabel Downs, Texas Downs, and Lissadell); Miriwoong and Gajirawoong 1 and 2, Balangarra 1, 2 and 3.
- Recognition of Aboriginal land management knowledge, expertise and skills and assistance with recording this knowledge and production of educational materials for use by future generations.
- Equitable access to expert information about natural resource management and the goals of the Ord-Bonaparte Program.
- Delivery and dissemination of information in a culturally appropriate away.
- Skills based capacity building in the fields of: research, community based planning, land management and planning, using land management tools, integration of Aboriginal land management skills and western style land management skills.
- Research that delivers practical outputs for Aboriginal people (for example: soils research, grass research, training in GIS, training using GPS, survey skills, mapping, water monitoring, boating skills, etc.)
- Control over research information collected from Aboriginal people and control over access to this information.
- Government natural resource management agencies do not come and talk with Aboriginal people
- Establish ranger training and employment programs to help protect important sites, control tourists, raise recognition of Aboriginal ownership of country
- Tourists go wherever they like - go to important areas. They should get permission from traditional owners first otherwise they could get sick.

Project Outputs

The following outputs have been identified as important by Aboriginal people:

- Delivery of information relating to natural resource management and Sub Program 5 in a culturally appropriate way.
- Aboriginal research projects identified by Aboriginal people providing a vehicle for the articulation of Aboriginal aspirations on how they want to use, live on and manage country.
- Natural Resource Management issues identified by Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley. Issues identified so far include: conservation and preservation of the Ord River; water quality issues and pesticide use in the Ord River Irrigation Area; pollution from mining and commercial fishing; access to country; access to Ord River; weeds; depletion of bush tucker; economic opportunities through tourism and impacts of existing tourism use;
- Skills based capacity building with Aboriginal people from the East Kimberley. Skills include learning about the purpose, need and use of land management tools including: GIS, GPS, developing maps, multiple use planning, surveying skills.

- Delivery of culturally appropriate natural resource management tools (maps, planning documents, posters, booklets, photos, video) to assist people in managing their country.
- Recording of ethnobotanical and ethnobiological knowledge about plants and animals.
- Assisting and supporting Kija transgenerational information flow of Aboriginal traditional ecological knowledge.
- Mapping bush tucker including; seasonal variation; past and present animal distribution; traditional and contemporary resource use patterns.
- Histories of environmental change: using oral history recording of landscape and land use change within Kija country.
- Options for alternative economic development including tourism, horticulture, agriculture and aquaculture. Methods of assessing viability and sustainability and the development of information products.
- Collaborative research projects with other sub-programs in OBP and outside institutions such as Murdoch University, Argyle Diamond Mine and existing government agencies.

Additional project outputs will be identified as consultation and capacity building continues with Aboriginal people from Kija (Warmun and outstations, Violet Valley, Bow River), Miriwoong, Gajirrawoong and Balangarra communities.

Establishment of regional network for Aboriginal participation in Ord Bonaparte Program

The establishment of a regional network for Aboriginal participation in the OBP has been one of the subprogram's greatest challenges. The Research Coordinator's placement in the Kimberley Land Council has assisted and facilitated communication and information flow to and from Aboriginal people. The appointment of the Assistant Coordinator, Russell Gallagher, in December 2001 has greatly assisted this process and the program has now established a regional network facilitating Aboriginal involvement and participation in the Ord Bonaparte Program.

This network is more developed in some areas of the region where initial research program development has been concentrated. The subprogram initially focused its efforts on developing relationships with the upper part of the catchment in the Halls Creek area as groups in the lower catchment area have been engaged in other equally important negotiations regarding land tenure resolution and development of agreements and joint ventures. The subprogram has focused on the development of research projects with Kija and Jaru speaking peoples from the upper Ord catchment area and also with Miriwoong and Gajirawoong people from the lower Ord area. In the towns of Halls Creek, Warmun, Kununurra and Wyndham networks have been established with relevant Aboriginal people.

The subprogram has employed a number of methods for creating and maintaining this network. An Aboriginal Steering Committee has been formulated and this includes representatives from each language group, Aboriginal organisational representation, and possible relevant government representation and selected community members.

The Steering Committee's primary function will be to provide advice, direction and support to the Aboriginal Board member, Research Coordinator and the Assistant Coordinator. The Committee is also a conduit for information flow ensuring a formal mechanism for local representative views into the subprogram and also for information flow out to each group. The Committee will also be a point of reference for the other subprogram leaders so that the integration aspect of the OBP is met.

A Community Network has also been established. It is vital that the process of collecting, collating and sharing information is not the sole responsibility of the OBP. This type of on ground community network ensures that when the OBP research is complete that there will be continuing participation in the type of work that OBP has fostered and that community aspirations for locally based projects can continue to be supported.

Subprogram 5 has identified Aboriginal people in each major town centre and for each language group who can act as community contacts to assist with on ground research projects and general program development. These people can be employed on a casual needs basis. Apart from assisting with the smooth delivery of the program the community network will ensure that there are a number of community based people who have a good understanding of the concepts of natural resource research, management and planning.

All the community network people identified have demonstrated a strong interest and enthusiasm for subprogram 5. They possess excellent communication skills, have respect within the community and are keen to assist in the process.

Development of a communications strategy

Communication with Aboriginal people and ensuring that information from a community level can flow back to the subprogram is integral to the success of the subprogram and the OBP as a whole. Communication with Aboriginal people in the region has been by a number of methods:

- Written – letters to Aboriginal organisations; newsletter for general community distribution (April 2002).
- Oral – attend meetings; individual discussions; radio presentations.
- Aural – listening to how and in what form Aboriginal people want to be communicated with.
- Casual employment of language workers and interpreters to assist in meetings.
- Visual – using maps of the area; booklets, posters, information produced by other Aboriginal people and organizations; photos; videos.

Discussions have also taken place with the two main organisations responsible for language and interpretation in the East Kimberley - the Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC) in Halls Creek and Mirima Language Centre in Kununurra. An Agreement on developing appropriate communication materials for the Aboriginal Program is currently being developed with both language centres.

To date discussions have focused on identifying the communication needs of Aboriginal people and identifying the audience types. The audience includes important senior traditional owners who have limited literacy skills in reading and writing English and for whom English is not necessarily a first language. The best communication method has proven to be oral communication either in a larger meeting style, small group or individually.

Communication with younger people is also done through face to face meetings. Some written materials have been developed but oral communication is seen as the best form of communication. There is an urgent need for more information to be disseminated to Aboriginal people in the region about the opportunities and issues surrounding land use and land management. This must be done in an appropriate way and developed from the bottom up as each group is different and at different levels of planning.

KLRC has assisted with:

- Facilitating at the Plants and Animals workshop
- Writing up of Workshop Report
- Identification of language specialists
- Appropriateness of certain materials for community use

It is envisaged that further work will take place within the field research with KLRC by:

- Assisting with organising meetings and field trips;
- Providing expert Linguistic advice and support;
- Identification and provision of language workers;
- Identifying senior language specialists;
- Translation and transcription of recorded material;
- Development and production of information materials to be used by community.

Mirima will continue to assist with the Capacity Building project involving Miriwoong and Gajirrawoong people and it is envisaged that any materials that are developed such as research papers, planning documents, posters, booklets and flyers will be developed in conjunction with relevant language workers and language specialists. Mirima has provided language workers to assist in meetings and advice on key issues affecting people and cultural maintenance.

Key communication mediums will be by photo documentation of research, newsletters, video production, posters and face to face meetings.

The KLC Land and Sea Management Unit has also developed and produced a report on the Information Needs and Media in Aboriginal Land Management, Kimberley Western Australia. The Report responds to a National Land and Water Resources Audit to identify Aboriginal information needs in the rangelands. This report presents a guide for both Aboriginal organisations and government agencies alike in identifying key land management issues for Aboriginal people, communication needs and suggested mediums, barriers to good communication and achievement of Aboriginal land management aspirations.

Some of the key recommendations are listed below (Walsh, 2002):

- *Future ecological surveys and research need to include Aboriginal ecological knowledge;*
- *Ecological survey themes need to be identified and prioritised through collaboration between traditional owners and scientests;*
- *Collaborative environmental research and monitoring projects should include budget items for contracting cultural specialists;*
- *Equivalent or greater time and resources should be allocated to effectively communicating the results of research to Aboriginal collaborators as to scientific peers, colleagues and funding agencies;*
- *Face to face communication, especially on country, is the most effective way of conveying environmental information;*
- *Community reports, posters and other materials must be compiled by and/or for local people and final copies returned to them. This must be budgeted and timetabled for.*
- *Protocols appropriate to the use of quotes, artwork and people's photos should be followed. This allows for people to check their material and, importantly, understand the context in which it is to be used. Adequate time for these processes must be included in projects;*
- *The KLC should be resourced by an appropriate agency to better utilise GIS software and databases and develop information themes and map products to use to Aboriginal land managers in the Kimberley;*
- *Aboriginal people should be contracted as presenters, photographers, artists, layout designers and in other roles to compile environmental information;*
- *Traditional owners and/or their representative agencies and/or research partners should hold sole or joint copyright of ethnoecological information and related cultural material. Copyright for material produced by individuals should remain with those individuals if they want it.*

Establishment of linkages OBP projects and other projects to Sub-Program 5

Liaison has centered on working directly with the OBP Chief Executive Officer, and other project staff. Preliminary discussions have taken place with subprograms leaders. The subprogram leader for subprogram 2 (Rangelands) has identified that there may be room for further collaboration after the first round of research is complete at the end of 2002 (Novelly pers comm)

The greatest potential for integration and collaboration within OBP at this stage is with Subprogram 3 &4 Freshwater and Marine and with Subprogram 1, Regional Futures. The issue of water quality and pesticide use is a key issue that has been raised by various Miriwoong and Gajirrrawoong people. A key component of research under subprograms 3 and 4 is water quality sampling, looking at sediment, nutrients, turbidity, temperature and undertaking other key chemical analyses. Aboriginal people have expressed concern over the health of the water and its impact on fish and wildlife and subprogram 3 and 4 research is considered to be relevant.

In discussions with the researchers and project leader for subprogram 3 it is agreed that the two subprograms will endeavour to work together to meet the OBP goals of integration and

collaboration. An agreed research objective is the involvement of Aboriginal people in the lower Ord water sampling work. Subprogram 5 envisages the development of a participatory and collaborative research environment whereby Aboriginal people are kept fully informed of research being undertaken in the other OBP subprograms.

The issue of integration is seen as essential to subprogram 5 but it should not be viewed as the central responsibility of that program alone. The responsibility for involving Aboriginal people in the other subprograms should be seen as the responsibility of relevant subprogram leaders, the CEO and a primary goal of the OBP Board.

Preliminary discussions have been held with the *CRC for Tropical Savanna* regarding their proposal for an Indigenous Capacity Exchange project. Linkages with this project would extend the networks of the program to include institutional links with education providers and external research organizations.

The table below shows a list of meetings that took place in the effort to establish links with research institutions, government agencies and community groups.

Who	**When**	**Issue**
John Childs – CEO of CRC Tropical Savannah	6/9/01	Launch of OBP. Discussion of SP5 and links with CRC-Savannah.
Dr Rosemary Hill	5/11/01	James Cook University. Project Leader Indigenous Capacity Building, CRC Savannah. Collaboration with CRC.
Tim Croot	25/9/01	Ex-Chair Ord Land and Water. Brief on SP5 and Steering Committee involvement.
Tom Birch, Chair KLC, and Brian Prince, CEO	9/10/01	Discuss progression of SP5.
Department of Premiers and Cabinet, Sustainability Unit	10/12/01	Steve Kinnane, Margaret Raven. Role of OBP. Role of Sustainability Unit.
Scott Goodson, Waters and Rivers Commission	28/9/01	KLC to discuss WRC work and collaboration. Mapping work.
Dr Tony Start, CALM	27/11/01	Riparian vegetation work on lower Ord. Oral histories and environmental change
Argyle Diamond Mine/Sustainability Unit	12/12/01	ADM. Tour of mine. Assessment Program. Tour Rehabilitation areas with onsite scientist.
Anna Moulton- Manager and George Hamilton– Field Officer, Department of Indigenous Affairs	1/02/02	Collaboration, capacity building and networks. Community contacts and local issues.
Paul Novelley, Regional Manager, AgWest	14/02/02	KLC. Sub Program 2 Rangelands and integration with SP5.
Duncan Palmer, WRC	21/2/02	Discuss working with subprogram 3 and 4 water quality sampling work
Dick Pasfield Coordinator, Ord Land and Water	21/2/02	Role and work of OLW.
Leith Bowyer, Regional	22/2/02	Discuss integration with subprograms 3 and 4.

Manager, WRC		Water quality work, Ribbons of Blue and Waterwatch.
Subprogram 3 and 4 researchers OBP office	26/2/02	Meet subprogram 3 and 4 researchers to discuss collaboration and integration
Andrew Taplin EA and Kenton Lawson, ABARE, EcoPlan	28/2/02	Attend EcoPlan demonstration and discussion Kununurra community workshop
Anna Moulton and George Hamilton, Department of Indigenous Affairs	1/3/02	Discuss capacity building project
Leith Bowyer and Scott Goodson, Waters and Rivers Commission	5/3/02	Discuss Ribbons of Blue, capacity building project
Ben Dwyer, Manager Lissadell Station	12/3/02	Meet to discuss Plants and Animals project

Report on liaison/interaction with other projects within the OBP

The subprogram 5 Research Coordinator has been working with other subprograms to ensure that the program meets its goal of integration. As discussed above, collaboration on the water quality sampling work within subprogram 3 and 4 has been agreed to with the relevant subprogram leader.

Subprogram 1 offers opportunities to address the expressed desire of Aboriginal people to have access to already collected and collated biological data from the region. The project "Development of an integration framework for the OBP" will develop a GIS system with datasets from relevant government agencies as well as data from research projects in subprogram 5 and possibly from the KLC and other Aboriginal and government organizations. Similarly these organisations and on ground community organisations would also require access to government datasets for their own planning and management purposes.

It is planned that a pilot project be carried out under Subprogram 5 that establishes a GIS system in Warmun and will train local people in its use and application. This system will also predominantly be used in the development of culturally appropriate maps using information collected under the proposed ethnobiological research with Kija people from Warmun and Halls Creek and also by adopting intensive cultural mapping field research over a period of months.

Data Access and Management

The issue of access to data collected in the research projects is a key one. It has been made clear from the start of the program that Aboriginal people's intellectual and cultural property rights must be protected and this is reflected in the Collaborative Agreement signed by all parties in the Ord Bonaparte Program. It is also clear that Aboriginal people hold copyright over any information provided to the program. This also includes photos. There are strict protocols even for Aboriginal organisations themselves who wish to take and use photos. Firstly permission must be sought to take photos from the relevant Aboriginal people and the

intended use of the photo clearly explained. It the photo is then to be used for a purpose different to the articulated initial use permission must be sought for this. This point cannot be more reinforced particularly if photos are to go into the public arena either by way of a report, newsletter, internet, poster etc.

The collection and collation of data raises to the forefront the issue of ongoing management of data. Currently many Aboriginal organizations hold data both sensitive and not in the region. With some information there are strict restrictions on access to this information even within these organizations. The collection, use and storage of information will be an ongoing issue for the program and one that can be worked through on the basis of mutual respect. The proposed project on data management will assist with working through these issues particularly for Kija and Jaru people.

Plan(s) for subsequent project(s) based on the results of the scoping study for 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2003.

Research project proposals were approved by the OBP Board in April 2002. The three research projects are:

1. Plants and Animals of Kija, Jaru country: Aboriginal knowledge conservation and ethnobiological research in the upper Ord catchment;

2. Data management, GIS and cultural mapping with Kija and Jaru people in the upper Ord catchment;

3. Capacity Building and Two Way Learning for Kija, Miriwoong-Gajirrawoong and Balangarra people in the lower Ord Catchment.

All projects have been developed in conjunction with Aboriginal people from the OBP region. These projects are for the period from 1 April 2002 to 30 June 2002 only.

With the agreement of the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Brian Prince and the Research Coordinator Kylie Pursche, it is not possible to provide plans for the period July 2003 - June 2005 until later in the implementation phase of the proposed projects and after the Mid-Term Review of the OBP.

Lawrence Emery(KLC), Kylie Pursche(KLC), Angeline Bedford, Paula Cooney(OBP), Lulu Trancollino, Tiger Henry and Tanba Banks at the Plants and Animals Workshop, 2001 at Halls Creek .

Which way now?

> *In developing and managing these options, "persistence and commitment are more important attributes than pedantry" (Whitehead et al n.d.).*

To paraphrase another report from the early 1970's, there needs to be a conscious recognition that the most significant issue facing the East Kimberley (OBP) region is, in the language of the time, the

> *"...integration of the Aboriginal people into the developing economic system while allowing them at the same time to preserve a cultural identity and a positive say in their own future" (Beeton nd).*

As this report has shown, the picture is not a simple one of either a passive response to unyielding circumstance, or a turn around from the marginalisation alluded to in so many reports. The generalisation of statistics still paints a difficult social and economic picture for Aboriginal people in the region. It suggests a long way to go and the continued need for advocacy by and for Aboriginal people in improving measures of health and welfare. This picture gives rise to the use of such terms as 'capacity building', 'participatory approaches', 'community planning' as potentially paternalistic responses from well meaning individuals and agencies.

The litany of marginalisation is similarly repeated in any exploration of planning and natural resource management in the region. Time after time, Aboriginal people and Aboriginal issues are restricted to roles as 'add-ons' or 'after thoughts' in government and corporate processes. Where their needs are recognised it again tends to be filtered through a non-Aboriginal language, however well meaning.

Here, at least, a more positive picture also emerges. Aboriginal people are not, and have not, been passive observers of non-Aboriginal processes. Cultural attachments to *country* have carried with them unyielding responsibility for the management and care of *country*. Although not formalised by report or committee, Aboriginal people have never stopped planning for and managing the natural resource of the OBP region. The issue is not so much to build the capacity of Aboriginal people to undertake non-Aboriginal planning and management, but for non-Aboriginal people to recognise the rich history of management that already exists, and to seek a way to build a *lingua franca* that both can use.

Critically, when structuring projects to recognise and incorporate traditional knowledge systems it is important for support agencies to progress at a rate that does not move ahead of traditional owners themselves. Previous experience in grant and planning processes has shown that moving too quickly can lock Traditional Owners into the agendas of others, including support agencies, so that they lose the capacity to direct resources and effort.

Aspects of successful projects

As part of the Indigenous Land Corporation's National Land Management Research Project, a number of factors were identified that were the basis of successful applications for funds. Although it should not necessarily be assumed that these are the basis of good projects, they may provide a useful guide for the development of projects under the OBP. The key components were:

- A focus on education, in particular (ILC n.d.):
    - Of the wider community regarding Indigenous perspectives on resource management
    - Training for Indigenous people in land management techniques
    - Raising awareness of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities of land management issues
    - Raising awareness of Indigenous perspectives on management
    - Preparation of materials
- Employment of coordinators / supervisors / project managers
- Support for projects funded through other sources
- Documenting knowledge, particularly
    - Traditional knowledge systems of resource management
    - Flora and fauna for management planning
- "Regeneration, revegetation, rehabilitation and protection … including ongoing land management.." including:
    - regenerating bushfoods and medicines
    - revegetation of outstations and communities
    - fencing out stock and feral animals

  - introduced species control
  - riparian restoration
  - fire management incorporating traditional regimes
  - seed collection and nursery establishment
  - promotion of ecotourism
- land management planning:
  - preparation of plans
  - resource assessment and planning assistance for water and natural resource use
  - provision of technical advice to communities

Importantly, these should form part of the core considerations for any revised projects proposed under Subprogram 5 of the OBP, as they clearly speak to the core of many of the issues identified in the preceding sections.

Collaborative Research and Participatory Planning

Many of these attributes identified above form part of the core proposals for the original scope of Subprogram 5. To implement these it was, and is, proposed that a participatory approach be adopted.

Effective approaches to community based planning need to be structured in such a way that they explicitly address some of the problems that can occur, identified by Lane (2000) as:

- "inequities in resource distribution over time and space;
- unnecessarily professionalising the grant application and planning process and thus undermining community control and ownership;
- over reliance on external expertise."

The approach taken to date in the development of Sub-Program 5 has sought to address these issues by:

- explicitly directing resources into the work with Traditional Owners
- employing a person to work directly with communities in interpreting and negotiating the research funding structures developed by the OBP; and,
- working with communities in such a way that projects developed explicitly aim to reduce the role and power of external expertise, be they support agencies or consultants.

The focus on an active planning approach has been a core part of the development of Subprogram 5. In discussing working with Aboriginal groups using planning and participation Walsh (2001) offers a rationale why planning can be a powerful tool in working between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities:

> *"Planning is important ... to: break large, complex activities into small and manageable steps; to help share and refine ideas, visions and aspirations; to assess whether ideas are feasible in environmental, economic and social terms; to link Aboriginal land owners to resources they may draw upon; and to produce paper documents that express what people want to do, how and why to government and other people in wider Australia"*

Similarly, Walsh offers a justification of adopting a participatory approach to the planning process, in contrast to the typical centralist planning approaches historically used throughout Australia:

> *"Participation is about building on the strength and knowledge of local people. Key features include: 'outsiders' who work with people as facilitators rather than experts; facilitators who work with people rather than for them; local people taking control and responsibility and maintaining their actions for as long as it suits them. Participatory methods rely on group work and a wide variety of large, visual and interactive communication methods. These are used to complement conventional scientific methods"*

Importantly this does not only apply in the Aboriginal domain, but should apply across the spectrum of OBP projects.

However, within the planning process, the management of *country*, directly or indirectly, by Aboriginal people needs to be based on a realistic set of assessments about the ability to influence land and resource management outcomes, as well as the desirability of doing so. Across Australia's rangelands, argues Holmes (2000), a more flexible management approach is needed, recognising the need for access, particularly of Traditional Owners with a recognised claim to exclusive possession. This is because, as Natcher (2001) states:

> *"Despite efforts to quantify the traditional and contemporary land use patterns of Aboriginal communities, current research methods fail to articulate the cultural significance of the 'land'. This limitation is due to the fact that land use research, as it is conducted under the semblance of consultation, remains grounded in conventional planning and resource management practices that represent only the spatial distribution of physical features of the landscape (Natcher 2001).*
> *…the very act of documenting Aboriginal land use knowledge is an empowering process that leads to increased self-respect and self-reliance" (Natcher 2001).*

Fiona Walsh, Rhonda Matthews, Geraldine Demi, Mavis Taylor, Maggie Long, Biddy Dimbinah, Mark Horstmann (KLC), Tamsyn Banks recording information at the Plants and Animals Workshop, 2001.

No simple solution

A final, and brief, point needs to be made. There is no simple 'solution' to the issues presented here. For agencies and processes with the need for rationally based timelines and proposed outcomes / outputs, the issues discussed in this paper may appear insurmountable. Working with Aboriginal people in this domain means: using a range of sometimes ad hoc and unstructured approaches; working toward vague and ill defined points; within uncertain time frames; exploring a number of 'dry gullies'; being iterative and reflexive rather than linear and programmatic. These things rarely fit into neatly defined funding structures and guidelines, and translate poorly across already difficult cultural interpretations.

As Stevens (1986) said:

> *...there will be no simple formulas ... to preserve ecosystem viability and cultural integrity and the need will increase for ... an understanding of both indigenous cultures and western resource management"* (Stevens 1986).

Bibliography

Altman, J. 1987. *The Potential for Reduced Dependency at Aboriginal Communities in the East Kimberley Region*. East Kimberley Working Paper No. 18. CRES: Canberra.

Altman, J.C., and Gaminiratne, K.H.W. 1992. *Establishing Trends in ATSIC regional council populations using census data: a cautionary note.* CAEPR Discussion Paper No.20/1992.

Beeton, R. 1971. Support Program for Assisting the Mirima Council with Social, Cultural and Economic Development. Second Draft.

Bolger, A. 1987. *The effect of public sector activity on Aborigines in the East Kimberley. Part 1: Public Sector agencies in the East Kimberley*. East Kimberley Working Paper No. 20. Canberra: CRES.

Coombs, H.C., H McCann., H. Ross., and N.M. Williams. 1989. *Land of Promises*. Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies: Canberra.

Crough, G., and Christopherson, C. 1993. *Aboriginal People in the Economy of the Kimberley Region*. North Australia Research Unit: Darwin.

Department of Regional Development and the North West.1985. *Kimberley Pastoral Industry Inquiry: An Industry and Government Report on the problems and future of the Kimberley pastoral industry*. Perth.

Holmes, J. 2000. Land Tenure and Administration in Northern Australia: Needed future directions. Section 3 in *Land Administration and Management in the Tropical Savannas: A Better Way*. Proceeds of the TS-CRC Forum, 21-22 February 2000: Darwin.

ILC [Indigenous Land Corporation]. n.d. *National Consultations on Indigenous Land Management Issues*. Unpublished report for the National Land Management Research Project.

Jackson, S. 1996. Response – Kimberley Region. In *Still Our Country: Submission to the National Rangeland Management Working Group for the National Strategy for Rangeland Management and Action Plan.* Central Land Council.

Kimberley Aboriginal Pastoralists Project Committee. 1994. *The Kimberley Aboriginal Pastoralists Project. Summary report and recommendations*. Kimberley Land Council: Broome.

Kimberley Land Council. 1995. *Kimberley Aboriginal Labour Force: A preliminary survey of Aboriginal employment, education and training in the Kimberley Region*. Kimberley Land Council, Office of Labour Market Adjustment and Department of Employment, Education and Training.

Langton, M., Epworth, D., and Sinnamon, V. n.d. *Indigenous Social, Economic and Cultural Issues in Land, Water and Biodiversity Conservation: A Scoping Study for WWF Australia*. Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management: Northern Territory University, Darwin.

Natcher, D. C. 2001. Land use research and the duty to consult: a misrepresentation of the aboriginal landscape. *Land Use Policy* 18 (2001) 113–122.

Neate, G. 1999. mapping landscapes of the mind: a cadastral conundrum in the native title era. Paper delivered to the UN/FIG Workshop, Bathurst, New South Wales – 18 October 1999

Phillpot, S. 2001. Blackfellas, whitefellas, cattle, grass and land. Paper presented at *Northern Grassy Landscapes Conference, Darwin.*

Sansom, B. 1982. The Aboriginal commonality. In R.M. Berndt (ed) *Aboriginal Sites, Rights and Resource Development*. University of Western Australia Press : Nedlands.

Stephens, S. 1986. *Inhabited National Parks: Indigenous people in protected landscapes*. East Kimberley Working Paper No. 10. Canberra. CRES.

Taylor, J. 1991. *Geographic location and Aboriginal economic status: a census-based analysis of outstations in Australia's Northern Territory*. CAEPR Discussion Paper No.8/1991.

Walsh, F. 2001. Working with Aboriginal people rather than using Aboriginal knowledge. Paper presented at *Northern Grassy Landscapes Conference, Darwin.* Land Assessment and Planning Unit; Central Land Council

Williams, N.M., and I. Kirkby. n.d. *Ethnography of the East Kimberley: an overview*. East Kimberley Working Paper No. 33. Canberra. CRES.

Yencken, D., and L. Porter. 2001. *A Just and Sustainable Australia.* Australian Council of Social Services. Sydney, NSW.

Young, E. 1988. *Aboriginal Cattle Stations in the East Kimberley: Communities or Enterprises*. East Kimberley Working Paper No. 21. CRES: Canberra.

Yu, P. 2000. *Conservation and Cultural Survival Through Coexistence: The Democratisation of National Parks in Western Australia*. Keynote Address to Public Forum "The Reform of CALM: Are the Proposed New Conservation Laws Adequate?" 11 March 2000, Alexander Library Theatrette, Perth Cultural Centre.