East Kimberley
Impact Assessment Project

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF ARGYLE DIAMOND MINES ON THE EAST KIMBERLEY REGION

With special reference to the Aboriginals of the Region

Frank Donovan
27 May 1986

East Kimberley Working Paper No.11
ISBN 0 86740 267 9
ISSN 0816-6323

A Joint Project Of The:

Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies
Australian National University

Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies

Anthropology Department
University of Western Australia

Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia

The aims of the project are as follows:

1. To compile a comprehensive profile of the contemporary social environment of the East Kimberley region utilising both existing information sources and limited fieldwork.
2. Develop and utilise appropriate methodological approaches to social impact assessment within a multi-disciplinary framework.
3. Assess the social impact of major public and private developments of the East Kimberley region's resources (physical, mineral and environmental) on resident Aboriginal communities. Attempt to identify problems/issues which, while possibly dormant at present, are likely to have implications that will affect communities at some stage in the future.
4. Establish a framework to allow the dissemination of research results to Aboriginal communities so as to enable them to develop their own strategies for dealing with social impact issues.
5. To identify in consultation with Governments and regional interests issues and problems which may be susceptible to further research.

Views expressed in the Project's publications are the views of the authors, and are not necessarily shared by the sponsoring organisations.

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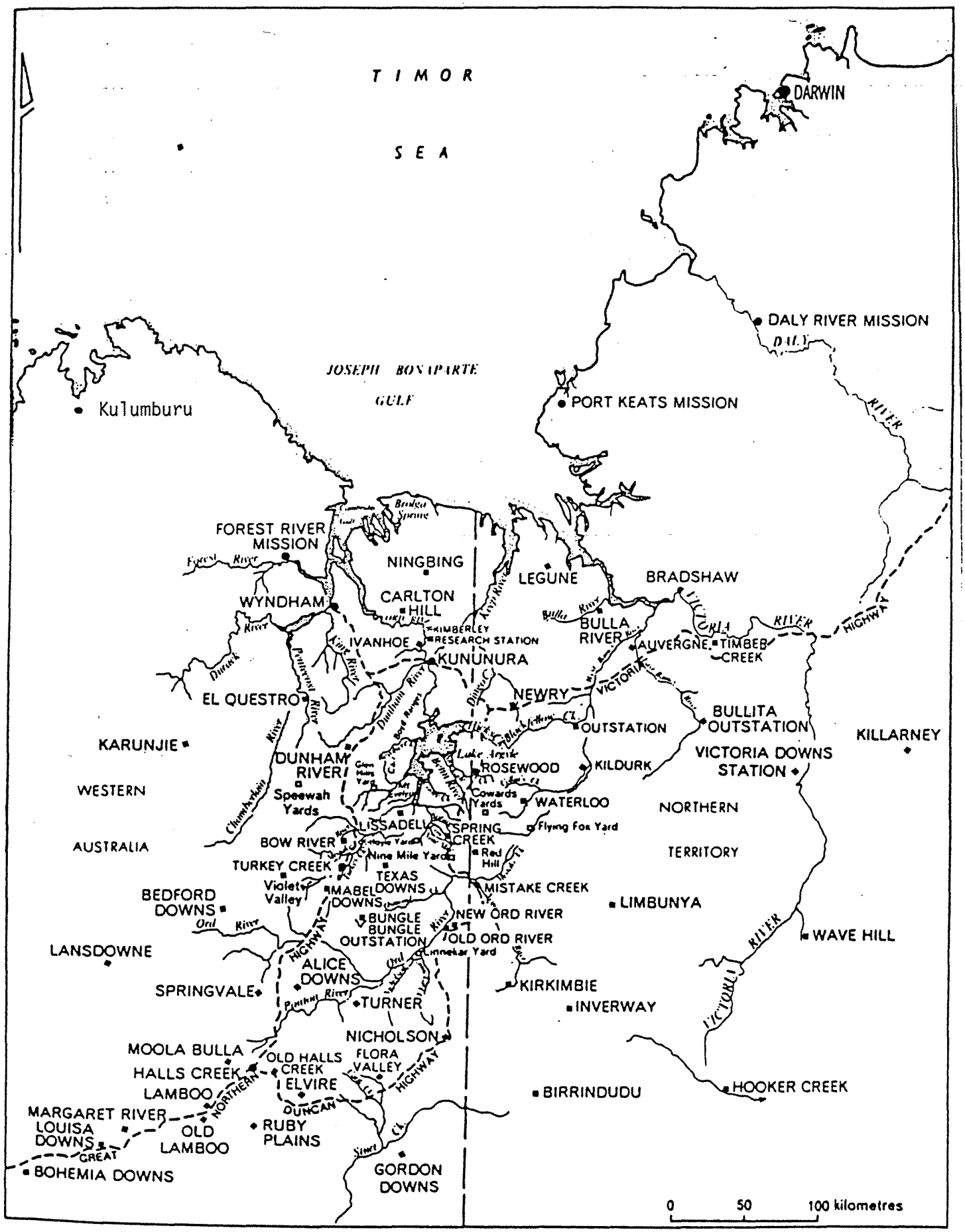

The East Kimberley region today.

SOURCE: Shaw, 1983a. Reprinted from Banggaiyerri: The Story of Jack Sullivan as told to Bruce Shaw with permission from the publishers, The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED

ADM	Argyle Diamond Mine(s)
ADMJV	Argyle Diamond Mine(s) Joint Venture
AIAS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies
AJV	Ashton Joint Venture
ALS	Aboriginal Legal Service
KLC	Kimberley Land Council
NAC	National Aboriginal Conference
ORIA	Ord River Irrigation Area
SIAG	Social Impact Assessment Group

ABSTRACT

This paper is taken from a report commissioned by the Western Australian Minister for Minerals and Energy in 1984 to assess any social impacts upon the people, and specifically Aboriginal people, of the East Kimberley region attributable to the Argyle Diamond Mine (ADM). The report also assesses the impact of ADM's Good Neighbour Policy and the likely effects of the (then) proposed amelioration scheme to be jointly funded by the State Government and ADM. The social conditions of Aborigines in the region before the establishment of the mine are described as being those of dispossession, dependency and alienation. The author concludes that this has been largely due to Aborigines being excluded from non-Aboriginal economic production. The operation of the mine has not improved this historical situation. On the contrary, it has aggravated social tensions, both between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and among Aboriginal communities, and created a range of new social and economic difficulties. A new form of dependency has arisen - that of Aborigines on mining capital. The author discusses the relevance of self-management policies to altering the situation.

SUMMARY OF SOCIAL IMPACTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This summary provides a short-form report of social impact assessment for the operations of the Social Impact Assessment Group. To facilitate organisation and reading this summary precedes the Introduction (Section 1) and the report proper. It is important that it be read in the context of all sections of the report.

As will be seen, the summary is presented in a form that breaks down social impacts into 'General' and 'Specific' categories.

The whole report, together with the listed impacts is further sub-divided into those impacts attributable to the history of the East Kimberley region and those attributable to Argyle Diamond Mine (its operations and its Good Neighbour Policy).

2. GENERAL IMPACTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO HISTORY

There are three basic pre-conditions arising from history, which underpin and reproduce the major impacts and problems of Aborigines in the Region (see Section 2): these pre-conditions are summarised below.

Dispossession

Dispossession refers to the original and continued dispossession of land and land-based resources previously owned, controlled and managed by Aborigines, and upon which their entire economy and social structure was founded.

Although economic and social adaptations to dispossession have been made over the last 125 years, land and dispossession from it remains at the foundation of all Aboriginal experience and social life.

Regardless of political, ideological, religious and idealist attempts to evade or deny this issue, the fundamental and continuing importance of dispossession cannot be over-emphasised: it is the major social impact on the lives of the majority of contemporary Aborigines in the Region, at least at an objective level. For most the impact is also of major proportions at the subjective or experiential level.

Dependency

The next great social impact of history has been the ever-deepening level of dependency by Aborigines, first on pastoralists and missions, then on Government Departments and funded Agencies. This level of dependency - as much an adaptation from pre-European foraging as a response to paternalism - has functioned to prevent or minimise any autonomous action by Aborigines in the economic base or social superstructure.

Dependency is something people experience, not something they do. It is an experience arising from resourcelessness and, therefore, from the ways in which resources have been distributed in history; ways that advance some interests and retard others. Dependency is, in that

sense, a power relationship: it excludes some and includes others. Aborigines, largely, have been excluded.

Alienation

Alienation refers to the situation in which the Region's Aborigines, excluded from all but the dispossessed and dependent fringes of social and economic life (by imposition and by choice) have also been, since contact, excluded from the processes by which mainstream social and economic life is determined. In every way they have been a race apart: with few resources and mostly dependent on the dominant economy and structure, Aborigines have remained 'on the fringe' and powerless to affect political or economic decisions until recent years.

These three conditions form the Aboriginal social context for the intervention of ADM. They also form the basis of under-development and social problems experienced by Aborigines of the Region.

3. GENERAL IMPACTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO ADM

There are, again, three basic and general impacts arising from ADM's intervention in the Region (see Sections 3,4 and 5).

Land

ADM's use of land for which Aborigines of the Region have strong historical associations not only modifies their access to that land but also modifies the meaning of their relationship to it.

In terms of public and private capital - when its broadest meaning is applied - ADM's occupation of and mineral extraction from its leases represents a re-distribution of capital resources. It thereby reinforces dispossession and alienation.

Barramundi Gap

ADM's desecration of Barramundi Gap and proximal 'dreaming sites' constitutes a major social and psychological impact on the lives of hundreds of Aborigines, especially women.

'Custodianism' as applied anthropologically does not provide a sufficient definition of the scope of impact. This desecration is irremedial, though some interview data suggests that pseudo-rectification measures are being considered. Apart from its mass-depression impact, the desecration reinforces dispossession and alienation.

Aboriginal Communities

Both the primary and secondary impacts of ADM have been distributed through all Aboriginal communities of the Region.

The three basic pre-conditions (dispossession, dependency and alienation) have been reinforced. Internal social organisation and complex articulations have been threatened and stressed. Their economic processes and forms have been challenged.

Most importantly, the accelerated speed with which impacting events have occurred is inversely related to the paucity of accurate and reliable information made available to Aboriginal communities.

4. GENERAL AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Social impact and change is ongoing; therefore, continuous monitoring and assessment ought to be conducted.

General areas recommended for further study are as follows:

1. The ongoing process of impact and change (Section 7.1).
2. The region's specific demography and sociology (Section 7.2).
3. Local economic and social resources for development (Section 7.3).
4. Australia-wide and international precedents and experiments, particularly in under-development (for example Third World countries) (Section 7.4).
5. Community and worker co-operatives for application of labour and capital relevant to context (Section 7.5).
6. Von Sturmer's (1982:104-108) requirements for self management (Section 7.6).

5. SPECIFIC IMPACTS

These are arranged as follows:

1. Impacts attributable to Regional history (Section 2).
2. Primary impacts attributable to ADM (Section 4.1).
3. New problems arising from the primary impacts of ADM (Section 4.2).
4. Secondary impacts attributable to ADM's Good Neighbour programme (Section 5).
5. Impacts attributable to proposed social impact assessment group (Section 6).

NOTE: specific impact sub-heading numbers refer to the actual section from which they are extracted. This facilitates referral to sources of supportive data and argument.

6.1 IMPACTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO REGIONAL HISTORY (Source: Section 2)

Section Reference	Impact
2.2.4.1	East Kimberley Aborigines exist at the bottom of a historically produced dependency spiral. This was responsible for the generally poor levels of health, social and economic wellbeing of most Aborigines and their communities.
2.2.4.2	The rate of economic change has been too rapid and exclusive of Aboriginal involvement.
2.2.4.3	'Consumer Dependency' characterises Aboriginal relationships to all regional economic activities to which they are party, especially those of the public affairs type.
2.2.4.4	Distributions of natural resources, though recently modified, historically have disadvantaged Aborigines in the region.
2.2.4.5	Except for out-station based marginal activities, the foraging economy has been made obsolete by European industrial activities.
2.2.4.6	Aboriginal participation in economic production has become essential to Aboriginal independence and inclusion in the region's economic affairs.
2.2.4.7	Aboriginal dependency upon resources and skills owned by European workers in the public affairs economy is still maintained (for example government departments, voluntary agencies and private enterprises). Against this Aborigines still form the region's majority population group.
2.2.4.8(a)	Divisive practices in funding and programming, inherent to many economic development projects designed for Aboriginal communities, have been destructive to Aboriginal integrity and control.
2.2.4.8(b)	Previous attempts at economic development in Aboriginal communities have attempted to adapt western ideas and methods of Aboriginal structures and processes. These adaptive attempts have largely failed.
2.2.4.9	Service providers to Aboriginal communities have been ill-equipped, under-resourced and under-skilled.
2.2.4.10	Town based Aboriginal populations have suffered all of the preceding historical impacts, but enjoy less opportunity for recovery.

2.2.4.11 Town dwelling Aborigines are 'locked into' a consumer dependency that is vulnerable to price spirals and other marginalising events.

2.2.4.12 The above historical *economic* impacts have created and furthered the conditions for dispossession, dependency and alienation.

These all pre-date the intervention of ADM, whose operations cannot LOGICALLY be seen as their cause - but only as reproducing or reinforcing these conditions.

2.3.5.1 Any social impacts of ADM must be seen in the context of the social superstructure produced in the history of race relations in the East Kimberley region.

2.3.5.2 The social experience and cultural life of Aborigines today is the product of a trans-generational socialisation into dispossession, dependency and alienation. That experience and socialisation form the specific social context into which ADM is now introduced. The conditions that maintain and reproduce that context must be modified before any significant change can occur.

2.3.5.3 Romantic models of the Aboriginal 'Man-Land' relationship have not been in the best interests of Aborigines.

2.3.5.4 Protectionist practices in welfare provision and political advocacy fail because they do not address the active education and participation of Aborigines in those social processes that affect their lives.

2.3.5.5 Aborigines have inherited a social system adaptive to subordination and dependency, which acts as a brake to their development.

Since participation in economic production is the key to this system, significant improvements to social conditions and behaviours cannot be expected without participation in the economy at some level.

2.3.5.6 Accelerated change produces 'fight' and 'flight' human responses in East Kimberley, as elsewhere. These manifest in behaviours often regarded as deviant (for example, violence, depression, alcoholism).

2.3.5.7 Social alienation from dominant European social structures and practices continue to exacerbate racial tension and conflict.

2.3.5.8 *Universal* responses to dispossession, dependency and alienation can be expected to persist (for example, homelessness, overcrowding, poor health and nutrition,

	alcoholism, fringe-dwelling, intra and inter-group friction and conflict).
2.3.5.9	Not relevant. This is a statement of objectives, not impact.
2.3.5.10	Reductionist and distorted explanations of Aboriginal events and phenomena abound.

6.2 PRIMARY IMPACTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO ADM (Source: Sections 4.1, 4.2)

Section Reference	Impact
4.1.1.1	ADM's mining and exploration activities constitute a further redistribution of public capital away from Aborigines, thereby deepening the Aboriginal experience of dispossession and alienation. This works to retard Aboriginal aspirations.
4.1.1.2	The value added to land used for mining, via profit from diamonds, constitutes a redistribution of (potential) private capital away from Aborigines.
4.1.2.1	Increased and independent incomes are enjoyed by those Aborigines employed by ADM.
4.1.2.2	Participation exists in the dominant economy for ADM employed Aborigines and their dependents.
4.1.2.3	Increased wage-based cash circulates in Aboriginal communities due to ADM employment. This may help to decrease dependency on the public affairs economy.
4.1.2.4	Improved purchasing power from ADM employment helps to counter consumer dependency generating some Aboriginal buoyancy at the consumer end of the economy.
4.1.2.5	Restricted Aboriginal employment in favour of more 'desirable' European labour will deepen the alienating process.
4.1.2.6	High levels of Aboriginal unemployment will not be affected significantly by ADM's Aboriginal employment program - as it operated to December 1984. Therefore Aboriginal marginalisation from economic production can be expected to increase.

4.1.2.7 Since purchasing power will improve for ADM's Aboriginal employees, certain individuals and family groups in Aboriginal communities will gain at the expense of others.

This is a fissive impact which may create new tensile social divisions in communities.

4.1.2.8 Economic processes of co-operation and collective enterprise - characteristic of Aboriginal adaptive responses - may be challenged and eroded as a function of ADM wage and working conditions.

4.1.2.9 Community-relevant 'skilled' labour may be syphoned off to the ADM workforce. A drying up of available labour for community public works may then be seen.

4.1.2.10 A transfer of dependencies from the public affairs field to the ADM field may result from ADM's employment program - if effective.

4.1.3.1 An ADM-led consumer price inflation will impose additional economic pressures upon non-town based Aboriginal communities.

4.1.3.2/3 Price inflation will seriously erode the purchasing power of Aboriginal individuals and families in town-based and remote communities. Social security and welfare consumers will be worst affected.

4.1.3.4 Aboriginal access to town-based services and facilities may be further reduced by more formalised standards and criteria for dress, behaviour and presentation etc.

Price fixing mechanisms are likely to compound this effect.

4.1.3.5 Any collective bargaining power previously enjoyed by Aborigines could be weakened by an (unintended) ADM-led 'market-substitution' process conducted by local entrepreneurs.

4.1.3.6 The forecast increase in affluence, and the accompanying price spiral, will advantage Europeans at the expense of Aborigines. The latter will be marginalised still further from the economic and social resources of the region.

Racial tension then can be expected to intensify.

4.2.1 Ill-equipped Aboriginal communities were forced to regroup and reorganise at an accelerated rate in response to AJV's activities on their land. Their information base was poor, and not helped by AJV's secrecy.

4.2.2 Confusion, tension and depression were widely produced throughout the region's Aboriginal population, by ADM's desecration of Barramundi Gap.

4.2.3 Internal Aboriginal social divisions occurred as leaders and groups clashed over rights of representation and advocacy for lands and sites. (Refer to Section 2 data about historical change procuding the circumstances for conflict at this level.)

4.2.4 New tensions and conflicts arose around certain decisions taken by spokespeople. Recriminations were threatened or actualised.

4.2.5 Shifts in leadership and dependency structures resulted from ADM-related Aboriginal disputes, posing threats to previously established organisations.

4.2.6 Aboriginal recruitment of pan-Aboriginal organisations (such as KLC, NAC and ALS) and European resource people (lawyers, advisers, resource officers, anthropologists and others) were made essential by local resourcelesness (see Section 4). Hence a new transfer of dependencies occurred, with no moves towards local Aboriginal independence.

4.2.7 Economy-based conditions for cooperation, competition, conflict-resolution and decision making within Aboriginal communities are likely to shift again as a function of economic power derived from ADM-paid wages (contingent upon ADM's employment program succeeding).

4.2.8 Aboriginal dependencies therefore may shift from traditional and adapted influence-leaders to ADM-employment-created influence-leaders.

6.3 NEW PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE PRIMARY IMPACTS OF ADM (Source: Section 4.3)

Section Reference	Impact
4.3.1	Aboriginal self-provisioning by bargaining power, exchange and development will be reduced.
4.3.2	External dependency and internal tension will be increased for Aboriginal communities.
4.3.3	Present living standards are likely to be reduced as purchasing power is eroded.

4.3.4 Poor health may deteriorate further.

4.3.5 Alcohol consumption and related behavioural problems have risen and are likely to increase.

4.3.6 The incidence of violence, injury and disease have risen and are likely to increase.

4.3.7 Disputation between Aboriginal groups is likely to increase.

4.3.8 Conflict, rivalry and hostilities, already evident between helping agencies of the government and non-government sectors, is most likely to increase.

4.3.9 Due to 4.3.8 inter-agency competition will intensify for public and private funds and resources.

4.3.10 The underlying problem-causing conditions of resourcelessness, dependency and alienation are unlikely to change significantly in the short term.

6.4 SECONDARY IMPACTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO ADM's GOOD NEIGHBOUR PROGRAM (Source: Section 5)

Section Reference	Impact
5.1	Differential Aboriginal gains from the programs may increase social divisions and tensions within and between groups.
5.2	Since Toyota vehicles have become a 'Cargo cult' commodity, dramatic economic and social tensions can be expected around issues of differential access and ownership.
5.3	Additional transport availability increases the importation of destructive commodities (such as alcohol and weapons) as well as socially useful ones (such as stores, equipment and personnel). Exportation of goods and cash, as well as inter-group contact, are facilitated.
5.4	Vehicles alter the status of individuals and impact upon the social structure of Aboriginal communities.
5.5	Vehicles bear a 'Renewable Waste' characteristic in Aboriginal communities: they literally are 'spent' very quickly, and thereby exhaust valuable resources.

5.6 A transfer of dependencies from the public sector to the mining sector has occurred, and this is not in the best long-term interests of Aborigines.

5.7 Aboriginal social structures for leadership, decision-making, management and development may be undermined by the program. They may be further undermined by the processes used for selecting representatives to the negotiation process between ADM and Aboriginal communities.

5.8 Aid dispensed by - and contingent upon partisanship to - the Good Neighbour Agreement excludes those groups and communities who remain outside of that agreement and its programs. This leaves town groups especially unaided (for example, Emu Creek, Nine Mile, reserve and camp people).

5.9 A new Aboriginal sub-economy and sub-society is likely to develop, based upon relationship to the Good Neighbour Program. This camouflages the underlying conditions common to all Aborigines of the region. It also relocates race-based tensions away from their economic and structural foundations, and into intra-Aboriginal conflicts.

5.10 Within the program no plans are included for Aboriginal participation in regional economic and social life. Alienation thereby is likely to be reinforced.

6.5 IMPACTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO PROPOSED SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT GROUP (SIAG) (Source: Section 6)

Section Reference	Impact
6.2.1	Decision-making power reposits at the top tier of the proposed SIAG, reinforcing regional Aboriginal dependency and alienation.
6.2.2	Certain Aboriginal groups, impacted upon either by historical factors and/or by ADM, may be excluded by fissive proscriptions and processes.
6.2.3	The proposed Executive Officer could become a functionary of the top tier; thereby rendered an agent of ADM, the State Government or both. Such an impact would counter the essential goals of Aborigines, and seriously erode the effectiveness of the SIAG.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: THE COMMISSION

Commissioning of this study was confirmed by the Western Australian Minister For Minerals And Energy, Hon. David Parker MLA, on 7th December 1984.

The commission called for an assessment of any social impacts upon the people of the East Kimberley region of Western Australia attributable to the exploration and mining activities of the Argyle Diamond Mine Joint Venturers (ADMJV).

The circumstances of this commission arose from the proposed agreement between the State Government of Western Australia and ADMJV to share equally the $1 million per annum cost of a social impact amelioration programme. This programme sought to incorporate the pre-existing 'Good Neighbour Policy' scheme extended by ADMJV to three local Aboriginal communities who were party to an agreement with the Joint Venturers.

Since the 'Good Neighbour Policy' agreement communities were all Aboriginal, and since the social impacts of principle concern to the government clearly were those affecting Aboriginal people, the thrust of this study is almost exclusively directed towards the region's Aborigines. Indeed, neither field work nor formal research indicated any expressed concern about likely impacts upon the region's European population. On the contrary, all interviews and observations indicated little but gain for the majority of Europeans.

Implicitly and explicitly then my commission called for an assessment of social impact upon the Aboriginal people in particular.

1.2 THE ACTORS

Ostensibly there were two sets of actors indicated within the terms of the commission:

(1) The Aborigines and Aboriginal communities of the East Kimberley region; and

(2) The Argyle Diamond Mine Joint Venturers and related personnel.

This limited scope however assumed the existence of sufficient and reliable base-line data which would allow the elimination from study of all other actors as extraneous. In the event no such base-line data existed, and this study was obliged to consider the role of ADMJV against the total historical context of the region's population as a whole.

That logic is easy enough to follow: to draw any useful conclusions about the impact of ADMJV upon the Aboriginal population depends upon data-based means of excluding the probability that all or part of any given impact is *not* attributable to *other* actors in the region. Unfortunately no such means existed. On the contrary, it was quickly apparent that the impacts of ADMJV could not be divorced from the history of impacts produced by the other major actors in the region's

history. To understand something of the present - and then only in the broadest possible terms - necessitated a critical review of the past.

1.3 THE LOCATION

Diamond exploration in the Kimberleys had been going on since 1967. Stockdale Prospecting (De Beers), Oilmin N.L. consortium and Stellar Minerals N.L. were so engaged until 1971. Nine alluvial diamonds were found at Police Camp Pool on the Lennard River (ADMJV, 1984:29). Kalumburu Joint Venture was established in 1972, and was joined by CRA in February, 1976, to form the Ashton Joint Venture.

On 28 August 1979 two diamonds were reported in a sample from Smoke Creek, with more being found in subsequent samples. In September 1979 exploration crews located the Lower and Upper Smoke Creek alluvial deposits. These crews were strategically located some eighty kilometres away from the site in order to preserve secrecy.

This secretive strategy not only secured the interests of Ashton Joint Venture (AJV) against possible competition, it also exemplified the ways in which local Aborigines were deprived of information about the impending events until it was too late.

On 2 October 1979, these crews '... walked onto and recognised the Argyle pipe' (ADMJV, 1984:29).

> The Argyle pipe is located at the headwaters of Smoke Creek in a valley in the Ragged Range some 120 air kilometres from the nearest town, Kununurra, and about 2200 kilometres north-east of Perth. It is about 35 kilometres upstream from Lake Argyle (ADMJV, 1984:39-40).

This location on the Lissadel leases of ADMJV is the site of the present operations of Argyle Diamond Mine (ADM).

It also hosts sites of major significance to Aboriginal groups whose connections span a wide area of surrounding country. If not the most controversial site from an Aboriginal perspective, the specific site of the open cut mine affects a very large group of Aboriginal women from all over the region: under the dozers currently excavating the open cut itself lies the most important Aboriginal site of the Barramundi.

1.4 THE FACTORS

There is a fundamental and historical paradox here: not only does ADMJV's success go to the heart of modern mineral technology and the economic future of the state, it also drives a permanent shaft into ancient Aboriginality and the human history of the region.

If, as the experts suggest, the Kimberley was indeed the 'cradle' of Aboriginal occupation on Terra Australis then - and without betraying the trust of many women interviewed - Barramundi Gap was one of the most important 'mothers' for Aborigines everywhere. Whilst its symbolic value *may* be replicated elsewhere, the historical and evolutionary importance of Barramundi Gap can never be replaced.

Like the Great Barrier Reef - whose importance lies less in its geological formation and more in the living nature it spawns and maintains - the Barramundi site has helped to sustain a human/social system, not over centuries, but over scores of centuries.

As some women from Turkey Creek and Glen Hill put it with such simple but forceful impact:

> 'That Barramundi? ... He's finished now.
> We don't know ...,
> Maybe we're finished too!'

Nonetheless, and without detracting from the impact on thousands of Aborigines affected by Barramundi and its environs, ADMJV's excavation of their Argyle pipe is by no means the beginning.

The social, economic and political conditions that legitimate ADMJV are the same conditions which, over the last 120 years, have rendered powerless the Aboriginal people of the East Kimberley. The poor socio-economic conditions that characterise Aboriginal life today were produced by this region's particular history, and that of Western Australia as a whole. Those conditions prescribe the terms under which Aborigines meet, deal with and adapt to the sorts of economic and industrial developments that ADM represents.

Whilst in Australia those conditions are specific to the Aboriginal population, they are by no means unique. Indeed, they occur frequently throughout the under-developed regions and populations of those parts of the globe known as 'The Third World':

- dispossession of economic and social resources (such as land), either by historical colonisers or by modern resource exploiters;
- dependency on those colonisers or exploiters and the societies they represent;
- alienation from control over their own socio-economic systems (through dispossession), from effective participation in the (new) dominant socio-economic system (if only because of its demand for quite foreign skills and ideas), and alienation from themselves as autonomous individuals operating in time-honoured social and cultural systems of related groups and communities. Whether in conflict or co-operation (both clearly operated) the systems in which life made sense have now been removed from them.

In short, the story of under-development is a story about power - and its unequal distribution. Whilst in the case of 1980's Australia and its Aborigines this story might not be so clear and concise, it is no less real. The conditions of Aboriginal powerlessness in the East Kimberley are best seen in a review of that region's history. Such a review was necessary to provide a distinction between impacts that might be attributed to ADM and those that must be attributed to history. It also helps to provide some understanding of Aboriginal responses to ADM; which is after all what social impact is all about.

1.5 THE STUDY

The absence of base-line data, the particular history of East Kimberley, the very late entry of ADM into that history, and the nature of social impact (as a statement of human responses to external events) were the primary factors in the choice of study methodology. The particular circumstances of Aborigines generally, and in East Kimberley specifically, narrowed the choice still further.

On the other hand, if social impact studies around the world can be described as moving towards adolescence, in Australia the art is still in its infancy: there are still no well developed and tried models for general adaptation. In view of all these factors a critical methodology was adopted for this study. This critical method is outlined in the appended Methodological Note.

Section 2 traces the major historical issues that have worked to produce the specific context into which Argyle Diamond Mine was introduced to the region. Several general and specific historical impacts are observed to occur independently of ADM.

Section 3 presents some major social and economic issues posed by the intervention of ADM in the East Kimberley region. Two sets or 'generations' of social impact are specified for consideration.

Section 4 assesses the social impacts attributable to ADM (of the first generation type) at three levels: the economic base of the region, the social superstructure of the region, and the social problems produced by the impacts of these two levels. The general and specific impacts are tabled in the Summary.

Section 5 assesses the social impacts attributable to ADM's 'Good Neighbour Policy' (the second generation) as it appears to have operated to date. Whilst general impacts are incorporated within those for Section 4, specific impacts are again tabled separately in the Summary.

Section 6 outlines briefly the proposed social amelioration scheme to be funded jointly by the State Government and ADM. Likely impacts associated with this proposal and its structure are discussed and are tabled in the Summary.

Section 7 is a brief forecast of major areas that require further study.

Typical of studies of this type the report probably raises more questions than it answers. Both the Minister and all those who contributed to this study (see acknowledgements) - there were many - were made aware that such an outcome was most predictable.

Nonetheless it is a sincere hope that this exercise will have contributed to the realisation of three major objectives:

(1) That the social and economic circumstances of the East Kimberley Aborigines will be more fully understood, appreciated and effectively responded to.

(2) That future economic developments and their impacts upon the lives of people will be evaluated responsibly prior to formal approvals; and that, at the same time, the errors and injustices of history will be less likely to be 'dumped' at the feet of the most recent actors on the stage.

(3) That this assessment of impacts will be helpful to the establishment and operations of the proposed Social Impact Assessment Group (SIAG); and most importantly to the Aboriginal people whose rights and needs are to be judged again by an imperfect political system.

Social impact assessment generally should not stop with Aboriginal communities in Northern Australia. It should extend to the assessment of social impacts upon the lives of all human communities who, from time to time, are affected by economic decisions and developments. Hopefully this present exercise will contribute in some way to a mature realisation of that goal.

SECTION 2

EAST KIMBERLEY AND THE ABORIGINAL EXPERIENCE: THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF HISTORY AND CHANGE - BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF ARGYLE DIAMOND MINE

2.1 THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONNECTION IN DEMOGRAPHY

Demographic data for the East Kimberley region is infamously sketchy, under-numerated (especially regarding Aborigines) and conflictual (for example, ABS Census data and estimates conflict with Office of Regional Development Statistics). Since estimates depend upon which population pockets are included or excluded, I will not add to that confusion in this Report.

Dames & Moore (1982:179), Taylor & Burnell (Circa 1980: Chapter 4.1) and other informants all refer to this problem. However, if a combination of estimates is used to sum the population of Wyndham-East Kimberley and Halls Creek Shires - the regions directly affected by the Argyle Diamond Mine - an estimate of 7,200 seems realistic.

Up to 55 per cent of this population is reported to be Aboriginal in one assessment (KLC/NAC, 1984), and all sources agree that this ethnic group certainly were in the majority, at least prior to ADM. Prior to the earliest European exploratory activities of the 1860's, of course, Aborigines comprised 100 per cent of the known regional population. Only in the last twenty years, and then only in one major settlement, has this demographic balance changed.

The value of demography, of course, is not simply in what it says about numbers, but in what it says about people and their interests. Prior to 1860, only 125 years ago, the value of the East Kimberley region was its provision of natural resources for life support of the resident population. Dortch (quoted by Dames & Moore, 1982:173, and Shaw, 1980:261), dates Aboriginal occupation of the Argyle area back 18,000 years. The economic considerations of conscious occupational choice have too often been ignored or unknown to much conventional anthropology. There has been a tendency to dwell more on the social and cultural issues of the man/land relationship.

It is indisputable that Aborigines of this region (as elsewhere) have developed over 18,000 years a highly sophisticated and complex organisational and cultural super-structure in response to the economic demands of survival in the region. The maintenance of order and control, protection from rivals and basic principles of good husbandry in a 'foraging' (or hunter/gatherer) economy demanded the very best environmental practice from the region's original inhabitants. Hence, as in any economic system, in this region and prior to 1860 there was a continuing interplay between the processes of economic provision and those of social organisation and function.

After 1880 a new socio-economic system interposed in the region. European pastoralism was a quite different economy demanding not only different productive practices and methods but also much of the best land resources available. In the subsequent century, therefore, a new simplified organisational and cultural super-structure was imposed on the original inhabitants, radically transforming both their ancient economy and their socio-cultural practice.

At a macro level what the region witnessed during the last 100 years was the interdiction of one new set of social and economic dynamics and one ancient set; as two oppositional interest groups confronted each other over the same economic resources.

With at first the technical superiority to impose brute force and subsequently the institutional facilities to effect controls, Europeans secured the subordination of Aborigines in the region until the late 1970's. Furthermore, unlike more industrialised and agricultural regions to the south and west, European interests were for the most part shared. Intra-European conflict was minimised by the specific objectives (wool, meat and gold) which drew people to the Kimberleys before the advent of the Ord River Irrigation Area (ORIA). Large sub-strata of dependents were not common (for example, large groups of unemployed, homeless, poor, and handicapped people). Since large labour-forces were not required, organised Union activity was rare.

Historically the field of *conflict-precipitated* social and economic change in the East Kimberley itself was almost exclusively one of Aboriginal/European tensions. It is in that context that acquired human responses and adaptations to change must be understood before any intelligent and informed assessment of social impact can be appreciated.

In this region Aboriginal interests, material and social, have tended to be retarded rather than advanced for most of the last century. It is tautological to observe that they, as a group, have experienced most by way of negative impact and least by way of social and economic gain. This is not to say that gains have not been made - they clearly have. Overall, however, and in historical terms relative to people and resources, the emphasis of a social impact study in the East Kimberleys must concern the region's Aboriginal population.

Presently, that population is distributed through the following towns, pastoral stations and settlements.

Towns:	Wyndham and Kununurra
Pastoral Stations:	Dunham River (Dun Dun) Glen Hill (Mandangala) Bow River Settlement
Settlements:	Turkey Creek and Balgo Hills

There are also several out-stations in the region.

Note: Halls Creek is excluded from the area of impact, geographically, and therefore from this Study. Forrest River Mission (known now as Oombulgurri) is excluded from the Study for the same reason. But it ought to be appreciated that the history of Oombulgurri plays an important part in the consciousness of the Aboriginal people of this region.

2.2 ECONOMIC BASE

As Gibbs (1984) emphasises in the accompanying economic impact study, the economy of the East Kimberleys has fluctuated greatly, at least since the establishment of the pastoral industries. From what little knowledge is available the pre-pastoral Aboriginal economy owes its apparent stability to the nomadic practices of its operators.

Although commonly perceived by outsiders as conservative, the East Kimberley has experienced significant changes in economic and social terms - again mostly since 1860.

Since Gibbs' economic impact study provides the necessary data about the economics of the region, it is beyond my competence and brief to duplicate that here. However, because of their importance to the dynamics of change and stasis discussed in section 2.1, it is essential for me to review the relevant economic issues under the following headings.

(1) Main Economic Activities

(2) Resource Utilisation and Distribution

(3) The Labour Process and its forms

(4) Impact and Implications.

These provide the context into which Argyle Diamond Mine was introduced in the 1980's.

2.2.1 Main economic activities

Summaries of most activities are provided by Gibbs (1984: paragraphs 3.1, 3.2) and Dames & Moore (1982:183-189).

The East Kimberley region has hosted several economic activities which can be simply grouped as follows:

(1) The Foraging Economy (hunting, gathering, trading and environment protection).

(2) Pastoralism (including meat processing and export).

(3) The ORIA Economy (water, electricity and agriculture).

(4) The Public Affairs Economy (administration and community services).

Foraging is not discussed by Gibbs or Dames & Moore, however some very useful summaries are provided by Altman (1980:87-107), Ackerman (1980:243-251) and Lanhupuy (1982:53-57). The rather paradoxical and major contrast between the first economy and the last three is the almost total independence of the former, as against the varying levels of dependency upon public expenditure characterised by the latter. From a social impact perspective this observation is by no means insignificant.

Firstly, it implies the inevitable alienating and destructive consequences of such a rapid and radical transformation of Aborigines from economic independence to dependence, bearing in mind that the original transformation was effectively completed over a short forty years leading to the turn of this century and the 1905 Aborigines Act.

Secondly, the high levels of dependency exhibited by the last three economies placed their participants in competition with each other

and, collectively, with Aborigines as a group: each struggled for greater shares of funds and resources dispensed from public revenue.

This issue of economic dependence versus independence has been a critical variable in the political history of the East Kimberleys, accounting for much of the *apparent* passivity of the Aboriginal people until their political resurgence in the late 1970's.

2.2.2 Resource utilisation and distribution

In the East Kimberley region's 18,000 years of verifiable human occupation, useable land and water sources have been the major natural resources for economic provision and production. Natural food stocks and grain were primary nutrients for a relatively large and mobile Aboriginal population for all but the last 120 years of the region's long history.

Similarly, as most reliable observers and folk-tellers have recorded, natural resources of scrub, rock and terrain provided for most shelter needs, whilst animal and vegetation resources provided what little clothing was required.

Continued provision for human needs was insured by a well codified land, totem and kinship matrix, based on dual systems of 'Custodianism' and 'Rights of Use' (Berndt,1982: 1-11 and Altman, 1980). Unfortunately, both these labels are European attempts to approximate Aboriginal meanings and realities and have proved themselves susceptible to distortion and misrepresentation. Nonetheless, they remain useful as 'best linguistic equivalents' for expressing, in English, the specific relationship that existed between humans and their economic environment prior to European settlement. The economic consequence of such a long history of foraging-provision (as the dominant mode of production) was that natural resources of land and water were constantly renewed, rather than depleted.

Hence, when commodity-production of wool and meat were finally introduced towards the end of the last century, those resources caught the entrepreneurial eyes of the first pastoralists.

There were, however, two major problems to be overcome by the new settlers. The first was the tyranny of distance from markets and suppliers of necessary external resources (building materials, stock and station supplies, non-indigenous food and clothing, essential services). Second, but more immediate, was the prior and contemporary occupation of the land by people engaged in a long established foraging economy.

The first problem probably contributed to a third problem, the impact of which has continued to the present time: unattuned to the delicate balance of the environment, but obliged to recover or offset the inordinate cost of operating in such an isolated region, 'over-stocking' introduced a process of resource depletion never before experienced by the regional environment.

If over-stocking was one response to the cost and profit equation of early pastoralism, expansive land holding and deployment to grazing was the other. A cursory review of Surveyor General's maps for Lissadel (SE 5-2), Dixon Range (SE 52-6) and Cambridge Gulf (SD 52-14)

provides some visual appreciation of the vast acreages involved (Department of Lands and Surveys, Perth, Western Australia).

With such large tracts of land being re-distributed from Aboriginal control to European control, and with the relatively rapid rate of resource depletion incurred by over-stocking and pastoral expansion, documented Aboriginal opposition to this process can be easily appreciated in the context of their economic history. At the same time, Aboriginal occupation and exploitation of the land was seen by the pastoralists as dangerous to their new industry and incompatible with their value system and social order.

That conflict of interest, more than any other, laid the ground rules for economic (and social) relations between whites and blacks which have characterised resource development in Northern Australia generally up until the present time.

In the event, the Aboriginal economic order was by and large (but not completely) supplanted by the pastoral economy. Dispossessed Aborigines, for the first time in their history, were rendered dependent upon a foreign economy operated by foreign people.

Neither their dispossession, nor the measures employed to enforce it (first overt force, followed by institutionalised administration) have been lost to the memories and consciousness of the Aboriginal population in the East Kimberleys. Only in the last decade or so have the means and resources begun to become available for redress. Until recently, then, the second major problem for pastoralism, Aboriginal occupation, appeared to have been overcome.

Returning to the first major problem, distance from markets and suppliers of goods and services, pastoralism also grew up in the region with relatively high levels of external dependency for supportive infrastructure and capital investments (for example, transport routes and shipping facilities, abbatoirs and providoring). Much of this was provided directly by State and Commonwealth Governments or at least heavily subsidised.

The next major economic development, the Ord River Irrigation Area, was initiated less from a basis of sound economic and entrepreneurial advice than from a basis of political consideration and resource subsidisation of agricultural industry through water.

Again, it appears the Europeans were the major beneficiaries and Aborigines were the losers. With ORIA the town of Kununurra was established with all of its facilities and services. With the diversion dam came irrigated land upon which it was hoped a new agriculture would grow up. Though the second proved somewhat less than ideal, tourism and recreation added a further boost to the economic rationale of the Lake Argyle developments.

For Aborigines there were no economic gains (apart from one experimental sorghum project which has since failed). There was, however, the experience of witnessing the irretrievable flooding of one of their most important economic and cultural resources. Again, a major resource was allocated away from the Aboriginal population and to European residents.

This event was compounded by the in-migration of some 1,300 Europeans whose population has grown slightly since the establishment of Kununurra and during more recent years. Population fluctuations and earlier high turnover have not significantly affected the situation, except that a stabilisation process has been noted to produce a '... small core of long term residents' (Dames & Moore, 1982:182).

Prior to Kununurra, all of the public and private enterprise services and supports to the East Kimberley region were advanced through or located in Wyndham and to a lesser extent, Halls Creek. As the regional centre, Wyndham seems to have followed the typical north-west scenario of out-posting: that is, Government Departments and Agencies stationed personnel and resources there which were 'head officed', staffed and administered ex-Perth. Local decision making was rare except for the day-to-day execution of prescribed functions and duties.

With Kununurra there was a substantial importation of Government administrative and community service activities: firstly, capital and personnel associated with ORIA; secondly, the establishment of the Kimberley Regional Administration Centre and its location in Kununurra (Gibbs, 1984:para 3.2).

Modifying and/or complementing the pre-existing level of public sector activity these events effectively spawned the fourth major group of economic activities which I have grouped under the 'Public Affairs Economy' heading. Gibbs' (1984) Table 1 Data are illuminating: public administration, community services and recreation personnel now account for nearly 30 per cent of the total regional work force. Of these, 'community services' is the largest and accounts for 20 per cent of the total work force. It also has been the third greatest growth area since 1976, as the following figures from Gibbs (1984: Table 11) illustrate:

Mining	up 32.1 per cent per annum
Agriculture	up 9.6 per cent per annum
Community services	up 8.6 per cent per annum

The specific activities included under the specific umbrella of community services and the broader economy of public affairs are not given. They are assumed to cover the whole gamut of Government Departments and instrumentalities, as well as the much smaller private sector activities of tourism and leisure. That being so, and since the region's Aboriginal population is both the majority and the most dependent, it seems safe to assume that Aborigines constitute the majority of consumers of services and activities produced within this sector of the economy. There is no evidence of any significant participation by Aborigines in the productive end of this economy.

Hence, although by no means as overtly forceful as their initial transformation to economic dependency, nor as paternalistic or repressive as the post 1944 model of administrative/institutional dependency, the community services-led public affairs economy appears to rest heavily on a new model of consumer dependency. This model not only includes updated services provided by Government Departments and Agencies, but also those provided by (Aboriginal) resource agencies, voluntary welfare organisations, community development agencies, (Aboriginal) community and station book-keeping and store managing agencies, missions, refuges and so on. It is into this particular economy that Argyle Diamond's 'Good

Neighbour Policy' and now the ADM/State Government social impact assessment amelioration fund are introduced.

Within the main stream economy then and because of the historically prevalent distribution of economic resources away from Aboriginal population and towards the European population as a whole, the level of dependency among Aborigines has tended to increase overall. This is in spite of ostensible financial incentives and improvements which have occurred for 'welfare' recipients nationally, Aborigines generally, and East Kimberley Aborigines in particular. These financial improvements include increases to social securities, unemployment benefits, Aboriginal education grants and other benefits.

Probably the most important observation to make about resource utilisation and distribution is that, of the four major spheres of economic activity operated in this region, only the foraging economy has provided for Aboriginal ownership and control of economic resources. In the last three, control and ownership of resources has been reposited exclusively in European hands. It has only been with the acquisition of a few economically marginal pastoral stations (Dunham River and Glen Hill in the 1970's, Bow River in 1984) that some control of economic resources has passed back into Aboriginal hands.

2.2.3 The labour process

What has been said of capital as resources above has parallels in the history of the labour process in the East Kimberley.

There are, however, two important differences. Firstly, Aborigines became almost indispensible as an important source of labour to the pastoral industry - at least up until the pastoral recession of the 1960's and 1970's.

Secondly, all other labour required for subsequent economic activities seems to have been recruited from outside the region, except for some semi-skilled occupations such as shop assistants, clerical and certain para-administrative functions.

Returning to the original foraging economy of the Aborigines, several observers have recorded the very sophisticated division of labour that existed between sex groups, totem and kin groups. As alluded to earlier, these were always qualified by rights and responsibilities for, within and between various tracts of 'country'.

An important part of the traditional labour process in the East Kimberley and neighbouring regions was the operation of trading groups known as 'Wunin' lines. Berndt (1982) and Ackerman (1980) have documented the Kimberley pattern and others have done so for similar operations elsewhere in Northern Australia. Ackerman is particularly useful in that his detailed geographic and economic mapping of goods produced and exchanged provides a clear picture of the symbiotic relationship between economic, social and cultural life.

The important economic point to make about trade and land-labour processes is that, whilst economic control of land resources was transferred to Europeans, many Aboriginal skills and practices survived.

Indeed, Wunin in the East Kimberleys is very much alive in the region today, both as a socio-cultural imperative and as a material process or activity.

An equally important point to observe is the massive change in Aboriginal labour processes which transformed their working lives under the new pastoral economy.

Whilst it seems difficult to imagine the successful maintenance of an 'Aboriginal slave' system of labour that historians and functionaries of the time described, there was a kind of quasi-fuedal system operating throughout the region. With the Aborigines Act (1905) Police were required to regulate Aboriginal labour, round up uncooperative Aborigines and deposit them on stations and, generally, reinforce the nascent pastoral industry of the region. In their turn, pastoralists were expected to feed and clothe their Aboriginal workers and families in exchange for full legal rights to as much labour power as could be extracted. Runaways were usually caught by Police, punished (either by law or summary jurisdiction) and returned to their stations.

World War II and the demand for military service generated a temporary shortage of labour power in the region. This gave skilled and 'specialised' Aboriginal stockmen some bargaining power for the first time since white settlement. The first wage-payment system, although extremely low, was introduced for Aborigines at that time. These Aborigines and their families (especially sons) appear to have become the major beneficiaries of the 1970's and 1980's pastoral station acquisition programme.

By and large the now entrenched pastoral economy persisted, with the dominant mode of labour being one of paternalism. Families in groups lived on stations where some worked as stockmen, station hands or domestics and were provided with some form of rations as the major form of wages paid.

With the pastoral decline of the 1960's and the introduction of the Pastoral Award, whole families and groups of Aborigines were obliged to leave the stations. Most went to towns or camps like Turkey Creek, formerly regarded as holiday venues during the wet season when productive labour was not required.

Although many skilled Aboriginal stockmen apparently remained in pastoral employment, the majority of Aborigines were forced into a new dependency on welfare provisions and overcrowded reserves and town camps. This was a very similar transition to that experienced in the Pilbara region and documented for Roebourne by this writer (Donovan, 1975 and Bodeker & Donovan,1977).

Ironically, it was this quasi-refugee status, together with the new level of economic dependency to which the majority of Aborigines were now reduced, that provided the necessary 'consumer force' for the rapid expansion of much of the public affairs economy discussed earlier. Along with the ORIA, Aboriginal dependency provided a substantial boost to a new in-migration of skilled and professional workers for the new economy. For the most part these were public servants or Government employees in health, education, welfare, housing and similar employments. Turn-over was and is high amongst this labour force, many of whom are employed with

either formal or implied transfer policies in operation. Their return to Perth or some other post was guaranteed after two to three years service in the North.

With the Grant system introduced during the 1970's, the Public Affairs economy took new directions in labour and employment. Non-Government Agencies (religious and secular) became eligible for specific purpose grants for a wide range of community service activities. The roles of Agencies, such as Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Social Security and some components of the State Education and Welfare Agencies, became transformed into funding roles. The era of 'Grantmanship' was established, opening up new fields for Agencies and staff.

If Australia could be accused of riding to wealth on the sheep's back, a large part of its Public Affairs economy certainly took off on the Aborigines' backs. Certainly, the Public Affairs economy in the East Kimberley opened new fields for new in-migrated labour. Whereas so much of this labour was hired for and expended upon a range of activities associated with Aborigines, very few paid labour opportunities were available in this field to Aborigines themselves.

2.2.4 Impact and conclusions

The important sociological implications of the above economic history and present context are these:

2.2.4.1 At the bottom of an economic dependency spiral medical, psychological and sociological evidence - along with economic and political experience - will suggest that people perform poorly in all areas.

The East Kimberley Aborigines are no exception. The general health, welfare, economic and social life experience of the majority is poor. That spiral needs to be reversed as a pre-requisite to any significant improvements in their conditions.

2.2.4.2 The rate of economic change, as it affects Aboriginal people in the region, has not only been too rapid but also too exclusive of Aboriginal involvement. Alienation and marginalisation are likely to intensify for as long as these change processes of acceleration and (Aboriginal) exclusion continue.

Aboriginal involvement in the pace and direction of change must be effected, therefore, if the processes of alienation and marginalisation are to be halted and reversed.

2.2.4.3 'Consumer dependency' is characteristic of Aboriginal relationships to all regional economic activities in which they participate.

Not only does this work to reinforce the experience of dispossession and general economic dependency, it also contributes to tense and conflictual race relations, since white and black compete for public resources.

A valuable role is indicated here both for ADM and the State Government.

2.2.4.4 The direction of resource distribution away from Aborigines and towards Europeans has begun to be modified.

The process needs to be stepped up, traditional skills and experience in environmental conservation need to be recovered and exploited, and the Aboriginal hold on the natural environment strengthened.

2.2.4.5 Except for some marginal activities (facilitated by the out-station movement), viable foraging is objectively dead.

It is anachronistic to attempt any recovery of this mode in current economic circumstances. As a pursuit for urban romantics the history and tradition of foraging makes both informative and enjoyable reading. For contemporary Aborigines of the East Kimberleys it can never again be anything more than a cultural practice and recreational pastime.

2.2.4.6 Participation in economic production at the levels of capital and labour is essential to Aboriginal development in the region. This may take the form of either participation in mainstream regional economies or of Aboriginal community/group production for Aboriginal communities and groups.

Given present levels of skills, opportunities and resources, the latter form is preferred from an economic stand-point.

2.2.4.7 Aboriginal dependency upon the resources and labour skills located within the public affairs economy is maintained. Therefore, Aboriginal participation in the 'productive' processes of that economy is essential to their growth. Resources and skill development must be the major objectives for intervention.

2.2.4.8 From an economic development perspective it is important to remember two vital points:

(a) The processes by which Aborigines of the region were obliged to become dependent were rational processes specific to the mode of production which interposed on and eliminated its foraging antecedent;

(b) The current mode of production cannot be made to fit traditional processes and practices which are specific firstly, to their eliminated economy and, secondly, by adaptation, to pastoral and public affairs economies.

If Aborigines are to recover any economic autonomy and effective participation, they will require more adaptation to the dominant economy - possibly involving some synthesis between private and public (collective) modes of production.

If we have learnt nothing else from the European history of Aboriginal affairs, it is that there is no evidence that attempts to fit modern commodity production in various forms to Aboriginal communities and traditions have been successful. On the contrary, Aboriginal communities

and traditions must be adapted and modified if economic development through commodity production is to be viable. Such development is incompatible with attempts to preserve unchanged traditional communal forms and labour processes.

2.2.4.9 Consequent upon the above implications and impacts, and for all service providers and employees of Aboriginal groups and communities, essential basic training must include the following:

(a) methods of economic resourcing necessary to the development of productive activities;

(b) methods of accessing and providing necessary training and development of relevant occupational skills;

(c) methods of community development.

Where service providers, agencies and employees of Aboriginal organisations and groups are funded from public revenue of all forms, fund-qualifying criteria should specify these basics. Evidence of prior training in these fields, or proposed in-service training provisions, should be available to the funding organisation and/or the proposed social impact group. The latter could have a right of veto.

2.2.4.10 Most of the above implications and impacts have implicitly focused on rural Aboriginal groups. The town-based groups have experienced the same economic background but have enjoyed fewer opportunities for economic improvements.

2.2.4.11 For town dwellers economic dependency is as discussed above but complicated by a typical 'locking-in' to the economies of Wyndham and Kununurra.

The immediate economic problem confronting these people, over and above the foregoing, is located in the consumer economy of the towns. Purchasing power (the important factor at the consumer end of any economy) has tended to increase for participants in production (in the public affairs sector at least and, more recently, in mining). It has not lifted significantly for dependent consumers. Should an economic lift occur (with its attendant increase in services and affluence) as predicted by Gibbs (1984, sections 2 & 6), Aboriginal dependent consumers will not withstand any upward spirals in consumer prices as comfortably as will those employed in the workforce. Such an event would have a further marginalising impact on Aborigines who comprise the vast majority of dependent-consumer populations in Wyndham and Kununurra.

2.2.4.12 Finally, and most importantly for the purpose of this study, the foregoing economic history and its major impacts and implications (listed above) constitute the Aboriginal economic context which exists independently of the Argyle Diamond Mine.

In a critical sense this economic review, when read in conjunction with Gibbs' economic impact assessment, provides the economic base-line data essential to an understanding of the Aboriginal conditions in the East Kimberleys - prior to any impacts that can be validly attributed to the Diamond Mining Project.

In that sense, ADM's intervention constitutes the latest in an historic sequence of qualitative changes. It is a discrete event in the economy of this region; its impacts must, therefore, be evaluated against a pre-existing economic condition of dispossession and dependency of the Aboriginal population.

2.3 SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND CULTURE

One of the more significant findings of the McKenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry (Gambol, 1978) was that its social impacts varied mostly as a function of variation in the human contexts involved. These contextual variations were not only consequent upon economic change but also upon social change in history. So in East Kimberley it is necessary to consider its social history before any attributions of impact can be made.

Like all social phenomena impact is not a simple mono-causal, uni-directional and discrete event: it is always a tension-filled matrix of actions and events over time, representing the articulation of interests in a given social system. As with the economic base, the most consistent field of tension and change in structural terms for East Kimberley is that defined by the history of race relations.

Shaw's (1980:261-273) study of race relations in the region is most useful for its summarisation of social history. In that work Shaw addresses the historical developments that have produced the present social context into which ADM is introduced. Shaw is well supported in a circumspect way by the eminent anthropologist the late Professor A.P. Elkin (1980:285-323).

Blending these two independent recorders (both having intimate contact with the region as well as sound academic credentials) with field interviews conducted for this study has been useful. This blending produces a valuable picture of the historical development of the institutions (meant here as patterned ways of doing things) and ideas that have helped shape the contemporary social structure of the region.

It is specifically intended that this Section be read in conjuction with Section 2.2, since the only intelligently useful way to apply social history is within the particular economic context which produced it.

2.3.1 Ownership and trespass

As far as is known, Aboriginal occupation of Terra Australis dates back 30,000-40,000 years before the present.

According to Shaw (1980) and others, original access to Australia was from the Indonesian archipelago and via the coast between what is now known as the Kimberley division and Arnhem Land.

'Aboriginal man', says Shaw, 'was modern man.'

With an already well-developed culture, Kimberley was arguably the cradle of Aboriginal civilisation. Apparently this northern region

was an innovation centre for cultural and social tradition, dating centuries before European settlement. It is ironic that, whereas Aboriginal penetration and influence seemed to flow eastward from East Kimberley, European exploration and settlement came westward from the eastern colonies in the late 19th century.

Kimberley's history as a 'cultural block' for Aboriginal tradition and law is probably due, in part, to its ancient role as gateway to Aboriginal Australia.

Given the continuity and centrality of the 'dreaming' to Aboriginal tradition and economic life, it is no surprise nor accident that so much Aboriginal energy has been directed to the protection of land in the East Kimberleys. The 'Wunin line' remains intact today, not as mere artifact, but as the social and material everyday link between contemporary Kimberley Aborigines and their ancient civilisation. 'Wunin' is a living reminder of the technical, social and ceremonial innovation that, according to Shaw (1980:262) marks the importance of Kimberley to Aboriginal development in history.

Kimberley-specific and updated anthropological material was not available for this study. However, anthropological reports and interview data helped establish the critical importance of the social and economic relationship with land enjoined by Aborigines of the region.

An unfortunate aspect of the so-called 'man-land relationship' is that in much anthropology, as in the politics of mineral development, this complex and sophisticated phenomenon has been reduced to debates about 'sacred sites,' 'secret sacred sites,' 'custodians,' 'traditional owners' and other simplified concepts. Not only has this reductionism been gross in its capacity to distort a 40,000 year old reality, it has been destructive in its provision of joke fodder, racial intolerance and the linguistic means for escaping the issues of Aboriginality in a white Australia.

As we saw in the previous Section, a foraging economy such as that engaged in by Aborigines is essentially an economy of provision, rather than one of production of commodities as we know them.

As such, its nearest capitalist equivalent in Australia was pastoralism as practised in northern Australia. Certainly there was a very real transformation of the labour process under pastoralism as it affected Aborigines; but the resource base of both was almost identical, the only major difference being one of fences and gridlines. The pastoralists competed for the resource base previously occupied by Aborigines.

Aboriginal economics demanded the quite complex and sophisticated system of social relations and cultural traditions that would ensure their continued survival on the land. Generosity and co-operation between people were the predominant, but not the exclusive, modes of recognising the level of inter-dependence between people and between people and land that a foraging economy demands of those who would survive in a fragile eco-system. Hence, the interchange of rights and responsibilities, privilege and obligation, that characterises some Aboriginal groups today.

It is most important that this inextricable link between economic demand and social response be considered in any evaluation of pre-European Australian social history. Equally important is the economic similarity between the resource base of Aboriginal foraging and that of European pastoralism.

The persistence and endurance of Aboriginal opposition to their displacement, even against incredible and foreign force of arms, can then be understood. Almost overnight the ancient relationship with their land was transformed (objectively, at least) from one of 'ownership' to one of 'trespass'. (See Elkin, 1980:285).

Aboriginal response to dispossession varied from active resistence to apparent passive acceptance; not too different from human responses in history (Hebrew response to Roman occupation, Jews to the Third Reich, Negroes to plantation slavery, Africans and Indians to colonialism, Irish resistence to English invasion, American-Indian opposition to white settlement and so on). In that context Noonkanbah shares the ethnic meanings, if not the tragic cost, of Masada, Ghandi's salt, the Easter Rising, Wounded Knee and many more.

As Shaw (1980:270) deduced, what is so often misinterpreted as apathetic passivity or self-deprecation on the part of Aborigines is better explained as '... a realistic demeanour towards individuals and/or agencies which are representative of a society holding the political aces.'

Before all else then, dispossession was the basic event which shaped the foundations of the new social superstructure imposed on Aboriginal Australia and the East Kimberley in particular. From 1880 onwards, Aborigines committed trespass (in colonial law) every time they engaged in foraging, since now the land provided cattle, sheep and imported supplies. Trespass was therefore the greater cause of pastoral reprisal against Aborigines, and the a priori target of legislation and law enforcement in the Kimberleys well into the 20th century.

2.3.2 Pacification

Colonial settlement began in earnest after 1880 when Wave Hill (NT) was selected. In 1884 Ord River Station was settled, followed by Lissadell in 1885, Argyle Downs and Rosewood in 1886. Also in 1886 Wyndham was founded as an administrative, cattle and trading port, primarily to service the Halls Creek gold boom. It appears that with the drought of 1889-1892 the East Kimberley became somewhat static (in expansionary terms) with settlement then concentrating on the mid-reaches of the Ord River and Sturt Creek, near Halls Creek (Shaw, 1980:263).

Although the Eastern and Western Kimberley pastoral frontiers remained separate until after 1900, settlement expansion moved westward again after 1894 until a continuous belt of European property ownership extended from Derby to Wyndham. Limited only by northern and southern areas, either too rugged or arid for grazing, this belt joined up with Northern Territory settlements to form '... a vast cattle complex across Northern Australia.' Predictably this was the period identified by Shaw (1980:263), Elkin (1980:287) and most other recorders as that of 'pacification by force'.

It is true that the first attempt at Aboriginal protection was made in the 1886 legislation to establish the Aboriginal Protection Board. However, as Elkin (1980:294) notes, the five-person Board depended for its effect upon the services of Magistrates. Certainly in the East Kimberley (as in West Kimberley and Pilbara) Magistrates were too busy with Police business of trespass control, cattle stealing and reprisal to be able to give effect to the needs of the Board.

Pacification by force continued with shootings and punitive expeditions for cattle stealing and the occasional killing of Europeans. In this early context, where cattle were valued by Europeans above Aboriginal lives, the frontier advanced with local attrition, violence and localised genocide (Shaw, 1980).

Elkin (1980:286) and Shaw (1980:263) both identified this period of pacification by force as the most vulnerable time for the introduction of conditions like venereal disease, malnutrition, infertility, alcohol and opium abuse. The early roundups and large scale imprisonments of Aborigines constituted the first step in the transformation of nomadic foragers to sedentary 'quasi villienage'.

Aborigines, reports Elkin, had no resistence to dietary changes, sedentary life, alcohol and new diseases. On the other hand, European measures were justified by popular colonial doctrines and values that supported the 'dying race' thesis and 'the white man's duty'. Fear and tension were worsened by ignorance and colonial ideas about blacks.

Aboriginal responses included the full range of fight and flight activities, linked by an enduring confusion and bewilderment (culture shock) as their economic survival, taken-for-granted cues and predictable social structures were lost in a welter of unprecedented brutality. This was a war over control of land: Aborigines were the conquered.

It is important, in understanding the present context, to be aware of the enormous influence of inter-generational socialisation processes: the oral tradition of Aboriginal society and culture lent itself well to the transmission of values and experiences, acquired during this pacification period, to present generations of Aborigines. Whereas official European Australian history all but obliterated these events, Aboriginal oral history did not. Indeed, subsequent events, as far apart from each other as the 1926 Oombulgurri Forrest River massacre and the 1983 death of John Pat at Roebourne, do much to reinforce and ensure the continued survival of the colonial-Aboriginal acculturation. They also ensure an on-going experience of alienation, the basis of most social problems today.

2.3.3 Protection

After 1900 Shaw (1980:265) reports that:

> During the secondary decade of European settlement in the Eastern Kimberley, from around 1900 until the 1930's, the Region was still being 'tamed' with gun, strychnine, horse, chain and dog.

And again

> From accounts substantiated by Gadgerong, Miriwong, Guluwaring, Gidja (Lungga), Djamindjong (Djamindjung) and Yilngali men, there was movement also towards the west, to the fertile river valleys of the East Kimberleys, where earlier settlers like the Duracks had established oases of relative peace.

The impact of the former case - a continuity of the 'pacification by force' process - was to precipitate massive locational upheaval and movement by Aborigines from south-western areas eastward to Port Keats and Daly River mission settlements. Given the economic and social relationships surrounding land in pre-European Aboriginal history (discussed above and in Section 2.2), the inter-racial conflict was compounded by a new level of internecine Aboriginal conflict; as old taboos, kinship and land-link systems and the Aboriginal law/lore was inevitably trespassed against. The resulting near anarchy has been described by Stanner as both cause and symptom of the breakdown of traditional social organisation:

> Many of the pre-conditions of the traditional culture were gone - a sufficient population, a self-sustaining economy, discipline by elders, a competent dependency on nature - and, with the pre-conditions, went much of the culture ... (Stanner, quoted in Shaw, 1980:265).

Movement west, therefore, to the sedentary sanctuaries of now established pastoral leases in the East Kimberleys - by the second generation of Aborigines (that is, after settlement) - was the predictable and only alternative. Their entrenchment in the now familiar cattle station way of life was, therefore, ensured. In this system, conformity with the wishes of station managers and owners was essential to survival - under pain of enforcement by Police and Magistrates. These 'micro-communities' (Shaw, 1980) were supported by isolated and self-sufficient pastoral economies determined by two annual seasons - the wet and the dry.

Under the old indenture system, wages were paid in the form of clothing (mostly for work and cultural niceties) and rations for workers and families.

The status system was equally simple and rigid:

(1) Europeans (managers and staff).

(2) 'Half-caste' Aborigines.

(3) 'Full bloods'.

Thus a new sub-cultural division was imposed and an implicit value attributed to degrees of skin pallor.

Ironically, the unbending seasonal nature of pastoralism in the Kimberley, governed by wet and dry, provided for substantial (unpaid) holidays known as 'Big Sundays' (Shaw, 1980:266). For station Aborigines these wet seasons were characterised by a return to the bush for ceremonies, initiations and dispute settlement.

Thus, 'protectionism' (the institutional and cultural equivalent of economic dependency) began in the East Kimberley. Formalised through the Aborigines Act of 1905, protectionism provided the social superstructure of Aboriginal life and race relations for the next seventy (70) years. Station and mission forms of protectionism predominated until the early 1970's: 'Home' was the station or mission that subsequent generations were born on. 'Identity' was in the pastoral and mission figures after whom off-spring were named. Paradoxically, the micro-communities and settlements so established were located for the most part on or near traditional home country. This helped to ensure an adaptation of Aboriginal economic, social and cultural life rather than its elimination. The 'Big Sunday' pastoral adaptation, and the 'off-mission' continuity of Aboriginal law and tradition, survived both law-enforced pastoral attempts to bend Aborigines to the required labour process and Christian-evangelised mission attempts to press them into submission.

Arguably, it may have been better had these attempts succeeded. As it is, and although pacification and protection did succeed in wresting social control from Aborigines by supplanting their institutional practices and cultural traditions, the Europeanisation of the East Kimberley rendered Aborigines powerless and dependent. They were alienated not only from their own means of production and social structures but also from those of the new system.

Under these circumstances, Aborigines were obliged to take what they could from both systems and adapt these to their new 'no-man's-land' condition, a condition made worse by the later public affairs economy and the administration of Aboriginal affairs in the region.

In terms of the present context it is most important to appreciate that in spite of political, religious and dominant-culture rhetoric, neither assimilation nor integration were realisable for the majority of Aborigines. Economically and socially they were overtly not wanted as equals and were covertly excluded as incompetents. To debate which of these models was most appropriate or effective, even regardless of Aboriginal views and wishes, therefore becomes redundant.

On the other hand, some sort of 'return to the wilderness' exodus, or full economic and social recovery of traditional life, was no longer a realistic proposition. The economic means for such a proposition were now dispossessed and subject to trespass, and their social system - even if accessible - was either unacceptable or illegal.

The social problems arising from these circumstances are well documented elsewhere: Departments of Aboriginal Affairs, Social Security, Health, Community Services, and the wealth of information produced by Commissions of inquiry and research. Such social problems are the predictable consequences of alienation seen in history all over the world.

It is this experience of dispossession, dependency and alienation that Aborigines are now forced to overcome. Therefore, the social impact of any new development (social or economic) must be assessed for its potential to retard or advance Aboriginal efforts to (some) repossession, independence and participation in East Kimberley economic, social and cultural life.

As Shaw (1980:268) states, referring to Stanner's work:

> What the early settlers either failed to see, or ignored, was an acceptance by many Aborigines of the changing order (...) and that what they wanted (and still seek) was: (1) A workable union of their lives with those of whites, going 'side by side' as many Eastern Kimberley Aborigines have put it, and (2) achieving this in their own terms, e.g. retaining their identity.

2.3.4 Contemporary responses and interventions: a critique

European political, economic and academic responses to East Kimberley Aboriginality have been marked most recently by gross reductionism and distortion of Aboriginal presentations and meanings. These responses followed historically from the protectionist policies of the last seventy or so years and from their antecedents in pacification by force.

These responses have failed to appreciate several critical issues:

1. The identical nature of the resource base necessary to both pastoralism and its foraging antecedent.

2. The oppositional nature of 'provision' and 'production' inherent in the foraging and commodity economies respectively.

3. The transformation of available labour power which was the economic function of pastoralism, and which, although sharing much in common with foraging, was essentially an economic activity of commodity production.

4. The adapted economic processes demanded of Aborigines for their survival after dispossession, pacification and protection.

5. The adaptive social processes demanded of Aborigines in the new social superstructure of domination, subordination and exclusion.

6. The range of available Aboriginal responses to dispossession and subordination included active resistence and passive acceptance (all having historical and universal precedents); including increased mobility to other territories and the inevitable internecine conflicts.

7. The real meaning of apparent self-deprecation by Aborigines found in a crude appreciation of the power displayed by European society.

8. The conventionally understood socialisation processes by which new experiences are incorporated into

cultural and sub-cultural realities, thereby ensuring a trans-generational transmission and maintenance of opposition to dispossession.

9. The introduction of diseases and disabilities to a population made vulnerable by its social and economic transformation.

10. The role of legislatures, law-enforcers and missions in legitimating Aboriginal subordination by Europeans, weakening or eroding their social structures and cultural practices, and thereby reinforcing dependency and alienation.

11. Adaptive use by Aborigines of a new and maintained socio-cultural system imposed by seasonal pastoralism and mission Christianity.

12. The legislative impact (through the 1905 Aborigines Act) in entrenching a new alienating system.

13. The paradoxical role of pacification and protection (by law, pastoralism and mission) in ensuring the necessary land-based and communal links to the maintenance of material and social integrity among Aborigines.

14. The adaptive function of continued 'provision' (albeit under a foreign system) in which the essential elements of foraging were maintained; first by station, second by mission, third by official handout and finally, by the new public affairs economy.

15. The failure of assimilation and integration due to rejection and exclusion of Aboriginals as unequal and incompetent. Social and economic depression and failure are the consequences of this alienation.

16. The practical impossibility of some fringe European proposals for Aboriginal problems, such as the 'return to the wilderness' model.

17. Recent Aboriginal political and economic action to overcome dispossession, dependency and alienation are the principle issues to be addressed. Ad hoc approaches based on simple provision of material commodities can only serve to choke this movement and reinforce precisely those conditions that Aborigines themselves are trying to overcome.

2.3.5 Impact and conclusions

2.3.5.1 Any impacts associated with ADM cannot be dissociated from the more general impacts of the East Kimberley's particular historical development. The social superstructure of today is the product of historical relations between Europeans and Aborigines, not between

Aborigines and ADM.

2.3.5.2 The social experience and cultural life of Aborigines today is the specific dynamic context which will receive impact from ADM. That context is the product of socialisation through which the experience of dispossession, dependency and alienation is transmitted. For the context to be positively changed the experience has first to be changed. Therefore, the conditions that maintain the experience have to be modified. Whilst the proposed land rights and other resource acquisition programmes may help to change the experience of dispossession, of themselves they will not significantly change the remaining two conditions of dependency and alienation.

2.3.5.3 Therefore, the reductionist view of 'man-land' relationships - as related to Aborigines works to romanticise (at best) the potential value of land acquisition programmes. This view should be expanded to include the economic as well as the social basis of the relationship.

2.3.5.4 The protectionist model for Aboriginal affairs also works to maintain dependency and alienation. Whether they be models of provision or of politicisation, where they do not specifically address the active education and participation of Aborigines in those social processes that affect them, those models inevitably maintain dependency upon providers and advocates alike. This works to ensure the persistence of Aboriginal alienation.

2.3.5.5 Aborigines of the East Kimberley have developed a social system adaptive to conditions of subordination and dependency. That system can be expected to act as a break to development, just as the original systems acted as a resistor to pacification, control and 'initial' subordination. The necessary pre-conditions to positive social development, therefore, rest on Aboriginal inclusion in economic production; either of an Aboriginal community-based form or of a European commercially-based form, or an appropriate mix.

The experience of economic production where Aborigines are in control of both resource base and labour process constitutes the optimum conditions for the development of social structures and systems that will foster independence.

2.3.5.6 Fight and flight responses to change universally are not only typical of fear and powerlessness, they are also typical responses to 'accelerated change' imposed by others. Field interviews constantly produced concern about the rate of change and Aboriginal inability to keep up. On the other hand, they well recognised that there is no safe 'time-lock' device that can be applied.

The only available solution to this problem is to equip Aborigines with the economic and social means of controlling the rate of change as it affects them.

2.3.5.7 Social alienation from dominant European social structures and practices will continue to exacerbate racial tension and conflict. Whilst a buffer exists for remote communities, such as Turkey Creek, out-stations and pastoral leases, no such device exists in Kununurra and Wyndham. In town Aborigines are confronted daily with their exclusion and marginal existence.

2.3.5.8 Given the persistence of the three major historical experiences at the hands of European social structures - dispossession, dependency and alienation - the universal responses to these can be expected also to persist. These include homelessness, over-crowding, poor health and nutrition, depression, alcoholism, infringement, intra and inter-group friction and conflict, and other responses.

2.3.5.9 The best possible long term solution to these impacts and implications is that proposed by Aborigines themselves in history: a workable union with whites, within their own terms and identity.

2.3.5.10 A major obstacle to any positive change towards (8) and (9) above has been the failure of political, economic and academic enquiry to address the critical issues of reductionist explanation and distorted analysis of the Aboriginal experience in White Australia.

SECTION 3

ARGYLE DIAMOND MINE AS A SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTERVENTION

The general history of socio-economic change experienced by Aboriginal communities of the East Kimberley region (as presented in Section 2) provides two sets of information paramount in their importance for impact assessment:

(1) Information about the history of social and economic responses and responsiveness of the Aboriginal population concerned.

(2) Information about the social context into which Argyle Diamond Mine is introduced as an event.

These sets of information refer to the Aboriginal experience of and responses to both economic and social change. The social and economic responsiveness of any social group, fundamentally, is rooted in its relationship to the economic base upon which its survival depends. Equally, its responsiveness is rooted in its relationship to the particular social superstructure (institutional and cultural aspects) which is specific to that economic base. The social context, then, of any qualitative change or intervention is the pre-existing set of social and economic conditions (the factors) in which competing groups and their interests (the actors) are already operating as a 'society'.

Against this history and into that specific context, Argyle Diamond Mine is introduced as yet another new and major competing set of social and economic interests. As ADM's capital investment and corporate structure indicate (see Dames & Moore, 1982 and ADMJV, 'Project Briefing', 1984) this is no small scale, temporary or insignificant event. Rather, ADM's establishment in the region represents a very powerful, penetrative and substantial qualitative change, in economic and social terms.

To avoid any doubt or confusion, it is worth spelling out here just what are those new interests that are to be assessed for their impact. ADMJV's 'Project Briefing' of August 1984 provides the simplest, unambiguous statement of objectives and interests:

> Argyle Diamond Mines Joint Venture
>
> The Argyle Diamond Mines Joint Venture (ADMJV) was established to provide for the development, mining and management of the Joint Venturers' diamond interests in the Argyle and Ellendale areas of Western Australia.
>
> Interests held by:

CRA LIMITED		56.8%
The Zinc Corporation, Limited	33.0%	
New Broken Hill Consolidated Limited	23.8%	
ASHTON MINING GROUP		38.2%
Ashton Mining Limited	24.2%	
A.O. (Australia) Pty Limited	4.9%	
Tanaust Proprietary Limited	9.1%	
NORTHERN MINING CORPORATION N.L.		5.0%
		100.0%

> The activities of the Argyle Diamond Mines Joint Venture are managed by Argyle Diamond Mines Pty Limited, (ADM) a wholly-owned subsidiary of CRA Limited, incorporated in Western Australia on 14 March 1980.

Those principally are the simple inarguable objectives and interests of the ADMJV. Any other 'secondary' objectives and interests in the East Kimberley region that may be expressed from time to time by ADMJV will be directed towards the achievement of those principal objectives and the enhancement of those principal interests (as the venturers perceive them) in the most cost-effective and goal-oriented ways. Neither is it realistic or reasonable to expect the venturers to behave differently, nor are the best interests of the region's residents served well by their harbouring such an expectation.

The second major observation to make about ADM concerns its qualitative departure from basic regional economic tradition. Unlike its provisioning (foraging), productive (pastoral) and consumptive (public affairs) economic predecessors, the venturers' sole interest in this region lies in the exploration, extraction and exporting of diamonds. Economically the land involved is not the basic resource of interest to the joint venturers, it is of interest only for its role as repository for diamondiferous ores. As such, the venturers have no primary interest in husbanding, nurturing or replenishing the environment. Diamond mining requires no resource replenishing or renewal practices like seeding, burning off, irrigation, soil counter-degradation measures and so on.

The venturers may assume, or be required to adopt, a social and/or political responsibility for rehabilitating any disturbed or destroyed areas and features as far as is practicably possible. In fact they are required so to do and have commenced this work.

The third issue to be understood concerns ADM's economic viability status. Again, unlike its predecessors, the joint venture suffers very little dependency upon the public purse. On the contrary, they represent a substantial contribution, not only to taxation revenue (via royalties and in other ways) but also to the development of socially useful facilities otherwise unobtainable in the region, such as hospital extensions and a leisure centre in Kununurra. Again, ADM's demand for energy has provided the economic viability for the recently announced installation of a hydro-electric scheme which might otherwise never have eventuated.

Whilst it may be that public resources will be diverted to private use by ADM in the pursuit of its own interests, the venturers have demonstrated their economic ability and will to provide for much of their own infrastructural needs, such as an airport, accommodation, and commuting arrangements. In short, ADM has reversed the regional tradition of economic dependency upon public investment that has underwritten most previous economies of the North.

On the other hand, as Gibbs (1984: Section 2) summarises, the direct economic impact of ADM will not be great, nor can any substantial growth in resident-employment (as opposed to in-migrated and commuter labour) be expected.

However, Gibbs forecasts several indirect or 'secondary' impacts

> ... on unemployment, business opportunities and increasing real, and anticipated, levels of economic activity (which) will be of considerable benefit to the long-term economic development of the region, and to reducing required levels of Government support.

She also forecasts an economy-stabilisation leading to a '... strengthening of private enterprise potential in the region', originally initiated by ORIA. Finally, Gibbs suggests that ADM's basic compatibility with '...other economic development possibilities, such as tourism ...' can

> ... act to increase the welfare of the community of the region either directly, or indirectly via increased affluence and the provision of a higher level of servives.

Such high levels of actual economic independence on the one hand, and potential economic contributory value on the other, make the ADMJV a powerful force in the East Kimberley region. Any economic and social value incidentally posed by ADM should not be allowed to eclipse its even more powerful influence and impact on the social superstructure of the region. Historically, the legislative, law-enforcive and administrative institutions of the State, reinforced by cultural beliefs and implemented in social practice (force of arms, pacification, mission and pastoral rule) worked to legitimate and support the pastoral industry. So will they be used to do the same for the Diamond Mining industry. Any doubt of the extent to which ADMJV can expect to exert substantial social-structural power is quickly dispelled by a cursory examination of the Diamond (Ashton Joint Venture) Agreement Act 1981.

At a local level, and of more direct relevance to this impact assessment study, the terms of the 'Glen Hill Agreement' and its implementation through ADM's 'Good Neighbour Policy' provide graphic evidence of the social power enjoyed by the joint venturers. Signatory Aboriginal communities include Mandangala, Doon Doon and Warmun.

ADM then represents a situation quite new and unprecedented in the East Kimberley region. The joint venturers have introduced themselves and will establish their operations from a footing of independent power in both the economic base and the social superstructure of the region. Apart from the actual ground they occupy, their entire capital investment and labour force are supplied from outside with no dependence either on State Government infrastructure or local material and human resources.

About the only form of economic dependency on public investment in common with pastoralism is ADM's exclusive use of publicly owned land (that is, leased from the Crown) from which it will return private profit from Diamonds extracted.

ADM then intervenes in the socio-economic life of the East Kimberley region as an independent and powerful force. Its central interests and objectives exist outside of the region and have no principal commitment to the region. However, ADM has already recognised some major concerns and fears held by neighbouring Aboriginal communities, and has appreciated its impact on their lives.

For sound developmental and entrepreneurial reasons the venturers have attempted to minimise and prevent problems by extending its 'Good Neighbour Policy' to three communities at Glen Hill (Mandangala), Dunham River (Doon Doon) and Turkey Creek (Warmun). This policy was worth some $310,000 per annum in various material improvements for signatory communities over the life of the mine or twenty years. Since then, of course, agreement has been reached between the State Government and ADM to share liability for a social impact amelioration fund of $1,000,000 per annum.

For social impact assessment there exist two sets or 'generations' of impact to be considered:

(1) Those primary impacts associated with ADM's introduction and establishment in the region, and

(2) Those secondary impacts associated with ADM's 'Good Neighbour Policy.'

Whilst both are quite obviously linked and 'cross-fertilized' dynamically, they are qualitatively different enough to bear separate analysis.

SECTION 4

THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF ARGYLE DIAMOND MINE

There are three levels of social impact to be considered:

(1) Social Impacts at the economic base;

(2) Social Impacts at the social superstructure; and

(3) Social problems caused by impacts at levels (1) and (2) above.

(See appended Methodological Note for an explanation of the linkages).

4.1 SOCIAL IMPACTS AT THE ECONOMIC BASE

Section 2 traced the historical processes of conflict and change that have produced the high level of Aboriginal dependency transferred from the pastoral economy to the public affairs economy. At the point of intervention by ADM, East Kimberley Aborigines by and large were at the bottom of this dependency spiral. However, pastoral acquisition programmes were underway and Aboriginal political action was in train. The context of dispossession, dependency and alienation was largely unchanged, but a growing consciousness was emerging about at least three major economic issues:

(1) The distribution of resources as private and public capital (ownership, control and bargaining power).

(2) The exchange of labour power (in-migrated versus resident).

(3) Consumer factors (purchasing power and access to goods and services).

Regardless of the relative extent of Aboriginal clarity or confusion about these issues, they do represent the three major forms of social impact at the economic base. Some examination of them is merited.

4.1.1 Impacts of resource distribution

4.1.1.1 Public Capital

The questions of dispossession and ownership remain unsatisfied. The legitimacy of those institutional powers and processes by which Aboriginal-held land was alienated to the Crown are now widely challenged by white and black Australians and by many international observers.

Those facts are not altered by broader and valid social, economic and political realities that will prohibit a return to pre-European Aboriginal forms of land ownership and obligation. Very simply, the general questions of resource ownership and control (including land) are determined within the economic conditions and social structures of capitalism, not within those of pre-European and Aboriginal provisioning. Further, the specific case of land rights campaigning is

also being conducted within the structures and economics of capitalism, as indeed it must.

Nonetheless, and regardless of competing needs and demands, while the basic questions of dispossession and ownership remain unresolved, East Kimberley Aborigines observe and experience an effective re-distribution of land away from them and towards pastoral and mining interests. In the case of exploration and mining tenements here concerned, ADM was seen to gain at the expense of local Aborigines.

The impact of that distribution is to deepen the experiences and social effects of dispossession and alienation. These effects are summarised in Section 2.

At this level the Aboriginal aspirations and interest are retarded and not advanced.

4.1.1.2 Private capital

At surface level there is no re-distribution of private capital (away from Aboriginal communities) attributable to ADM. However, ADM's occupation and use of its leases are expected to improve the joint venturers' capital through a return of profit from the sale of diamonds extracted and processed.

To the extent that the added value is derived, inter alia, from the contested land, that value is recovered by ADMJV and not by Aboriginal contenders. As the Northern Territory and South Australian (Pitjatjanjara) experiences illustrate, Aboriginal ownership could otherwise return them a share of improved capital value via royalties and other means. Therefore, there is a 'secondary' re-distribution of private capital away from Aborigines.

4.1.2 Impacts of labour exchange

Gibbs (1984), Dames and Moore (1982) and ADMJV's Project Briefing provide a full treatment of the ways in which labour power at all levels will be recruited externally (mostly in Perth) and in-migrated to the Region. The vast majority of labour power will be enclaved within ADM's exploration and mining leases, commuting back and forth to Perth. Aboriginal labour is to be sought but will be effectively minimal since they will have to compete on the same basis as external recruits for most jobs. The criteria for hiring are rigorous, competition is already high and substantial numbers of successful Aboriginal applicants are not expected.

There are, however, several openings for local Aborigines in other specific fields such as ground maintenance, environmental rehabilitation, flora and fauna protection and so on. There are also some successful Aboriginal applicants working on 'mainline' jobs, and more are hoped for by ADM.

The social impacts of labour exchange are, therefore, multiple. They can be categorised as positive and negative.

Positive impacts

4.1.2.1 Increased and independent incomes for those Aborigines employed.

4.1.2.2 Participation in the dominant economy for those Aborigines employed and indirectly for their dependents.

4.1.2.3 Increased income-based money circulated in Aboriginal communities independent of the public affairs economy may help to improve the economic circumstances of certain family groups.

4.1.2.4 Improved purchasing power may accrue to those family groups with ADM-employed wage earners.

Note: Adapted traditional economic patterns discussed in Section 2 may help to extend the last three impacts.

Negative impacts

4.1.2.5 Restricted Aboriginal employment in favour of more 'desirable' and skilled Europeans will deepen the alienating processes.

4.1.2.6 Low Aboriginal employment will not offset the high levels of unemployment already sustained. Therefore, economic marginality as a form of dispossession from main production will increase relative to the scale of ADM's total enterprise and its position in the regional economy.

4.1.2.7 Since purchasing power will improve for ADM Aboriginal employees and more consumer goods will be introduced to communities, certain family groups will gain at the expense of others. New social divisions can then be expected.

4.1.2.8 Adapted economic processes for co-operation and collective enterprise, arising from public affairs dependency and community responses, may very well be challenged and eroded. What are known as the 'chuck-in' and 'pool' systems of contributing to collective enterprise could face extensive modification.

4.1.2.9 Relatively skilled labour relevant to community needs may be syphoned off from socially necessary 'public works' tasks (store, hygiene, transport and general labour) to the ADM work force. The impact will be seen in a drying up of the skilled labour supply available to Aboriginal communities: ADM employment of Aborigines may benefit first the more skilled and 'employable' Aborigine members of the workforce.

4.1.2.10 In general terms, a shift of dependencies from the public affairs field to the ADM field can be expected from a successful execution of ADM's Aboriginal employment programme.

4.1.3 Impacts of consumer factors

The CPI for East Kimberley is estimated to run as much as 30 per cent higher than in southern areas of the State and, doubtless, higher again than in the Perth metropolitan area. Yet, there is no proportionate increase to the incomes of those groups left outside of the productive process such as the unemployed, pensioners, and others.

In East Kimberley Aborigines account for the vast majority of these marginalised groups. Conversely, the vast majority of Aborigines fall into those groups since relatively few are employed in the dominant economy.

For more remote, non-town based groups, there is unlikely to be any increase in 'relative poverty', since the level of general or 'absolute poverty' is expected to remain high for these groups as a whole. While some impact associated with ADM employment is expected (see Section 4.1.2), it is unlikely to generalise sufficiently for a 'relative poverty' experience to occur. 'Relative poverty' refers to the mutual disadvantage experienced by some when compared to the relative affluence of others in the same community.

For town-based Aborigines, especially in Kununurra, the picture will be quite different. Already well marginalised economically, with relatively few in full-time employment, Kununurra's Aborigines can expect to lose considerably by the establishment of ADM.

Kununurra, quite reasonably, can be expected to host the proposed 70 new ADM families, their visitors and company affiliates to the utmost ability. ADM already has invested much economic capital (grants and supportive investments) and social capital (personnel, expertise and facilities) in Kununurra. European residents and interests will want to capitalise on these gains, rather than to threaten them.

This is likely to precipitate more stringent criteria impositions for behaviour, dress and hygiene. Hence, admission and access to most services and facilities, whether privately or publicly operated (such as swimming pool, leisure centre, hotels and so on) are likely to become more exclusive of Aboriginal patrons. An inflated local economy, supported by high European incomes, offers the means to deploy price-fixing mechanisms as further aids in the 'screening out' of people regarded as undesirable.

With ADM's intervention, the retail and service industries of Kununurra can expect to reduce their former dependency on Aboriginal patronage. ADM personnel, their families and affiliates will provide a more lucrative market, and a more congenial one.

Aboriginal consumer impacts, therefore, can be forecast as follows:

Non-town based groups

4.1.3.1 Due to price inflation, added difficulties will be experienced by communities attempting to improve their economic circumstances.

4.1.3.2 Consumer prices are likely to rise, thereby limiting the purchasing power of individuals and families.

Town based groups

4.1.3.3 Consumer prices almost certainly will rise, thereby seriously eroding the purchasing power of individuals and families.

4.1.3.4 Access to services and facilities will be made more difficult for Aborigines as two mechanisms begin to operate:

(i) Formalised standards and criteria of dress and behaviour.

(ii) Price fixing mechanisms.

4.1.3.5 Any collective bargaining power that might presently be enjoyed by Aborigines will be weakened by the process of market-substitution.

Regional impact

4.1.3.6 Along with the increase in affluence forecast by Gibbs (1984) an upward spiral in consumer prices is the most likely impact of ADM's presence in the Region. This spiral will further deepen the economic difficulties of Aboriginal communities and individuals, and marginalise them still further from the economy. Since Europeans will be more advantaged, racial tension will intensify. This scenario was well documented by Kimberley Land Council and National Aboriginal Conference in July 1984.

All of the above impacts will be multiplied, in effect, with the proposed installation and operation of a hydro-electric scheme at Argyle. Since this is made viable by ADM's energy demands (expected to consume some 40 per cent of output) its additional impact becomes linked as a secondary impact to ADM's operation.

Social impacts at the social superstructure

In the pre 'Good Neighbour Programme' phase there appear to have been no significant impacts upon the institutional structures and practices that have governed Aboriginal lives since those offered in Section 2. Nor has there been any significant impact upon the culture of race relations or social organisation among the dominant European group. ADM appears not to have affected the social order at this stage, either in positive or negative terms.

There has been an observable hardening of European attitudes toward those Aboriginal responses that are seen to threaten development, such as land rights claims and claims for amelioration funds or compensation.

Within Aboriginal social structures, however, there were some quite profound impacts.

4.2.1 Ill-equipped communities were obliged to re-group and re-organise at an accelerated rate in response to the new activities on their land.

4.2.2 Confusion and depression occurred as a result of the desecration by ADM of Barramundi Gap.

4.2.3 New divisions occurred as different influence leaders and groups vied for rights to speak for various sites and lands.

4.2.4 Tensions and conflicts arose around certain decisions taken by successful spokesmanship contenders, and recriminations were threatened or actuated.

4.2.5 Shifts in leadership and dependency structures have resulted from these disputes, posing threats to previously established organisations.

4.2.6 The recruitment of Aboriginal organisations (KLC and NAC) and European trained personnel (lawyers, advisers and resource officers) became essential for their advocacy and political skills. Hence, a new transfer of dependency occurred with no evident moves toward independent functioning.

4.2.7 It is likely that economic conditions for co-operation, competition, conflict-resolution and decision-making in Aboriginal communities will shift again as a function of economic power derived from ADM-paid wages.

4.2.8 Dependencies, therefore, may well shift from influence leaders created by the public affairs economy, and adopted from tradition, to those created by ADM's employment programme.

4.3 SOCIAL PROBLEMS CREATED

The only positive primary impacts attributable to ADM are those in the employment field, and those are very limited. They also have considerable secondary negative impacts on the internal articulation, organisation and function of Aboriginal communities. This is true of town and non-town based groups at the economic and social-structural levels.

The social problems that can be expected to arise from either 'no change' to levels of dispossession, dependency and alienation, and/or from 'aspiration - retardive' impacts, are as follows:

4.3.1 Resource distribution away from Aborigines will reduce their ability to provide for their needs by bargaining, exchange and development.

4.3.2 Restrictive work opportunities will both maintain dependency and fuel internal tensions.

4.3.3 Consumer price spirals will reduce present standards of living by eroding purchasing power.

4.3.4 Poor health is likely to be made worse for communities in which existing patterns of nutrition and mechanisms of health care are subject

to sudden disruption.

4.3.5 Alcoholism and related behavioural problems will increase dramatically, due to increased import of alcohol.

4.3.6 Violence, injury and disease are likely to increase dramatically, due to increased consumption of alcohol, increased use of motor vehicles, changing patterns of nutrition and related causes.

4.3.7 Disputation will increase between rival Aboriginal groups.

4.3.8 Conflict, rivalry and open hostilities are likely between 'helping' agencies in the Government and non-Government sectors, as each explains and responds to the same problems in opposing ways.

4.3.9 Because of 4.3.8 competition for funds and resources will intensify between Agencies, such contests being decided by political or ideological acumen and volume of argument.

4.3.10 The underlying conditions that produce these problems - resourcelessness, dependency and alienation - are likely to remain unchanged. Note that here, the clumsy use of 'resourcelessness' is only favoured because it extends the 'dispossession' argument to a broader scope than is allowed by its usual exclusive reference to land.

SECTION 5

THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF ADM'S GOOD NEIGHBOUR PROGRAMME

The Glen Hill agreement was signed on 26th July 1980 by representatives of ADM and the Mandangala Aboriginal community. The Good Neighbour Programme arising from this agreement was later extended to communities at Dunham River and Turkey Creek. Prior to the recent agreement between the State Government and ADM to share a $1,000,000 commitment the agreement was worth $310,000 annually.

Since then road construction projects, station facilities, accommodation units, vehicles, windmills, bores, fencing and other material contributions have been made in varying amounts to the signatory communities. A great deal of valuable material development has occurred since.

Along with this programme, ADM has appointed a full-time Aboriginal liaison officer to a middle management rank on its staff. He is backed up by an assistant whose sole responsibilities are to the assistance of Aboriginal projects within the signatory communities.

Although the Good Neighbour Programme has now been operating for over four years, there are no documented base-line data available upon which to assess critically its value and impacts. Nor, then, is it possible to present any detailed assessment of either the positive or negative critiques levelled at the programme by Aborigines and Europeans alike.

Without adequate field studies, and until the proposed Social Impact Assessment Group is operative, observation and comment on the Good Neighbour Programme must rely on anecdotal evidence and relatively superficial inquiries.

It is possible, however, to offer the following qualified observations about likely general impacts. These tend to be supported by interview data and comparative studies in the fields of Aboriginal affairs specifically, and by the development/under-development literature generally:

5.1 Increased divisions will occur between communities and groups based on who seems to gain most from the programme.

5.2 Since vehicles have formed a significant 'cargo cult' commodity, dramatic economic and social divisions can be expected to occur around the issue of access to and ownership of these prized possessions.

5.3 Vehicles act as transport in and out of communities. Hence, socially destructive commodities such as alcohol and weapons are ferried in and scarce resources of goods and cash are ferried out.

At the same time useful commodities are brought in (stores, equipment and personnel) and inter-community contact is facilitated.

5.4 Vehicles carry the same kind of 'renewable waste' characteristic that Von Sturmer (1982:98) describes for money. They are not necessarily used well or economically but literally 'spent' faster. The greater the supply, the faster the expenditure.

5.6 A major impact is likely to be the transfer of dependency from the public sector to the mining sector.

5.7 The social structures of leadership, decision-making, management and development of Aboriginal communities will be directly affected by ADM policy and indirectly affected by status shifts dependent upon which people deal with ADM and which do not.

5.8 By definition, since only those groups party to the Agreement receive the benefits, those groups who are not, do not. This leaves town groups especially unaided.

5.9 A new Aboriginal sub-economy and sub-society is likely to develop based on relationship to ADM. This effectively camouflages the original conditions of dispossession, dependency and alienation imposed by the broader socio-economic system. It also diverts the focus of tensions and conflicts away from the nexus between black and white, and relocates that focus between black and black.

5.10 Apart from the limited employment programme and its social context, no significant plans are included for Aboriginal participation in broader economic and social life.

Clearly, the Good Neighbour Programme is a tremendous innovation in the right direction, and provides a local 'first' in recognition of the Aboriginal position. It also recognises the impact of ADM upon some of the Aboriginal communities affected. Nonetheless, the observations in Section 3 apply to the assessment of ADM's Good Neighbour Programme as much as to the other actors in the Region: to expect ADMJV to do more than is necessary for the good conduct of its enterprise, the protection of its interests and the realisation of its objectives is unrealistic and foolhardy. No company in their position would do more - most would do considerably less.

SECTION 6

SOCIAL IMPACT AMELIORATION

6.1 THE NEW AMELIORATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE STATE GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND ARGYLE DIAMOND MINE

This Report has made a serious and concerted effort to distinguish between those social impacts attributable directly to ADM and those attributable to the economic and super-structural history of the East Kimberley region. The hostilities and resentments fuelled by simplistic and reductionist explanations are neither helpful to Aborigines nor justifiably levelled at ADM alone. The Report has also attempted to objectify some historical facts and dispell some a-historical myths about the Kimberley situation.

Nonetheless, the dynamic interconnections between historical realities and contemporary interventions cannot easily be divorced. Compounding those inter-connections is the frustrating dearth of hard base line data. Overriding all remain the harsh social conditions of Aboriginal dispossession, dependency and alienation.

It is fortunate that both ADM and the State Government have recognised these conditions. ADM's ERMP (Dames and Moore, 1982) makes that much clear, as does the State Government's proposed amelioration fund and social impact assessment group.

ADM's Good Neighbour Programme, with all its limitations, was the first ever exercise of this kind in the north of Western Australia. That the latter coincides with the principal objectives and interests of the ADMJV does not reduce the value of what has been achieved.

The new programme, produced by agreement between ADM and the State Government provides the means by which the limitations of the Good Neighbour Programme can be overcome. It also provides the means by which the injustices of history and the errors of past policy and administration can begin to be overcome. In that regard the bilateral agreement is most appropriate.

A $1,000,000 annual budget, shared jointly by the State and ADM, is not great in the context of anticipated profits from diamonds (see ADM Project Briefing, 1984). It is, however, a very healthy start which, over twenty years and in conjunction with other resources available, can do much to improve fundamental conditions that constrain Aboriginal development in the East Kimberleys. The commitment for five years is noted, while it is hoped that reviews will secure a longer term commitment.

6.2 SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT GROUP (SIAG)

The instrument for implementation of this Budget is to be the proposed social impact assessment group.

A dual structure is proposed:

(1) A top tier of three State Government representatives and three ADM representatives.

(2) A regional tier of representatives from Kununurra Aborigines, Wyndham Aborigines and the Turkey Creek group of communities.

It is understood that the appointment of a regionally-based Executive Officer is being considered to aid the work of the SIAG.

The two major roles of the regional tier are understood to be:

(1) The receipt of local submissions for purchasing of developmental and ameliorative programmes and the recommendation of such programmes to the top tier.

(2) The ongoing monitoring of social impact attributable to ADM upon Aborigines of the region.

The two major roles of the top tier are understood to be:

(1) Approval or rejection of submissions recommended for funding.

(2) Auditing of the amelioration fund's annual budget expenditures.

There are risks of further impact associated with this structure and distribution of roles:

6.2.1 Decision-making will be concentrated at the top tier, thereby reinforcing the processes of dependency and alienation experienced by Aborigines of the region.

However, providing that operating guidelines and criteria for funding are agreed and formalised, the top tier should be bound by the same criteria as applicants for funding.

6.2.2 Certain Aboriginal groups impacted upon by ADM may be excluded as a function of fissive impacts described elsewhere.

Aboriginal exclusion of certain groups is not favoured for an effective outcome of the amelioration programme. All ought to be represented at the regional tier and be eligible to apply for funding.

6.2.3 The proposed Executive Officer could become a functionary of the top tier and, therefore, an Agent of the Government, of ADM or of both. Again, this is counter to the aspirations that should underpin the SIAG.

Ideally, the Executive Officer's accountability ought to be directed to the regional tier by whom he or she should be employed on additional funds made available for this purpose. His or her role should include organising, administering, resourcing and co-ordinating the SIAG.

Relevant to the criteria for funding proposed projects from a limited budget, some rationale is essential. Section 6.3 summarises this rationale, hopeful that the SIAG will adopt these principles.

6.3 BACKGROUND FOR FUNDING PRINCIPLES

The chief lesson obtained both from history (Section 2) and from more recent public and private sector policies for Aboriginal affairs and development is that they do not seem to work. Those 'welfare' type policies, characterised by 'doing things to' Aborigines only differ from the old pacification days by degrees of ideology. Similarly, those 'development' type policies, characterised by 'doing things for' Aborigines differ from the protectionist policies only by expectations for outcomes. It seems we have been unable to accept the realities of life as Aborigines see and accept them. There is widespread and entrenched reluctance to 'listen', to afford Aborigines the status of teachers.

It has been argued that some Aborigines, together with well-meaning white people, have actively propagated a number of myths about the nature of Aboriginal society and traditions:

> ... that Aboriginals share freely; that they have a strong feeling of community; that they don't care about money and lack the materialism of white society; that they care more deeply for their children than do white parents; and so on. Such fallacies are generally believed by both black and white people. (Aboriginal author Kevin Gilbert, quoted by Gerritsen, 1981:1).

It is true, as suggested throughout this Report, that both pastoralism and the public affairs economy of the East Kimberley have, paradoxically, allowed the survival of many traditional socio-cultural and economic artifacts and values. It is also true, and this is the point of critical analysis, that as has been argued consistently economic circumstance governs much of what occurs socially (including the adaptations of institutionalised practices and cultural ideas). Again, foraging was a dependent economy; it demanded unremitting dependency on the environment and inter-dependency of social organisations and practices. The mutuality of 'man and land', and the inter-dependent co-operation imagery of pre-European Aboriginal economic and social life, were not given voluntarily, nor always with goodwill. They were given because economic conditions, and social institutions and beliefs relevant to those conditions demanded them for continued human survival.

The last 125 years of European occupation and Aboriginal subordination in the East Kimberley have radically transformed the economic conditions of social life. For social impact, that is what dispossession means. That is why dependency was not only an imposition but also an Aboriginal adaptive response consistent with their history. That is why their alienation was both historically predictable and contextually inevitable.

Aborigines of the East Kimberley (as elsewhere) have done what all dispossessed and conquered people have done in history. From their dependent and alienated position they have adapted as best they could by preserving of their tradition that which was available and made sense to preserve, and by incorporating from the new order that which was available by whatever means and which was seen as useful to them. This they have done in the context of their continuing and changing social and economic conditions.

It is not helpful to Aborigines for helping Agencies of any persuasion, Governments, administrations or companies to pretend that reality is what it is not. Much of Aboriginal affairs policy in the East Kimberleys, as in Western Australia and Australia at large, has been of the 'pretending' kind in which the interests to be served existed outside of the specific social group concerned. By this is meant that, in most Aboriginal development and welfare policies, the implicit priority has been to advance or secure the interests of the Agency extending the service, rather than the interests of the Aboriginal client group. This, in turn, has led to the ad hoc 'trial and error' model of Aboriginal development well criticised by Von Sturmer (1982:69-116) and many others.

Against this tradition this assessment aims to make obvious ways of addressing and overcoming obstacles to 'Aboriginal self-management' (with all its ambiguity of meaning). An effective execution of that policy, within the prevailing economic bases and social superstructure of the Region, is the only intelligent policy which can be adopted. That involves a total commitment to Aboriginal repossession (of available resources), independence (to the extent available in contemporary society) and participation in the process of self-management itself.

Although the policy of self-management is still poorly defined and understood, there are some fundamentals which are useful.

> The key elements are decision-making, responsibility and self-sufficiency, the 'economic face of self-management' (...). The major objective: an end to dependency (Von Sturmer, 1982:75; emphasis added).

There are, of course, several difficulties in the implementation of this policy, and these are also well canvassed by Von Sturmer (1982:76-77): economic independence, cultural differences and historical (internal) structures and ways of doing things; the complexity of traditional Aboriginal society, compounded by adaptations to contemporary conditions; the role of super-societal or pan-Aboriginal organisations (such as Land Councils, NAC, Legal Aid and Lands Trusts); and Aboriginal perceptions of the relationship between decision-making and management, between policy and implementation.

At the economic base a high level of economic independence is required (Von Sturmer 1982:77). How to achieve that within a $1,000,000 budget, even with other available sources, is another matter. If dependency and internal fission are to be minimised, the introduction of funds ought to be treated as collectively owned finance capital for investment in appropriate forms of economic production.

Further to that, this Report endorses the concurrence of Von Sturmer (1982) and Hugh Morgan of the Australian Mining Industry Council (1982:180) who find that a mining industry adoption of the welfare role is not a viable approach to Aboriginal development. In such a 'welfare substitution' model the three basic pre-conditions for Aboriginal under-development remain unchanged. On the contrary, education for decision-making by Aborigines is an essential component of the self-management process (Von Sturmer: 1982). This does not imply a passive 'sit back' approach while Aborigines make decisions about economic issues from which

until now they have been excluded. That is a recipe for disaster. It does mean active two-way education: qualified people teaching Aborigines the political, economic and social facts of the economic systems surrounding them; qualified (Aboriginal) people teaching Europeans about the political, economic and social facts of the social systems of Aboriginal life.

The second essential component in this education process is the localisation of decision-making with full participation by Aborigines (Von Sturmer, 1982:88). Informed experience is the only way to learn.

That leads to the third requirement: access to and control over information (Von Sturmer, 1982:89). Not only must Aborigines retain (or regain) control over information about their land and resources, they must have reliable information about externally-planned economic and political initiatives that affect them. Fourthly, there needs to be a programme of 'Education of the Interventionists' (Von Sturmer, 1982:91). It is not sufficient for advisers, helping agencies, resource agencies, missions, mining companies and Government personnel to be sympathetic, politically aware, religiously motivated or anthropologically sensitive and so on. It is important they be educated and skilled in local realities, economic and social development, practical resources and potentials for exploitation, internal community organisations and external social superstructures.

At the implementation level of self-management programmes a choice remains as to whether funding and development programmes should be advanced on an individualist model or on a collectivist model. Elsewhere Government funded and mining industry funded attempts at development have succeeded mostly in institutionalising individualist models by allowing the rise of entrepreneurial figures (see Von Sturmer, 1982, Gerritsen, 1981 and others). These models, clearly, do not work for the majority of Aborigines because they are fraught with fissive pressures. On the other hand, community based collectivist models of the past have tended to threaten the legitimate rights of individuals and families. Community and workers' cooperatives in Europe and elsewhere in Australia, the Mondragon experiment in the Spanish Basque country, and certain of the American and Canadian Indian initiatives may offer models for adaptation to the East Kimberleys. Further study of these fields needs to be conducted.

Community Councils, as they currently are structured, are not necessarily the most viable mechanisms for development. Not only are they fissive, they also represent the classic 'glory without power' phenomenon. Decisions are made by Councils, not only without information and under conditions of externally imposed haste, but with no real control over the resources being tendered or discussed. Councils do not make decisions about how various public monies are spent; auditors and policy statements do that.

As Von Sturmer has observed (1982:104), in the field of Aboriginal development we do not need 'more of the same'. 'The situation needs a radical re-think.'

SECTION 7

AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Although this Report has, of historical necessity, been long and ostensibly exhaustive, neither the picture provided nor the findings produced are anywhere near complete. Indeed, as has been suggested implicitly in Section 2 (as elsewhere) social impact is not only a functional result of social change, it is itself a form or process of change. Impact precipitates change which precipitates further impact and further change and so on.

7.1 The first area for further study is the on-going processes of impact and change. Ideally, the objective of this continuous monitoring process should be the enactment of a regional policy and planning programme. Laissez-Faire 'free wheeling' approaches to development in Northern Australia generally have invited tension, conflict and 'knee-jerk' responses in policy and planning. These, generally, have not helped white or black resident communities; they have served mostly to sustain the conditions for Aboriginal under-development and hostile race relations.

7.2 The second area for study, therefore, is region-specific demographic and sociological base line data. These would include studies of the range, distribution and individual socio-economic circumstances of all of the specific communities in the Region. An accurate picture of their histories, responses, contemporary problems and aspirations needs to be charted.

7.3 Thirdly, a profile of realistic economic and social resources needs to be constructed and monitored. This process can be implemented through the SIAG and conducted at a community-base level, with the participation of the people concerned.

7.4 Various Third World models for economic and community development exist in the sociological and community development literature, as well as actual working examples and experiments around the world.

7.5 Other adaptable and practical models exist in the field of community and workers co-operatives, both in Australia and around the world. The Mondragon experiment in the Spanish Basque country is one fine example of the successful application of collective capital and labour.

7.6 Finally, there are a series of major requirements, suggested by Von Sturmer (1982:104-108) for the Alligator Rivers, which have relevance to the East Kimberley Aboriginal communities.

They are summarised as follows:

(1) An objective set of bench-marks for assessing societies and the qualities of their interactions.

(2) A critical analysis of the 'self-management' policy - not only what it is, but what it is intended to achieve (1982:105).

(3) '...if things are not working, they must be made to work' (Von Sturmer, 1982:105). The obstacles to, and processes

of self-management need to be clearly and openly assessed for appropriate action.

(4) The question of mining revenue (whether in the form of royalties or in the form of SIAG) as a means of providing '...a form of self-funding Government' ought to be examined.

(5) Aboriginal full participation in mining and other enterprises is necessary in the long term.

(6) Therefore, ultimate full participation in Australian society must be the objective.

Note that this does not imply an 'assimilation' or 'integration' argument.

These principles and goals open a broad field of further studies now required:

(a) 'Researchers will need to formulate a theory and history of (European-Aboriginal) contact which goes beyond the frothings of oppression, exploitation and colonialism, which accounts for current realities and which is explicable to all Australians' (Von Sturmer, 1982:106).

This present study has of course only partially succeeded in achieving these goals.

(b) 'Governments must be prepared to set forth specific policies, programmes and objectives in the context of coherent social theory. (...) Policy must be more than a public relations exercise' (1982:107).

(c) 'Logic demands longitudinal examination of particular situations, the steady and systematic accumulation of relevant facts, of the 'actors and factors' in concrete terms, not just boxes, labels and arrows' (1982:107).

(d) 'It (logic) requires, too, the careful determination of local goals and objectives, assessment of feasibility and the development of strategies for their implementation:...' (1982:107).

(e) Logic requires also '...the assimiliation of researchers, Government personnel and relevant others to particular local social fields' (1982:107). This is as opposed to centralised control and temporary, superficial contact with client groups.

(f) 'The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies monitoring project in the Alligator Rivers region might provide the basis of a model of what is required' (1982:108). Modified to Western Australian and East Kimberley economic and social conditions, by local and State expertise, some progress may yet be made.

These are the general areas for further study that arise from this impact assessment. Both general and specific areas should be included in the ambit of the social impact assessment group.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE:

METHODOLOGY ADOPTED FOR SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. THE PROBLEM

As the Canadian 'McKenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry' of 1974-1977 discovered,

> Impact assessment is a new field. There is no universally accepted technique for addressing the complex biological, human and political issues involved in major development proposals (Gambol, 1978:946).

Eight years have elapsed since Judge Berger submitted his Report in 1977. Since then numerous mineral and energy development programmes have been proposed overseas and in Australia - with accompanying Environmental Review and Management Programmes (ERMP's) - yet the process of social impact assessment remains in its infancy.

Although attempts at social impact assessment are commonly made now, they continue to be characterised and confounded by the following forms:

1. Dependency on studies provided by vested interests. (Gambol, 1978:947).

2. The 'vacuum model' wherein studies are made of the impact of any given development (mineral, energy or transport) in historical or contemporary isolation from other proximal events and developments (Taylor, in Harris & Taylor, 1982:223).

3. The 'Judicial model', typically conducted along quasi-legal lines by legal practitioners or Judges. These tend to present as 'social assessment' a representation of interests usually based upon the concept of justifiable versus unjustifiable claims and rights.

4. The political lobby through which diverse interests seek to influence the outcome of political decision making; usually by presenting a professional or 'social science' interpretation of cause and effect.

5. The functional-descriptive model, based on an amalgamation of social psychology and the 'community studies' (American and British) schools. This rests heavily on social science ideas about cultural norms, value clusters, deviance, social consensus and so forth.

There are other forms which social impact studies take but they are generally hybrids or derivations of these five.

The problem common to all of these models of 'social analysis' and impact assessment is that they all inevitably lead to a statement about 'what ought/ought not to be' (that is, from the stand point of their authors). They do not typically produce statements about 'what actually is'.

Now, of course, no social assessment or analysis can be 'value free', simply because the parties to be studied and the parties to study them live and work in a social world to which they carry their values, interests and particular models for the world.

In my attempt to overcome this problem, and those posed by the forms outlined above, I have adopted the critical method of social analysis.

2. CRITICAL METHOD - MODEL AND TECHNIQUES

Simply explained, the critical method of social analysis provides a conflict model of stasis and change; that is, change and stasis occur as functions of conflicting interests and the strategies employed for the effective pursuit of these interests.

The techniques include:

1. Analysis of historical and contemporary relevant data about competing interests around the economic base of a given socio-economic system. This includes some information about economic activity, resource utilisation and distribution, the labour process and its forms, as well as the implications for various interests articulated around the economy. This provides an economic context in which to locate and understand those events which are likely to have, or actually do have, impact upon the lives of people affected.

2. Analysis of historical and contemporary relevant data about what is called the 'social super-structure' of a given socio-economic system, including:

   (a) Macro level data about structural organisation and cultural imperatives (such as beliefs and ideas) within which social order, administration and controls are exercised in this society. This provides a social-structural context in which to locate and understand actions taken by people (or not taken) in their own interests. It also helps to provide a more lucid framework with which to understand the limitations against effective action, as well as the related issues of autonomy and dependency.

   Changes within the super-structure (qualitative or quantitative) help to explain and predict impacts upon the lives of people affected. In East Kimberley this can best be done within the framework of race relations.

   (b) Micro level data about adaptive responses to macro level change evidenced over time by communities, groups, families and /or individuals as micro social systems or units. It is at this level especially that

the impacts of change (in economic base and macro super-structure) are evidenced in the day to day lives of people affected.

3. ADVANTAGES OF THE CRITICAL METHOD

1. Because this matrix of techniques necessitates some analysis of the inter-connections between the groups and events - inter-connections essential to full understanding of the processes of stasis and change - it is far more reliable as both an explanatory and a predictive methodology.

2. It does not artificially isolate events which are connected in reality.

3. It does not fall so easily into moral traps about what ought/ought not to be. But moral and cultural beliefs and ideas are important data for analysis, as are social and economic events, since they help explain those events from the viewpoint of antagonists.

4. It does not lend itself well to purposes of negative blaming and fault finding processes - processes which are notoriously ineffective as constructive instruments of amelioration, compensation, problem solving or development.

5. Where there is little or no conventional 'Baseline data', this method is particularly helpful in the following tasks:

   (a) The provision of a comprehensive framework in which to understand social phenomena;

   (b) The suggestion of guidelines for immediate interventions;

   (c) The identification of relevant participants for maximum participation in the on-going process of impact assessment and longer term interventive measures;

   (d) The identification of specific areas for further study and information required.

4. DISADVANTAGES OF THE CRITICAL METHOD

1. There is a risk of criticism based upon misconceptions associated with the method's origins, rather than upon the findings produced or upon the reliability and validity of the method itself.

2. The method does not provide any basis for simplistic social engineering, functional adjustment or benevolent provision (for example, 'cargo cult') models of intervention.

5. CONTINUOUS MONITORING ASSESSMENT

Social change and impacts are not static, mono-causal or unilateral. They are dynamic: continuous (quantitative) and discrete (qualitative) changes occur as ongoing processes in the social interaction of humans striving to realise their objectives and enhance their interests. Sometimes this process is characterised by overt competition, sometimes by co-operation.

Intervention designed to minimise or ameliorate impacts produce further impacts; either as directly and indirectly determined consequences, or as inherent contradictions and tensions.

Therefore, the process of impact amelioration has to be monitored continuously, just as the process of impact precipitation must be continuously assessed.

From a critical perspective this dual monitoring and assessment process is best carried out with the full participation of the principal actors in the subject field. In East Kimberley this means the ADMJV and the Aboriginal communities and/or the qualified representatives of each.

Since their respective interests are likely to conflict from time to time, the process should be oversighted by a qualified and independent arbiter. The State Government cannot validly be said to be independent or neutral for three reasons:

(1) The State's commitment to mineral development.

(2) The State's responsibilities for policy making in respect of Aborigines.

(3) The State's (present) five percent shareholding in the ADMJV.

Nonetheless, and paradoxically, because of its multi-dimensional interest in the issue, the State Government is better placed than any other authority to assume arbitrative responsibilities - provided this is checked by a social science qualified appeal and consultancy process.

The proposed structure of the Social Impact Assessment Group - understood to be accepted by the major actors - goes a long way towards achieving the best organisational framework for continuous monitoring and assessment. A suitably qualified adjunct to that structure would be the active involvement of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. Their experience in impact assessment and Aboriginal developmental issues, coupled with their professional credentials, offer the necessary social science qualification for effective appeal and consultancy.

Conventional judicial processes are not qualified for this task.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Some fifty interviews and a dozen group meetings were conducted during the eight days of field work for this study. Very many people thereby contributed to this assessment process, among whom are the following:

Mr John Toby, Ms Evelyn Hall and members of the Mandangala Aboriginal community at Glen Hill.

Messrs Ingandali, Dunham and Roosevelt Brockman and Ms Lorna Thomas of the Doon Doon Aboriginal community at Dunham River.

Members of the five community groups who presently comprise the Warmun Aboriginal community at Turkey Creek, including Mr Bob Nyalcas (Chairman), Messrs George Dinari, Jacko, Paddy Williams, Madigan Williams, David Turner, Jock Mosquito, Monkey Jooney, Ramul Peters, Raymond Wallaby, George Munmung, Queenie McKenzie and the ladies who patiently instructed me about the Barramundi.

Mr Joe Thomas, his family and members of the Aboriginal community at Bow River Station.

Messrs Tommy and Charlie Barney of Moongoong Darwung community, Kununurra.

Messrs Birribee Djimity and Mingli Wanjurri-Nungala of Mirrawong, Kununurra.

Messrs David Newry of Kununurra and Snowy Reid of Emu Creek.

Mr John Watson (President) and staff of the Kimberley Land Council, especially Ian Kirkby and Cath Elderton who went to some trouble to assist this study.

The staff and members of the Ballingari and Warangari Resource agencies.

Mrs. Meg Shedley of Bethel Sanctuary and Aboriginal Womens Refuge.

Mr Neil Butcher, Community Relations Officer (Argyle Diamond Mines), gave much of his time, energy and expertise - providing a practical insight into the operations and concerns of the ADMJV and the Aboriginal communities of the region.

Mr Allan Tegg, Community Advisor - Turkey Creek, likewise gave so much to the study, especially about the need for adequate training in relevant fields for all staff of agencies serving Aboriginal needs and for support staff in Aboriginal communities.

The ADMJV also provided air transport to, and a full operational briefing of, the Argyle Diamond Mine itself.

Mr Russell Hayward - Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Messrs John Fletcher and Mike West of the Department of Community Services, Kununurra.

Ms Helen Liedel and the staff of the Department of Community Services, Derby.

Mr David Ferguson, Department of Resources Development. Mr Graham Higgins, Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority. Mr Ian Horrocks, Aboriginal Legal Service.

There were countless other contributors in Kununurra, Derby and the East Kimberleys, as well as in Perth and elsewhere.

To all of these my gratitude is extended.

Library research

Ms Jan Sinclair-Jones.

Typing

Ms Ivy Bazley.

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ATTACHMENT 1

EAST KIMBERLEY WORKING PAPERS 1985-86

1985/1 East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project: Project Description and Feasibility Study.
East Kimberley Working Paper No.1
ISBN 0 86740 181 8
ISSN 0816-6323

1985/2 The East Kimberley Region : Research Guide and Select References.
M.C. Dillon
East Kimberley Working Paper No.2
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1985/3 Aborigines and the Argyle Diamond Project. Submission to the Aboriginal Land Inquiry.
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ISSN 0816-6323