

# East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM  
ON THE WARMUN (TURKEY CREEK) COMMUNITY  
EAST KIMBERLEY

J.C. Altman\*

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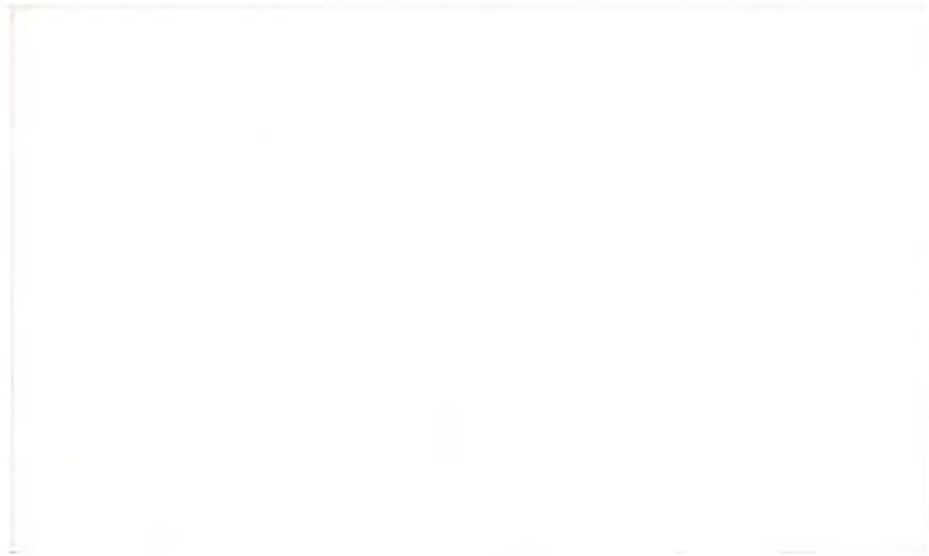
A Joint Project Of The:

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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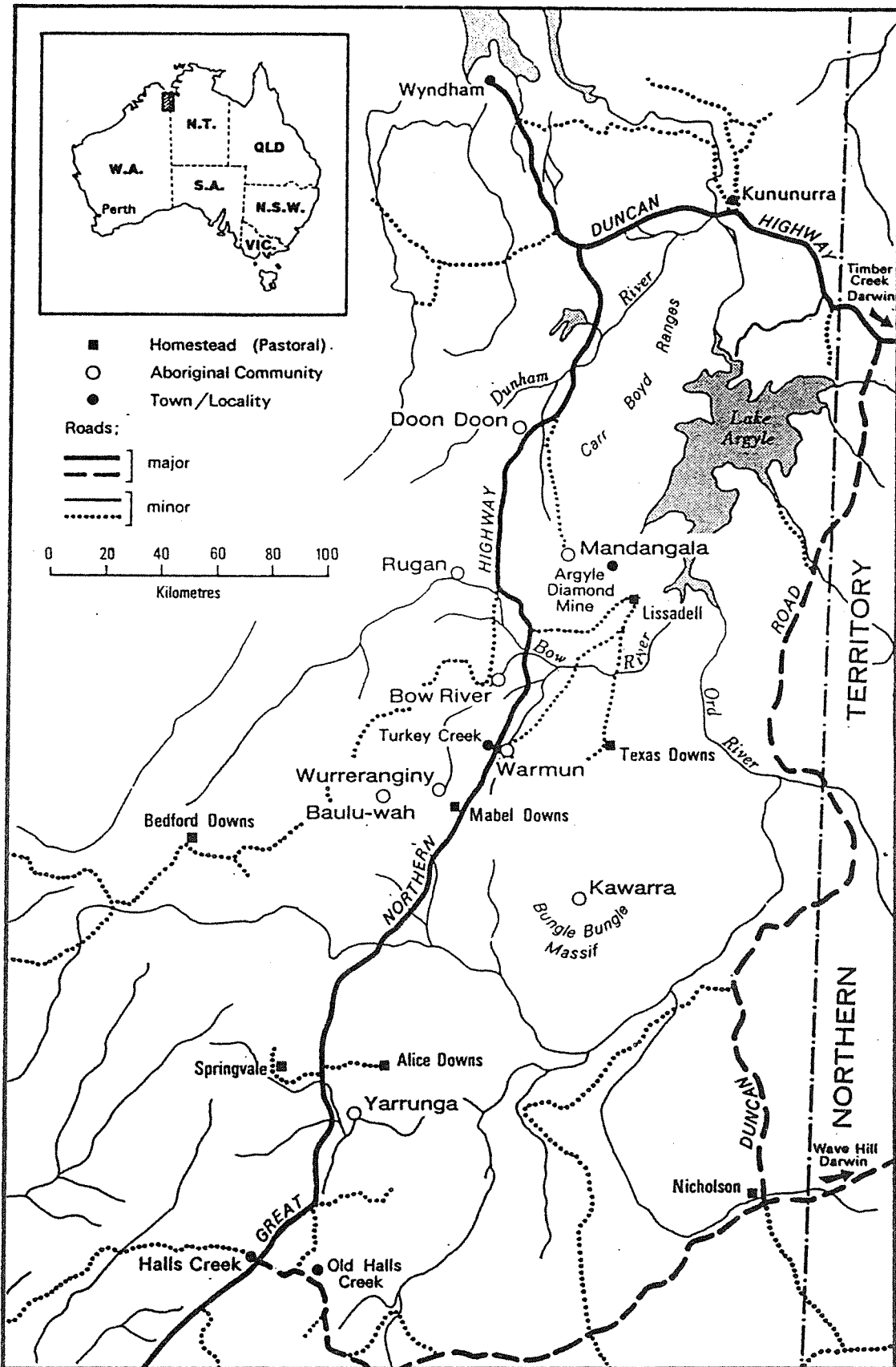
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**ABSTRACT**

The working paper presents the results of a month's field research undertaken in Western Australia in August 1986. This work represents part of a wider study that aims to assess the economic impact of tourism on Aboriginal communities in northern Australia and to identify possible avenues for Aboriginal participation in this industry.

The research presented here is divided into three parts. Part One provides an analysis of the economic structure of the Warmun community in the East Kimberley. Most of this analysis is based on a household census and employment and income surveys undertaken at the community. Part Two concentrates on the current scale and nature of the tourism industry in the Kimberley region. An assessment is undertaken of the significance of tourism activity in the vicinity of Warmun and on the current economic spinoffs to the community from this industry.

Part Three concentrates on examining the future of tourism in the Kimberley. Heavy emphasis is placed on the recently completed *Tourism Development Plan: Kimberley Region* (Barrington Partners, 1986) and on a critical evaluation of recommendations in the report that deal with issues of specific relevance to Warmun. The working paper ends by considering a range of economic policy issues that Aboriginal communities like Warmun should consider when contemplating involvement in the tourism industry.



MAP 1: THE EAST KIMBERLEY REGION.

## PART ONE: THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM ON THE WARMUN (TURKEY CREEK) COMMUNITY, EAST KIMBERLEY

### INTRODUCTION

The terms of reference for the research in this working paper were initially proposed to the East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project in March 1986. From April 1986 to August 1986, I planned to conduct fieldwork at a number of Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory (primarily at Uluru National Park, Kings Canyon, Kakadu National Park, Gurig (Cobourg Peninsula) National Park and Melville and Bathurst Islands) on the current and potential economic impacts of tourism. It seemed opportune to extend this fieldwork into the Kimberley region of Western Australia both for comparative purposes and to link up with the research agenda of EKIAP.

In April 1986, my proposal was presented at meetings with resource agencies in Kununurra and with the Council of the Warmun (Turkey Creek) community. The concerns of the community correlated closely with my research proposal. A letter dated 14 May 1986, signed by Rob Nyalcas, Chairman of the Warmun community, stated:

...the Warmun community would like Jon Altman to focus on the five areas of concern mentioned in his draft [proposal]. They roughly correspond to concerns also raised by people here at Turkey Creek.

The terms of reference for this working paper are limited to these five concerns, namely an examination of:

1. the current [August 1986] economic impact of tourism on the Warmun community;
2. current and proposed [tourism] developments within the Bungle Bungles area;
3. how the Warmun community could become more involved in tourist developments;
4. how tourism will affect the local economy; and
5. how to maintain a measure of control over tourism developments in the East Kimberley region.

These terms of reference are diverse, for they range between micro-economic concerns that relate specifically to the Warmun community and macro-economic issues of significance to the entire East Kimberley region. Furthermore, they address a wide variety of economic impacts: - impacts that are currently occurring, impacts that could occur if proposed developments proceed and impacts that could occur if members of the Warmun community became more actively involved in tourist developments and/or were able to exert a greater measure of control over these developments.

This working paper is divided into three parts. In Part One, the emphasis is on the micro-economy of the Warmun community. Most of the quantitative data presented in this part were collected during August 1986 when I spent brief periods at Warmun, Kununurra and in Perth. As will



become apparent, tourism does not feature as a significant component of the contemporary Warmun economy. However, a quantitative economic overview of this community serves a number of useful functions. Firstly, it goes without saying that the economic impact of tourism on Warmun can only be assessed by disaggregating this economy. Secondly, the potential for future involvement in the tourism industry can only be determined by gauging the human and capital resources within the community and alternate economic opportunities available to community members. Finally, there are limited quantitative data on any Aboriginal communities in the East Kimberley region. The lack of such 'baseline data' has resulted in enormous difficulties in attempts to undertake social and economic impact assessments. At one level then, the data presented here can be seen as a first step in an attempt to remedy this shortcoming. At another level, it seems likely that data on the structure of the Warmun community in August 1986 will be of use both to policy makers and to the community when they assess the impacts of recent developments (like the introduction of the Community Development Employment Project [CDEP] Scheme in June 1987) on the community.

In Part Two, the scale and nature of the tourism industry in the Kimberley is gauged. Particular emphasis is placed on the findings of the recently completed *Tourism Development Plan: Kimberley Region* (Barrington Partners, 1986) that is likely to influence tourism development in the region over the next decade. An assessment is made of the current economic impact of tourism on the Warmun community (term of reference 1 above) and the overall significance of Warmun enterprises (the Turkey Creek roadhouse) to East Kimberley tourism.

In Part Three, the micro perspective of Part One and the macro perspective of Part Two are combined, and an attempt is made to gauge future visitor demand for services and cultural tourism in the Turkey Creek precinct. The options that the Warmun community has when choosing whether to meet these demands are also examined. In this part, Aboriginal provision of tourism services (accommodation, food and beverage sales; petrol supplies) is differentiated from Aboriginal provision of cultural tourism (artefacts, Aboriginal guided tours, Aboriginal ceremonial performances, and so on). It is argued that in the former Aboriginal people at Warmun have a locational advantage (which with the procurement of the Turkey Creek roadhouse has become a commercial stake) while in the latter they have a distinct comparative advantage- in fact, if genuine cultural tourism is to be provided, then Aboriginal people hold a monopoly over this 'resource' (their culture). However it has been argued elsewhere (see Altman, 1987b) that not only is Aboriginal culture not readily marketable, but as a number of others have observed (Barrington Partners, 1986; Dillon, 1987; Kesteven, 1987; Kennedy, 1987), Aboriginal people are themselves reluctant to market their culture.

The terms of reference 2 to 5 are comprehensively addressed in Part Three. While plans for the Bungle Bungle region are not yet clear (May 1987), a specific proposal for this region in the Barrington Partners (1986) report is assessed. Terms of reference 3 to 5 are closely inter-related. The economic impact of tourism on the Warmun community will rather obviously depend on the extent of the community's involvement in the industry. The means to greater involvement are to allocate scarce capital resources to tourism enterprises (as the community has done with the Turkey Creek roadhouse); to direct uniquely Aboriginal skills to the industry (although this remains a decision to be determined by

individuals); or to utilise any leverage (based on recognised traditional ownership) or unique information and skills (as in the Bungle Bungle region) to extract commercial concessions from the WA State Government. In the Northern Territory, Aboriginal groups have statutory land rights to important tourist destinations like Kakadu and Uluru National Parks; they have commercial concessions in other national parks like Kings Canyon (Watarka) that have been won on the basis of negotiation using as leverage statutory rights to land elsewhere. In the Kimberley region of Western Australia, Aborigines have no statutory rights to tourist destinations and a limited bargaining position from which to extract commercial concessions. In this situation it seems that Aboriginal interests will only be able to gain a measure of control in the industry by investing in tourism enterprises.

It should be noted that in this working paper, Warmun is the name used for the incorporated Aboriginal community located adjacent to a seasonal watercourse called Turkey Creek. This can be differentiated from the name Turkey Creek that is used here to refer to the roadhouse situated on the Great Northern Highway some two kilometres from the main entrance to the community. This distinction is made here primarily for analytical purposes to distinguish the two localities. In the past, the roadhouse was totally segregated from the community. However, with the purchase of the roadhouse by the community in 1986, it is likely that there will be greater integration between the two localities in the future.

It should also be noted that the treatment of Warmun community as a discrete entity conforms to bureaucratic definitions of Aboriginal communities. As will be demonstrated below, the Warmun community does not have a homogeneous population, nor is this population static. In fact, Warmun residents are a part of a social network that extends north to Wyndham and Kununurra and south to Halls Creek and Nicholson station. There are also Aboriginal people residing at Warmun from as far away as Katherine in the NT. While there continues to be a great deal of mobility within this immediate social network, Aboriginal people defined here as Warmun residents are locally regarded as being based at this community.

## THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF THE WARMUN COMMUNITY

### Brief economic history.

Warmun community is located on a reserve that was excised from Mabel Downs station. The Turkey Creek locality is a place where Kija and Miriwung speaking Aborigines have always camped; it was an important location for large seasonal gatherings. Turkey Creek is located half way between Halls Creek and Wyndham. After the discovery of gold at Halls Creek in 1885 and the establishment of Wyndham as a town and port in 1886, this location became of strategic importance as a staging post between the two towns. In the 1890s, a hotel was built at Turkey Creek. From the 1930s, a telephone exchange and post office were located on the Crown reserve at Turkey Creek. By this time, most of the Aborigines of the region were residing and working on pastoral stations which were established in the region from the 1880s onwards.

The more permanent gathering of an Aboriginal population at Turkey Creek can be directly attributed to the enforcement of the Federal Pastoral Industry Award in the cattle industry from December 1968. This, combined with a decline in world beef prices, resulted in a rapid reduction in the number of Aboriginal pastoral workers in the Kimberley region (see Altman and Nieuwenhuysen, 1979:65-68). A number of pastoralists were unwilling to allow Aboriginal groups to remain on properties and there was an enforced shift of the population to towns like Halls Creek, Wyndham and Kununurra. From the early 1970s, there was a permanent Aboriginal presence at Turkey Creek. People squatted on the Crown reserve and were permitted to draw water from the bore and a tank alongside the telephone exchange/post office.

Warmun as a community has a history that dates back only to the mid-1970s, when it was recognised as a permanent community for funding purposes by Federal and State Governments. Initially the community was funded as an 'outstation'; in 1975 it received a \$5,000 establishment grant from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. According to DAA records, the community population at that time was 120 Aborigines. It seems that it received assistance as an outstation rather than as an Aboriginal township for a number of reasons. Firstly, the community was not yet incorporated and while establishment grants could be paid to unincorporated outstation groups, more substantial Town Management and Public Utilities (TMPU) grants could not. Secondly, there may have been some reluctance on the part of DAA to encourage the establishment of a new township at a time when decentralisation ('the outstation movement') was being encouraged. The DAA may also have been reluctant to establish a township at Turkey Creek because of the extremely limited economic opportunities at that location. At this time the Turkey Creek reserve (No.34593) of some 801 hectares created under the WA Land Act was still not vested in the Aboriginal Lands Trust. Nevertheless, in 1974/75 the WA State Government assisted the community at Turkey Creek with a grant of \$4,000 to establish 'market' gardens. In 1976, the community received further grants from the DAA for a bore and tank, housing, temporary housing and a vehicle.

In 1977, Warmun community was incorporated under the WA Associations Incorporation Act, 1895-1969. It was now a legitimate community and from 1976/77 received capital and recurrent funding under the DAA's TMPU scheme. In 1977/78 the community was granted further funding under the

DAA's Aboriginal Enterprises Scheme to further develop the existing 'market' gardens and an established chicken run. On 1 April 1977, title to the reserve was transferred to the Aboriginal Lands Trust (being vested under S.25 of the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act, 1972-73 ) and was leased to the Warmun Community Incorporated on 1 July 1977. During the late 1970s and early 1980s the community continued to receive TMPUI funding and various grants for community development and employment: in 1977/78 the community was granted \$10,000 to establish a mustering team (four men plus plant) to work on the Aboriginal owned Dunham River (Doon Doon) pastoral station; in 1978/79, a further grant was paid for maintaining the market gardens; in 1979/80, \$8,000 was provided to employ four people in community development; in 1980/81, a grant of \$10,000 was received for the construction of a basketball court and community landscaping; and in 1981/82 the community received a grant of \$15,100 under the Special Work Project Scheme.

It was not until 1979 that a community advisor was appointed to assist the Warmun community. At that time, a small community store was established and the community took over the old telephone exchange that DAA procured from Telecom (an automatic exchange had been installed in 1973). Prior to this time, Warmun community residents had shopped at Wyndham, and from the mid-1970s primarily at Harry's Place, a roadhouse established on the Great Northern Highway near the community. From that time facilities and services at the community increased rapidly- in 1980, a school was established and a housing program was initiated. By 1986, about 26 houses had been built and a health clinic, large community store, power house, water reticulation, mechanic's workshop, community offices, craft centre and a community hall had been established [see Tegg 1986:65] for a comparison of facilities in 1976 and 1986). The community maintains an unsealed airstrip with funds provided by the Health Department of Western Australia.

By 1985/86, Warmun Community Incorporated was receiving recurrent funding of about \$150,000 under the DAA's Community Maintenance and Service (CM & S) Program (the 1980s term for TMPUI) to perform all the functions normally associated with local government. In fact the only two areas for which Warmun Community Inc. does not have functional responsibility are the school (run by the Catholic Church but with policies determined by a local School Board) and the health clinic (Health Department of WA). Ninety-seven per cent of Warmun's recurrent funding comes from DAA, with the rest coming from housing rents and service charges for water reticulation and electricity. Warmun Community Inc. functions almost exclusively as an organisation that provides community services to its members. This is clearly evident in the agreement Warmun signs with DAA when accepting CM & S funding; these moneys are to be applied to:

1. continue the development of the Community Council into an effective decision-making body;
2. maintain the community's financial records and train community members in these operations;
3. use the Balingarri resource centre office at Warmun as an administrative and communication centre and train community members in office administration and communication;

4. operate garage/workshop to repair and maintain community vehicles and plant and to train community members in garage/workshop administration, vehicle repairs and maintenance; plant and equipment maintenance;
5. provide 24 hour, 240 volt power supply to all community housing, buildings and public areas on a 7 day/week basis;
6. provide for adequate replacement due to damage, destruction or loss of community assets;
7. ensure that all recipients of municipal and essential services contribute financially to the cost of these services; and
8. provide a water supply and sewerage repair and maintenance service for all community houses and buildings and training for community members in these operations (On DAA file 800/75 07 Warmun CM&S, Part 5).

There are three important observations that can be made about these arrangements. Firstly, all of these functions are service functions analogous (training requirements aside) to many of the services provided by local governments to rate payers or statutory authorities to users. None of these activities are materially productive. Secondly, the community has to employ a number of non-Aboriginal people to provide these services, in the absence of appropriate skills in the community. Currently, the community employs a community advisor, book-keeper and mechanic (all of whom are non-Aboriginal). An Aboriginal trainee powerhouse operator is responsible for power supply. The community store, school and health clinic are also run by non-Aborigines. Finally, the contractual arrangement into which Warmun Community Inc. must enter with DAA (when annual recurrent funding is dependent on the achievement of measurable outcomes) seems somewhat inconsistent with the Aboriginal affairs policy of self-management. However, the Department is hampered by rigorous requirements to maintain accountability for public moneys. It is currently unclear whether DAA funding should be regarded as welfare transfers or as normal public sector subvention of remote community, a subvention that is commonplace in remote Australia (see Holmes, 1985; Altman and Dillon, 1986). DAA seems well aware of this shortcoming and has advocated on a number of occasions (see Miller, 1985) that Aboriginal communities should be funded like other local government bodies in remote regions. This would mean that Aboriginal councils could gain access to untied funding under the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act, 1986 and would gain the ability to borrow money like any local government body (see Mowbray, 1986). Another problem that is specific to the Warmun community is that its late establishment as an incorporated Aboriginal community has resulted in it receiving CM & S funding that is low (on a per capita basis) in comparison to other Aboriginal communities (like Balgo Hills). This sort of anomaly is not unusual between Aboriginal communities (or between centralised and decentralised communities) as program funding, once established, is generally maintained, whereas new program funding must compete for available funds. The existence of Good Neighbour Program (GNP) and Argyle Social Impact Group (ASIG) funding has ameliorated to some extent the inequities between funding levels at Warmun and its outstations and comparable Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory (see economic issues below).

Warmun community's economic history is little different from that of other Aboriginal townships in northern Australia (see Altman and Nieuwenhuysen, 1979; Young, 1981; Fisk, 1985) with two exceptions. Firstly, Warmun was incorporated as an Aboriginal community far later than most Aboriginal communities in the north. Secondly, the land base of the community (some 800 hectares after 1977) is far more limited than that of most rural Aboriginal communities. The occupational background of almost all Warmun's residents has been in the pastoral industry, as stockmen, labourers, domestics and gardeners on white owned and managed stations. Consequently, Aboriginal people have had limited experience of private sector commercial activity except as employees of pastoralists. Today a number of Warmun residents continue to work on white and Aboriginal owned pastoral stations. The economic projects undertaken at Warmun in the late 1970s have failed. This is primarily because they were never commercially viable. In fact from the outset the term 'market' garden was a misnomer for 'subsistence' gardens for there is no evidence that any fruit or vegetables from Warmun were ever marketed. Similarly, the chicken run only provided eggs for local consumption. In 1979, a pump at the bore used to irrigate the gardens broke down and crops perished. From that time there have been no subsistence gardens at Warmun. From the mid-1970s, when Aborigines at remote communities started to receive unemployment benefits (see Sanders, 1986), the Warmun community has become highly dependent on welfare transfers.

The population of Warmun community, since 1977 when it became an incorporated body, has increased in overall size but has varied in composition. Just as Warmun was late in evolving into an Aboriginal township, so the decentralisation movement from this community occurred a little later than elsewhere. Currently, groups within the Warmun community are still establishing outstations away from the central community. The incentives to decentralise have been both political and economic. In a manner consistent with a model proposed by Gerritsen (1982), leaders of factions within the Warmun community have attempted to establish their own communities on lands with which they have traditional associations. At Warmun, a political hierarchy is accepted with a recognised traditional owner of the Warmun community site being undisputed leader and spokesman for the community. This leadership status results in resources (particularly 'good neighbour payments' from an agreement completed with Argyle Diamond Mines in 1981) being channelled via this man and his family. Other senior men at Warmun recognise that they need their own incorporated communities if resources (from ADM or public sources) are to be channelled to them. At another level though, many Warmun residents have aspirations to establish a land base and to take part in the pastoral industry. These aspirations are linked to the long history of these people in pastoralism (see Shaw, 1983 and 1986). To many, gainful employment is synonymous with pastoral employment as their entire occupational backgrounds are in this industry.

In 1975, the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission purchased Dunham River station (now called Doon Doon) about 100 kilometres north of Warmun. According to DAA Community Profiles, in 1985 36 people lived at the Woolah community on this station. In 1980, a group of people from Turkey Creek moved to a portion of this station called Glen Hill (Mandangala). This shift was subsequently cemented by an agreement made between this group and ADM with respect to mining at Smoke Creek which is situated on the border of Glen Hill and Lissadel station. Between 30 and 60 people currently reside at this community. In the next year, another group moved

south from Warmun to reside at Chinaman's Garden (Yarrunga) on an excision from Alice Downs station. Currently about 18 people live at Yarrunga. This community has effectively cut its service ties with Warmun and is now serviced by the more proximate Ngoonjuwah Resource Centre located at Halls Creek some 70 kilometres away. However, Yarrunga is regarded as a Warmun outstation under the Argyle Social Impact Group (ASIG) scheme, administered by the State government and ADM, and receives annual grants for capital items under this scheme. These three communities are today largely autonomous from Warmun community.

In 1973, title to the Violet Valley reserve, an area of 96,523 hectares, was transferred to the Aboriginal Lands Trust. Until 1981, this area was leased to the Texas Downs Pastoral Company. Subsequently, an Aboriginal association, Baulu-wah, has leased this land and runs cattle on it. In 1984, the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC) and WA State Government (under the ASIG scheme) purchased Bow River station for the Juwulinypany community. These two pastoral enterprises are operated by groups of about 14 and 26 persons respectively. The absence of housing or other services at both locations (about 35 and 30 kilometres from Warmun respectively) means that these people continue to reside primarily at Warmun and either commute to work or else reside seasonally at the stations. Other actual or proposed outstations from Warmun include Frog Hollow (Wurreranginy Corporation) located within the Violet Valley reserve; Crocodile Hole (Rugan Corporation) located on the border of Bow River and Doon Doon stations; Tunpi, a proposed excision from Bedford Downs station and Kawarra (Bungle Bungle outcamp) located within the proposed Bungle Bungle National Park. The land tenure arrangements for all these communities (except for Bow River, Kawarra and Tunpi) are in the process of being converted to 99 year leases under the WA Government's Land Package. At present most of the residents of these proposed communities reside at Warmun and form a part of this community.

The commercial viability of Aboriginal pastoral enterprises in the vicinity of Warmun community will not be assessed in any detail here. However, it is noteworthy that at present the overall viability of the pastoral industry in the Kimberley is being called to question (see Jennings, 1985 and Dillon, 1985). It has been acknowledged for a long time now that most Aboriginal stations in northern Australia were not only marginal and heavily degraded when procured, but that they have subsequently been undercapitalised and overpopulated. Furthermore, there are indications that the occupational backgrounds of Aborigines as employees and not managers in the pastoral industry means that they frequently lack the management expertise required to operate viable enterprises. Another structural problem has been the multiple objectives of groups on stations- it has frequently been unclear if stations are being run as commercial undertakings or as resource bases for small Aboriginal communities (see Doolan, 1977; Altman and Nieuwenhuysen, 1979; Young, 1981 and Symanski, 1987). Young (forthcoming) presents an analysis of these issues with respect to the enterprises at Bow River, Doon Doon and Mandangala. The data presented below suggest that those people who reside at Warmun and who work at Bow River and Violet Valley have an economic status that is little different from other residents of the community.

A principal object of the Warmun Community Inc. as stated in its constitution is 'to help to bring about the self support of the Community by the development of economic projects and industries' (Warmun Community

Inc, 1977). The economic history of Warmun since 1977, and the more recent experiences of adjacent pastoral enterprises, indicate that the community has been frustrated in its pursuit of this objective. The constitutions of the Juwulinypany [Bow River] Community Aboriginal Corporation, Baulu-wah (Violet Valley) Aboriginal Corporation, Wurreranginy [Frog Hollow] Aboriginal Corporation, Rugan [Crocodile Hole] Aboriginal Corporation and Kawarra [Bungle Bungle] Aboriginal Corporation are all modelled on the Warmun version and each has a similar objective: the development of economic projects and industries.

Given the attention that the tourism sector has been receiving as a potential leading sector in northern development, it is hardly surprising that the Warmun Council is eager for its community to benefit economically from any regional developments. However, the terms of reference for this research also indicate that the community is less than sure whether investments in the tourism sector are a sound strategy, what opportunities may be available, and whether the economic benefits of tourism development (which must be offset against possible economic and social costs) will flow onto the Warmun community. These issues will be addressed in detail in Part Three.

#### Population and demographic structure.

In Table 1, information is presented on the population of the Warmun community during August 1986 when I visited the community. This information was collected with the assistance of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff of Warmun Community Inc. At that time, there were 304 Aboriginal people regarded as residents of the community, although a number of teenagers (eleven) were away at secondary school in Broome. This population resided in 31 households in the community. A number of people (as already noted) regarded their primary community to be outstations away from Warmun, but nevertheless resided primarily at the township owing to an absence of facilities and services at their outstations. Altogether five households were in this category- two households (with a population of 36) were occupied by people who worked primarily at Bow River and Crocodile Hole; one (fourteen persons) was occupied by people who leased Violet Valley; one (six persons) by people who frequently camped at Frog Hollow and one (21 persons) was headed by the man who was generally regarded as having primary claim to the Bungle Bungle region [Kawarra outstation]. About 25 per cent of Warmun community's current population have a primary commitment to their outstations, although most continue to live at Warmun and occupy community housing. It should again be emphasised that the Aboriginal population presented and analysed here is not stable in the way that the population of a small white Australian township may be- high population mobility continues to be a distinguishing feature of contemporary Aboriginal life in the East Kimberley region. Nevertheless, most of the people enumerated at Warmun in August 1986 have had a longstanding association with the community.

In Table 1, the age structure of the Warmun population is presented in age brackets that are comparable with 1981 Census data. [Data from the 1986 census are not currently available by statistical division]. There are three striking features of the demographic breakdown of the Warmun population. Firstly, 39 per cent of the population is under 15 years of age, a high proportion in comparison with the general Australian

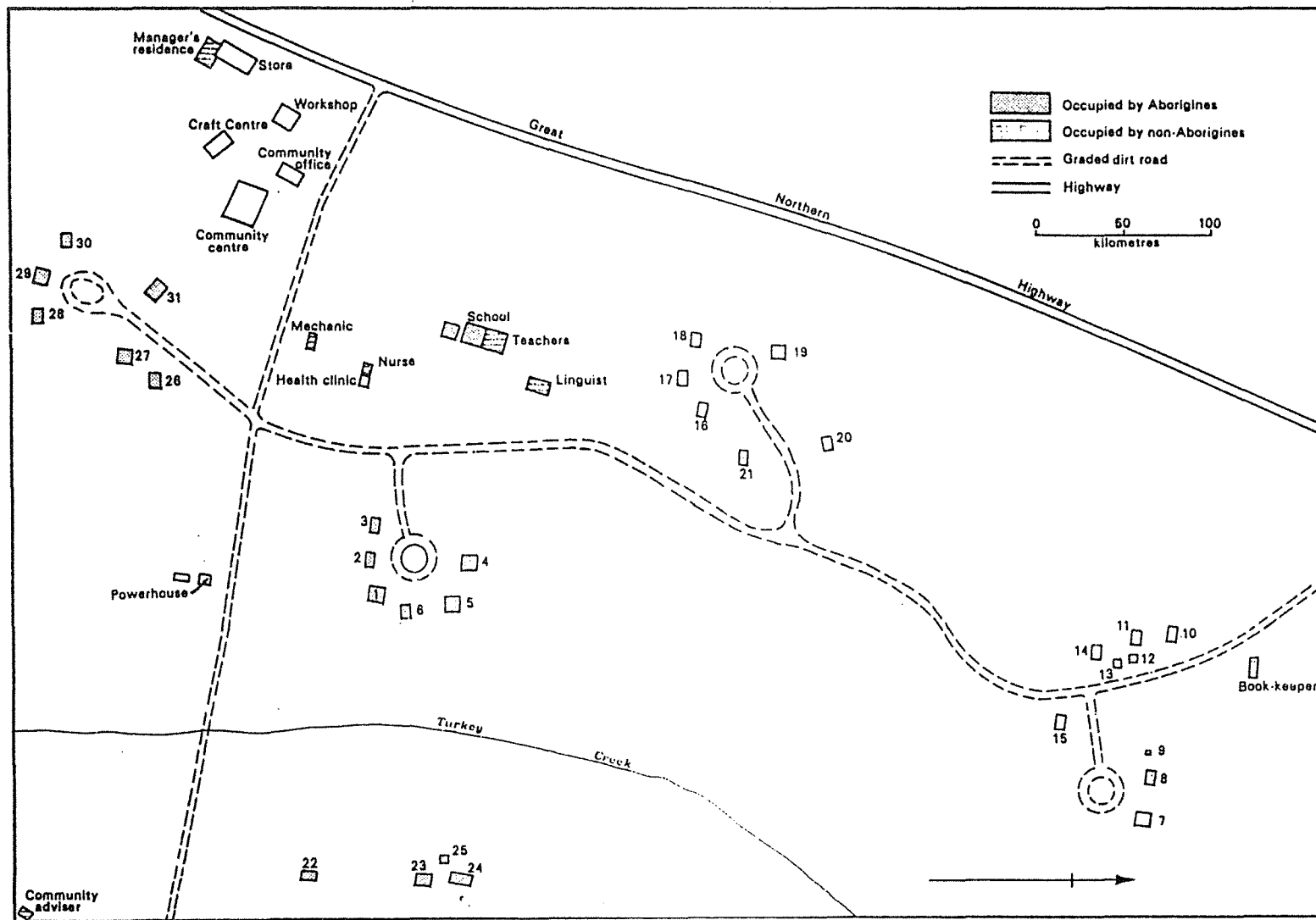


population in the 1981 Census (25 per cent), and fairly similar to the corresponding figure for the Aboriginal population in 1981. Secondly, just over 8 per cent of Warmun population is over 65 years of age. This figure is similar to the corresponding figure for the Australian population (10.6 per cent), but is far higher than that for the total Aboriginal population (2.8 per cent). Thirdly, there is a marked deficiency in the age categories between 30 and 54 years- at Warmun, only 16.2 per cent of the population fall into these categories in contrast to 30.7 per cent for the general population and 21.3 per cent for the Aboriginal population. This factor has important economic implications, for it is generally people in these age grades who are at their occupational peaks.

TABLE 1: THE AGE STRUCTURE OF THE ABORIGINAL POPULATION OF THE WARMUN COMMUNITY, AUGUST 1986

	Number	Per cent	Australian population (1981 Census)	Aboriginal population (1981 Census)
0 - 4	43	14.1	7.6	13.3
5 - 9	40	13.2	8.6	14.3
10-14	36	11.8	8.9	14.7
15-19	34	11.2	8.6	12.2
20-24	21	6.9	8.6	9.8
25-29	26	8.6	8.1	7.6
30-34	13	4.3	8.2	6.1
35-39	10	3.3	6.7	4.9
40-44	13	4.3	5.6	4.1
45-49	7	2.3	5.0	3.4
50-54	6	2.0	5.2	2.8
55-59	18	5.9	5.0	1.9
60-64	12	4.0	4.1	1.7
65-69	4	1.3	3.6	1.2
70-74	7	2.3	3.5	0.8
75 and over	14	4.6	3.5	0.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Sources: Field survey, August 1986; Aboriginal Social Indicators, 1984 (DAA, 1984).



MAP 2: SKETCH MAP OF THE WARMUN COMMUNITY, AUGUST 1986

The demographic structure of the Warmun population results in the dependency ratios at the community being high. The ratio of children aged 0-14 to the population aged 15-64 at Warmun is 0.74, whereas for the general Australian population it is 0.39 and for the Aboriginal population 0.77. The ratio of aged dependants to the population aged 15-64 at Warmun is 0.16 which is similar to the figure for all Australians and is far higher than that for all Aborigines (0.05). This demographic structure in itself implies that there will be a relatively high degree of welfare dependence at Warmun.

In the sketch map of the Warmun community, it is evident that the Aboriginal population of the community is divided into five residential clusters or 'camps'. The population of each household can be assessed with reference to the household numbers in Table 6. Household populations varied from a minimum of one person per household [there were no empty or abandoned houses in the community in August 1986] to a maximum of 24 persons in household 7. Mean household population was ten persons, with a standard deviation of 7 persons. This can be contrasted with the average household size throughout Australia estimated to be 2.8 persons (ABS, 1986). Houses at Warmun range from one to three bedrooms in size.

The division of Warmun community into five camps is a result of the way the community developed. It indicates that the community is not homogeneous, but that like most Aboriginal communities in north Australia, the population is heterogenous and made up of people who share languages (mainly Kija and Miriwung), kinship and ceremonial ties, rights to land and recent history primarily in the pastoral economy. A detailed anthropological analysis of the resident population was not undertaken, but skeleton genealogical information collected indicated that kinship ties were strongest within camps rather than between them. However, there are numerous affinal (marriage) ties between households in different camps.

TABLE 2: CAMPS WITHIN THE WARMUN COMMUNITY, AUGUST 1986

Name	Number of households	Population of each camp (number)	(per cent)
Garden camp	6	60	19.7
Bottom camp	9	63	20.7
Middle camp	6	63	20.7
Other side	4	46	15.1
Top camp	6	72	23.7
Total	31	304	100.0

Source: Field survey, August 1986.

In Table 2, information is presented on the households and population of each camp. In the sketch map of Warmun, houses 1-6 are Garden Camp, 7-15 Bottom (or Windmill) Camp, 16-21 Middle Camp, 22-25 Other Side and 26-31 Top Camp. In terms of the political hierarchy of the community, Garden camp, strategically placed in the geographic centre of the community and adjacent to a perennial spring, is most influential- senior traditional owners for the Warmun community site live here. However, this camp excepted, these days there is no particularly evident logic to the composition of camps or their geographic orientation. People in Garden Camp have a strong affiliation to Violet Valley (the Chairman of the Baulu-wah Corporation that has leased the reserve resides in house 4) and to Bow River. People in Bottom Camp have affiliations with Nicholson station, Halls Creek, Katherine (in the NT) and (the now abandoned) Turner station. Residents of Middle Camp have strong ties with Springvale and Bedford Downs stations, while those in Other Side have important custodial rights to the Bungle Bungle region, south east of Warmun and have continuing ties with Texas Downs station. Members of the Wurreranginy [Frog Hollow] community also reside in this camp. Top Camp is the least integrated (and most recent) residential cluster: its residents have affiliations with Bow River, Crocodile Hole and Lissadell and Springvale stations. Of particular relevance to this working paper is that the widely recognised principal traditional owner for the Bungle Bungle (Purnululu) resides in a household in this camp.

### Employment and income

In Table 3, information is presented on an employment survey undertaken at Warmun. Overall, there were 70 full-time, part-time and occasional/casual positions in the community occupied by 69 people (one woman held two part-time jobs). Overall, 43 per cent of the population aged between 15 and 65 held some position, with a further six persons over 65 years of age also being in employment. This rate of employment is low, but is fairly typical for remote Aboriginal communities.

Some of the most able bodied young men in the community continue to work on white pastoral stations (Springvale, Bedford Downs, Texas Downs and Lissadell) in the region. They are paid the pastoral award which includes wages and keep. Only one Aboriginal is employed (for a nominal wage) as a full-time stockman at Bow River. The other workers at Bow River work part-time and are nearly all on unemployment benefits or pensions and receive a top up of \$20 per week when working. [This practice has similarities to the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) Program to be introduced at Warmun in June 1987]. The ADC funded housing program at Warmun provides employment for three people on a full-time basis. The program at Warmun is somewhat unusual in that the community provides most of the labour for the project whereas at many Aboriginal communities outside contractors are brought in. The community school (run by the Catholic Church) co-ordinates employment at the school as well as the Kija language program and the meals-on-wheels program. These jobs are somewhat unusual on a number of counts. Firstly, the school has only one official Aboriginal teaching assistant position. The wages from this position are pooled with moneys from a 'school chuck-in' to provide six full-time teaching positions. Secondly, as with the positions at Bow River, most employees at the school receive either pensions or unemployment benefits and receive weekly cash supplements (from the pool) that vary between \$25 and \$50 per week. Thirdly, the

school attracts some of the most able (particularly in terms of literacy) young people in the community. However, a number of older people also work at the school and on the language program in an effort to pass distinctly Aboriginal cultural knowledge to younger age sets. A great deal of what could be termed 'community development work' occurs in conjunction with the school and Catholic Church.

TABLE 3: EMPLOYMENT, BY INSTITUTION, OF ABORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE WARMUN COMMUNITY, AUGUST 1986

Institution/ employer	Full-time	Part-time	Occasional/ casual
White pastoralists	5	0	0
Aboriginal stations	1	12	0
Housing program	3	0	0
Community school	6	5	0
Language program	1	4	0
Meals-on-wheels	0	2	3
Catholic church	0	1	0
Community store	0	1	2
DAA (CM&S)	2	3	1
CCEP- community	5	0	0
- outstations	4	0	0
Argyle Diamond Mine	6	0	0
Health Department	0	1	1
Waringarri Arts	0	0	2
Total	33	29	9

Source: Field survey, August 1986.

The other important sources of employment at the community are ADM and the Commonwealth Community Employment Program for Aboriginals (CCEP). About six Aboriginal people are constantly employed at the Argyle Diamond Mine on landscaping and regeneration work. At the time of this employment survey, there had been a marked shift in the personnel involved in this employment, and a group of women were experimenting with this form of employment for the first time. A bus from the mine calls at the community five mornings a week at 7.30 am to pick up people for work, and they are returned at about 4.30 pm. Longer-term information on employment at Argyle (see Cousins and Nieuwenhuysen, 1984) was not readily available at Warmun, but discussions with community members indicated that work at the mine was not popular and that ADM employees turned over frequently. Three projects under the CCEP were coming to an end in August 1986. At Warmun, five men were employed on a landscaping project; at Violet Valley, four members of the Baulu-wah Corporation were employed for four months on a fencing project (two were receiving their last pay in August 1986) and at Frog Hollow, three members of the Wurreranginy Corporation were employed for a similar period on a fencing and cementing project (again

two were receiving their last pay in August). The existence of this program during the employment survey in August 1986 would have inflated the normal employment level at the Warmun community, although people are frequently employed on a range of programs, particularly Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR) work experience or training programs. There are indications that short-term, but fairly regular, employment is popular at Warmun because of its analogies with seasonal employment in the pastoral industry. This is demonstrated by the popularity of work on Aboriginal pastoral stations like Bow River in spite of marginal financial returns. The abolition of the Community Employment Program from 30 June 1987 and the possible decline in DEIR work experience programs could have important ramifications for the Warmun labour force.

Private sector employment opportunities are limited to work on white pastoral stations, at the Argyle Diamond Mine or at the community's Wungkul store. These jobs total eleven full-time, one part-time and two casual positions. Jobs at Aboriginal pastoral enterprises at Bow River and Violet Valley continue to be dependent on public sector subvention.

Data in Table 4 contrast the employment status of Warmun residents with people in the Australian workforce. It is evident that a very high proportion of people employed at Warmun are in part-time employment. This situation is partly a consequence of limited employment opportunities. It is also linked to the extent of local entrenchment in the welfare economy as most people in part-time and occasional/casual employment are also in receipt of some type of social security benefit. Part-time work is particularly popular among females, many of whom are formally well-educated (by local standards) but who prefer this sort of employment because they have child rearing responsibilities.

TABLE 4: EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF ABORIGINAL EMPLOYEES AT WARMUN, AUGUST 1986.

Employment status	Warmun community		Australian workforce
	Number	Per Cent	1981 Census Per cent
Full-time	32	45.7	79.0
Part-time	29	41.4	19.3
Occasional/casual	9	12.9	-
Not stated	0	0.0	5.8
Total	70	100.0	100.0

Source: Table 3 and 1981 Census of Population and Housing.

It is unusual in the Warmun case (although it has also been observed at the Mutitjulu community in Uluru National Park, Altman, 1987a) that a number of older people are remaining in the workforce even though they are in receipt of age pensions. At Warmun, 20 per cent of the employed workforce was over sixty years of age. In Table 5 data are presented on the gender and age of employed members of the Warmun community.

TABLE 5: GENDER AND AGE OF ABORIGINAL EMPLOYEES AT WARMUN,  
BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS, AUGUST 1986.

Employment status	Males (No.)	Average age (Years)	Females (No.)	Average age (Years)
Full-time	25	32	8	36
Part-time	15	50	13	43
Occasional/casual	5	57	4	58

Source: Field survey, August 1986.

There is a far greater tendency for males to be in full-time employment than females. While average ages of males and females in full-time employment are similar (32 years and 36 years respectively), the standard deviation for males is far higher- most women in full-time employment are in their 30s and 40s. People in part-time employment are older than those in full-time employment, and those in casual/occasional employment are older again. This implies that it is the younger age cohorts that have the skills required in the Warmun labour market. Certainly, as already noted, it is the young that generally have the literacy skills required for administrative and educational employment. While an assessment was not undertaken of the formal educational status of the Warmun population, people's occupational histories and data contained in the 1981 Census suggest that this is low. Work experience has been largely limited to labouring, domestic work, pastoral work and gardening at stations. According to the 1981 Census disaggregated for the Halls Creek Statistical Division (where Warmun is located), only 1 per cent of the Aboriginal population aged over 15 years had any post-school qualification, with some 98 per cent having no qualifications. A question on the age that people left school indicates that 55 per cent never attended school. These data imply that people lack skills necessary for the labour market. However this observation must be qualified - for those Aboriginal people who choose to reside at Warmun community there are few employment opportunities irrespective of educational qualifications. In August 1986, there were nine non-Aborigines employed at Warmun (community advisor, book-keeper, store manager, nurse, pastoral advisor and four teachers; the community mechanic position was vacant). Even if local people had the requisite skills and the desire to take these jobs, there would still be acute underemployment in the community owing to its remoteness.

It was noted earlier that at Warmun as at most communities (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) there is a local political hierarchy. The existence of such a hierarchy introduces the possibilities for distortions in the Warmun labour market. Certainly there is some evidence of patronage in the distribution of jobs in the community, with the highest level of employment being evident in Garden Camp. However, there is no indication that people at Warmun find this unacceptable. This contrasts with the attitude to the distribution of resources under the GNP (which

is similarly skewed in favour of Garden Camp) about which people do complain. The rights of members of Garden camp who are closely affiliated with the community chairman and senior land owner are recognised. People at other camps in the community have devised their own strategies to gain access to employment, either by developing relations with non-Aboriginal resource managers (community staff) or by establishing their own communities or enterprises. For example, opportunities in the CCEPs at Violet Valley and Frog Hollow were taken up by people affiliated with these communities and employment opportunities at Bow River are restricted primarily to members of the Juwulinypany Corporation.

It is evident from Table 3 that no-one at Warmun was directly employed in the tourism industry in August 1986. At that time, two well known local artists (Paddy Tjamintji and Rover Thomas) were indirectly involved in tourism- both were producing paintings sold to Waringarri Arts and Crafts in Kununurra. The Warmun community does not have its own craft advisor and is serviced by a number of people including the craft advisor in Kununurra, a dealer from Perth who has dealt with Warmun artists for a long time, and the current manager of the Wungkul store. It seems that the extent of the marketable artistic tradition in the community is not known with any certainty. At least three Warmun men (Tjamintji, Thomas and Jock Mosquito Jubarlji) have paintings in the collection of the Australian National Gallery (Caruana, 1987) while a number of men with the requisite skills (particularly George Mung Mung) regularly produce art held for teaching purposes at the Ngala Nganpum school. A further half a dozen men and women produce items of material culture for sale on an irregular basis. In September 1986 the Warmun community became a part owner of Canila Pty Ltd, a company that procured the Turkey Creek roadhouse. Employment spinoffs to the community from this purchase were not yet evident in the August 1986 survey. However, up to the time of writing this working paper (May 1987) there have been few employment opportunities for Aborigines at the roadhouse. A small team has undertaken some landscaping at the roadhouse under a DEIR work experience program. It is anticipated that when CDEP is introduced in June 1987 four members of the Warmun community will be employed at the roadhouse under this scheme.

In Table 6, data on gross income levels collected in conjunction with the employment survey are presented. The critical statistic in this table is the significance of the social security sector: 63 per cent of household income at Warmun came from welfare transfers. This figure can be contrasted with the corresponding welfare dependence of all Australian households as estimated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Household Expenditure Survey in 1984 where the ABS (1986:12) found that just over 11 per cent of average weekly household income came from Government pensions and benefits. It is of interest that the proportion for the three lowest decile groups averaged 75 per cent. This implies that the extent of social security dependence at Warmun is not particularly high when compared with other poor Australians. It also implies that social security dependence is an important variable in explaining poverty in general terms.

As noted above, during the survey period there was a shift of a number of women from receipt of social security benefits to employment with ADM. This sudden shift from unemployment to employment resulted in social security payments to these individuals continuing until the Department of Social Security adjusted its records. This would have



resulted in overall household incomes being a little higher than usual. It is important to note that such occupational mobility is common in Aboriginal communities and occurs for voluntary and compulsory (as when program funding runs out) reasons. While little longitudinal data have been collected at Aboriginal communities it seems likely that cash income levels at those households where people move in and out of formal employment would be highly unstable. The apparent stability of cash income levels that cross-sectional surveys imply can be deceiving. It is also important to note that a number of people in receipt of pensions and unemployment benefits (but particularly the former) are also in part-time employment (see Table 5).

TABLE 6: AGGREGATE CASH INCOME OF WARMUN COMMUNITY MEMBERS,  
BY SOURCE (PER FORTNIGHT, AUGUST 1986)

Source	\$	%
<u>Social security income</u>		
Family allowances	1,254	3.1
Pensions (age, invalid, sickness)	14,527	35.6
Unemployment benefits <sup>a</sup>	10,143	24.8
Sub-total	25,924	63.4
<u>Employment income</u>		
Wages and salaries	14,240	34.9
Casual/occasional employment	475	1.2
Sub-total	14,715	36.1
<u>Other cash income</u>		
Sale of artefacts <sup>b</sup>	200	0.5
Sub-total	200	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,839</b>	<b>100.0</b>

a From June 1987, unemployment benefits will be replaced by payments under CDEP.

b Recorded during survey period. A number of artists are employed by the school and produce paintings that are kept for educational purposes at the school.

Sources: Field survey, August 1986.

In Table 7, data on total household income and per capita income during the survey period are presented. These disaggregated data can be utilised for a number of purposes. Assuming that households are reasonably discrete income and expenditure units, is there evidence of cash income inequality both between households and between camps? Average per capita income (per household) ranged from \$81 to \$354, with a mean per capita income of \$171 and a standard deviation of \$63. The distribution of household income seems equitable by wider Australian standards, although it is heavily skewed at the lower range of the household income scale. This can be demonstrated with reference to the ABS Household Expenditure Survey, where household income was divided by decile group. Overall, 65 per cent (20 households) of Warmun households were in the lowest decile (10 per cent); 3 per cent (one household) was in the second decile; 16 per cent (5 households) were in the third decile; 10 per cent (3 households) were in the fourth and 6 per cent (2 households) were in the fifth. This means that only two households at Warmun were in the modal decile. If the assumption that households are discrete economic units is relaxed, then it is likely that intra-community variability in income is lowered. The possibility of cash income transfers between households seems likely given the kinship network that binds many households in the community.

When per capita household income is averaged by camp affiliation, income discrepancies are lowered. Three camps (Garden, Middle and Other Side) have average per capita incomes that vary between \$139 and \$147; the other two camps (Top and Bottom) have average incomes of \$177 and \$181 respectively. The averaging of incomes within camps is not intended to imply that there is generalised sharing, although the observation can be made that in Aboriginal society residential proximity is often associated with relatively high degrees of resource pooling. What is interesting is that no one camp appears to monopolise access to employment and non-employment income. In fact, Garden Camp, which has the greatest political authority, has the lowest per capita income. The two camps that could be regarded as least established (in local terms) have the highest incomes. However, too much should not be read into these data. For example, the relatively high per capita income at Bottom Camp is almost entirely due to five small households occupied by pensioners.

The information on household income in Tables 6 and 7 can also be used to compare the cash income status of Warmun residents with other Australians. However it is important to note (see next section) that income status is not synonymous with economic status at Warmun. Overall, the mean of per capita household income in August 1986 (\$171 per capita) amounts to 48 per cent of the Australian average of \$360 in 1984 (ABS, 1986:12). In statistical terms this can be explained by the size of households- while mean total household income of \$1,323 is higher than the Australian average of \$907, average household population of 10 persons at Warmun is far higher than the average Australian household of 2.8 persons. It is also of interest that average per capita income at Warmun (as distinct from average per capita household income) is only \$135, implying that the grouping of individuals into households ameliorates poverty.

TABLE 7: TOTAL AND PER CAPITA HOUSEHOLD CASH INCOME AT WARMUN  
COMMUNITY, AUGUST 1986 (PER FORTNIGHT)

Household Number (see map)	Total household Income (\$)	Population	Per capita income (per fortnight) (\$)
1.	1,404	10	140.4
2.	998	5	199.6
3.	1,982	16	123.9
4.	1,427	14	101.9
5.	1,334	9	148.2
6.	741	6	123.5
7.	2,265	24	94.4
8.	218	1	218.0
9.	848	9	94.2
10.	1,389	5	277.8
11.	318	1	318.0
12.	218	1	218.0
13.	218	1	218.0
14.	903	4	225.7
15.	2,556	17	150.4
16.	2,489	16	155.5
17.	205	2	102.5
18.	218	1	218.0
19.	792	5	158.5
20.	2,249	21	107.1
21.	2,491	18	138.4
22.	1,308	16	81.7
23.	1,674	17	98.5
24.	1,444	10	144.4
25.	695	3	231.7
26.	3,078	21	146.6
27.	1,127	14	80.5
28.	2,857	19	150.4
29.	1,414	10	141.4
30.	1,415	4	353.7
31.	727	4	181.6
Mean	1,323	10.0	170.7
Standard deviation	839	7.3	63.4

Source: Field survey, August 1986.

The above analysis has concentrated on household and individual incomes, but the Warmun community (and its 'outstations') has also benefited from the GNP since 1981 and from ASIG since 1985. These two schemes currently provide community income of about \$430,000 per annum. The intended objective of making these payments to Warmun and outstations

has never been clear, but it is assumed here that these moneys (paid by ADM and the WA State Government) are compensatory, and are intended to ameliorate the socio-economic impacts associated with the Argyle diamond mine some 50 kilometres north of Warmun. The purposes for which these moneys may be applied vary between the GNP (where purposes are negotiated between ADM and the Warmun Council) and ASIG (where the Warmun outstations Project Committee puts up proposals to be approved by a Steering Committee that has representatives from ADM, and WA State and Commonwealth Governments). However, the emphasis in both schemes is on a financial policy that expends all moneys annually (rather than accumulating funds) on items of a capital rather than recurrent nature. To date, GNP moneys have provided Warmun with a modern general store, a workshop, a community centre, part-funding for a crafts centre and a stake in the Turkey Creek roadhouse. GNP moneys have also been used to procure numerous vehicles for the Warmun community. ASIG moneys over the past two years have provided vehicles to all outstation communities out of Warmun (although recipients under ASIG have had to provide a 10 per cent deposit for vehicles) and access roads, bores, power generation, housing and ablution blocks, pastoral plant and stock and other equipment to various groups.

The existence of the GNP and ASIG and its role in the development of Warmun and associated outstations is a complex issue that will be addressed elsewhere (Altman and Ross, forthcoming). Two pertinent issues will be briefly addressed here. Firstly, it is important to ask what impact these moneys have had on the economic development of Warmun given that these moneys are a rare source of capital (in critical masses) that is largely independent of annual budget appropriations and of the public sector. GNP will be paid to Warmun for the life of the Argyle mine while ASIG will be paid to Warmun and outstations for an initial period of five years. Under these circumstances it is surprising that these moneys have only been used for sound investments twice: to part-purchase Bow River station in 1984 (with State government money that was actually paid prior to the commencement of the ASIG Scheme) and to part-purchase (but provide an important forward commitment to purchase) the Turkey Creek roadhouse. These two investments alone have provided the Warmun Community Inc and the Juwulinypany Corporation with assets valued at over \$1 million. While both the GNP and ASIG schemes have not been publicly reviewed, it does appear that these moneys have not been used in a particularly effective manner. Secondly, it is most unclear to what extent GNP and ASIG moneys have been used to offset capital expenditure that is normally provided by Commonwealth and State Governments. At Warmun, for example, these moneys have been used to finance an outstation movement that is usually the funding responsibility of DAA. Similarly a number of community facilities at Warmun frequently funded by the ADC (or from State sources) at other Aboriginal communities have been provided under the GNP. It was also noted earlier that Warmun's CM & S funding is at a relatively low level because of the recent establishment and growth of this community. This issue is somewhat analogous to the question of receipt of mining royalty equivalents and access to public sector funds in the Northern Territory (see Altman, 1985). The difference is that whereas in the NT communities in areas affected by mining have had a great deal of discretion about how they utilise royalty equivalents, at Warmun the mining company, with respect to GNP, and the State Government and mining company, with respect to ASIG, have had this discretion.

At the time of the income survey, Warmun residents (collectively) benefited from GNP and ASIG at a rate of about \$1,400 per capita per

annum. However it should be emphasised that much of this program funding was expended on vehicles (costing about \$20,000 each). The issue of vehicle expenditures and utilisation in the East Kimberley context is somewhat contentious. It must be noted that while mobility is an integral component of Aboriginal culture and that vehicles are currently a most highly valued commodity, the investment in vehicles as 'capital' items may be somewhat shortsighted. This is partly because these commodities have a limited life and partly because (except when used in subsistence production) they do not generate income. The problem here has been that under GNP and ASIG, groups have not been able to invest their moneys to generate a future income stream (that could be used to procure vehicles). It is only recently with the purchase of the Turkey Creek roadhouse that an income generating investment has been approved.

A further issue with vehicles has been that acrimony is generated in relation to their distribution. It is difficult to discern to what extent this is because of the requirement that vehicles are owned and used communally, and to what extent there are genuine distortions in the bestowal of these goods. The most recent division of vehicles in 1987 has resulted in vehicles going to households in Garden, Bottom and Other Side Camps. In 1985, ASIG funding was used to provide all outstation groups with vehicles. In 1984, a high proportion of vehicles procured (four out of seven) went to Garden Camp. The distribution (and provision) of vehicles to community members has always been a community decision that has been within the guidelines of ASIG (since 1985) and has been acceptable to ADM under the GNP before that time. If the Warmun community regards vehicle expenditure as excessive and a misallocation of resources (given the opportunity cost of using scarce capital resources on goods with a finite life) then it seems important that expenditure policies are changed under ASIG and GNP to preclude this category of good.

### Discussion.

The Warmun community, like most Aboriginal communities in remote Australia, is faced with a number of general economic issues linked to the community's future economic development and the current pressures to reduce dependency on the public sector. The community's recent interest in tourism development cannot be divorced from these wider issues. These are complex issues that will be addressed in the wider East Kimberley context in the final report of EKIAP. A limited number of economic issues of specific relevance to Warmun are addressed here.

#### 1. Subsistence income.

In analysing income status at Warmun, the proviso was made that at Aboriginal communities income status was not synonymous with economic status. Some factors operate to increase people's incomes. At Warmun, cash income from employment and non-employment sources is supplemented by subsistence income (that is, income-in-kind). In the contemporary context, the main source of subsistence is 'killer' cattle, that is, beef that is slaughtered and butchered for local consumption rather than for sale. There are no accurate statistics on the significance of subsistence produce to the local economy, but given that members of Warmun operate cattle enterprises at Bow River and Violet Valley and that groups frequently travel to the Bungle Bungle where feral cattle are abundant, it seems likely that subsistence (that would also utilise indigenous floral

and faunal resources) would be of significance. Fisk (1985:21) estimates that 5 per cent of food supplies for residents of Aboriginal townships comes from hunting, fishing and gathering activities. He converts this figure to about 3 per cent of total (cash and imputed) income. Elsewhere, I have estimated that at Maningrida township in Arnhem Land subsistence production accounted for a far higher 10 per cent of total income (Altman, 1982:458). In the Warmun case, it seems likely that subsistence production amounts to at least 10 per cent of total income, particularly given people's access to 'killer' cattle both at the Ord River Regeneration reserve and at adjacent pastoral stations.

## 2. Expenditure patterns.

People living at Warmun community have markedly different expenditure patterns to most Australians. There is a range of commodities and services that most Australians must pay for that are provided either free or at a heavily subsidised rate to Aborigines at communities like Warmun. For example, according to the *Household Expenditure Survey*, 1984, the average Australian household spends 10 per cent of total income on current housing costs; 2 per cent on fuel and power; 6 per cent on household furnishings and equipment; 4 per cent on household services and operation; and 3 per cent on medical care and health expenses. These items alone total 25 per cent of average household income (ABS, 1986:11-12). At Warmun, housing (which is owned by Warmun Community Inc.) is provided at a nominal rent of \$10 per fortnight; electricity, water and sewerage is provided at a similar nominal charge of \$10 per fortnight. Assuming that all households make these payments to Warmun Community Inc. (and payments can only be enforced for those who receive wages or social security benefits through the community office) this totals \$540 per fortnight for the 27 houses at Warmun occupied by Aborigines (the other 4 structures in the community sketch map are humpies and caravans). This represents at most 2 per cent of community cash income per fortnight. There are other variations between the expenditures of most Australians and the residents of Warmun, such as the cost of travel to and from work, but the above example demonstrates the reduced expenditure associated with living at this community.

The remoteness of Warmun from industrial centres does mean that goods and services procured are relatively expensive in comparison with the cost of goods for most urbanised Australians- social security payments do not provide any adjustments for location of recipients, although Warmun residents do receive the Zone B allowance for income tax purposes. Furthermore, the Warmun Community Inc. does own the Wungkul general store. In a regional context at least, community ownership of the store reduces the price of goods. The manager of the store is paid a wage, but there are no rentals charged, no repayments on business loans (the store was built with GNP money), and no need to maximise profits.

## 3. Material aspirations

It is fairly common practice to characterise the material aspirations of hunter-gatherers as limited. While at communities like Warmun there is no doubt that values remain determined by a distinctly Aboriginal cultural system, people at this community are not living in a pristine state: their values are informed by a series of articulations with pastoralists, missionaries, miners and the Australian state. It is also generally

recognised that the material aspirations of people vary markedly between cultures. Consequently, it is probably more accurate to characterise the material aspirations of Aboriginal people at communities like Warmun as different (from the Australian norm) rather than limited. To some extent these differences are determined by a number of structural factors: the lack of economic opportunities at remote locations and the subsequent high welfare dependence; the relative cash poverty associated with such dependence; and the lack of opportunity in Aboriginal society for private accumulation of capital. This last point is particularly pertinent. The social relations of production at Warmun remain primarily kin-based and continue to demonstrate strong anti-surplus and anti-accumulation characteristics. [It could be debated whether these kinship relations of production are a function of poverty or of Aboriginality or of both; I personally have no doubt that they are an integral component of the resilient and dominant Aboriginal value system that informs individual and group action at Warmun].

The community's relations with the Australian welfare state reinforce (at times unwittingly) these anti-surplus and anti-accumulation forces. For example, the majority of non-Aboriginal Australians spend their lifetimes investing earnings in housing, a form of capital accumulation that frequently provides financial security in retirement if not a stepping stone to further capital accumulation. At Warmun, all housing is 'public' housing owned by the community. Not only does Aboriginal housing have an extremely limited value (owing to its location), but there is no Aboriginal housing market in remote communities. In short, even if people had surplus cash to invest, one of the most common avenues to private capital accumulation in Australia is closed off to them.

The kinship relations of production result in any individuals or households who manage to accumulate being under continuous pressure to meet widespread obligations. This is again an integral component of Aboriginality - as already noted people belong to a wide social network and its maintenance requires sharing, irrespective of the wishes of particular individuals within it. The operation of this network explains the frequently observed fluctuation in the size of households on Aboriginal communities. Household accumulation or control of resources often has a centripetal affect that results in 'demographic success' for the household head, while lack of resources frequently has an opposite centrifugal impact.

A combination of these cultural influences results in an absence of private property rights (in the Australian common law sense) at communities like Warmun. This is not to say that there are no property rights among tradition-oriented Aborigines (see Altman and Peterson, in press). Rather, existing property rights in Aboriginal society are utilised to accumulate debt and prestige (social capital) rather than material goods (private capital). Nevertheless, by wider Australian standards the extent of material aspirations at places like Warmun are quite limited; in everyday life, people accept a fairly simple standard of living.

#### 4. Economic status

Measuring economic status cross-culturally is a task that is fraught with difficulties (see Altman and Dillon, 1986). This is particularly the case during times of rapid social and economic change. There is no doubt that

historical factors influence people's assessments of their own economic status and consequently there are marked variations in perceived economic status between age grades. Similarly, perceptions of economic status would vary between households on the basis of their access to resources, although it was demonstrated earlier that access to cash income was fairly similar across the Warmun community.

A great deal of discussion in policy circles concentrates on the extent of economic dependence on the Australian state of communities like Warmun and the low income status of Aboriginal people. The arrival of the welfare economy at Aboriginal communities in the 1970s, particularly since the payment of unemployment benefits to most community members from 1979, resulted in access to unprecedented amounts of cash. When Aborigines were (and are) employed in the pastoral industry, their periods of employment are highly seasonal, with a lay season over the Wet. It is generally accepted (see Stevens, 1974; Berndt and Berndt, 1987) that this seasonality suited Aboriginal employees who were able to participate in prolonged ritual activities when not employed. With the introduction of the pastoral award in 1968, there was a rapid decline in Aboriginal pastoral employment. Even those Aborigines who continue to work in the industry only receive award wages on a seasonal basis. Aboriginal people found that with the payment of unemployment benefits the autonomy that they had enjoyed in pastoral employment was greatly enhanced, and that cash income was not greatly reduced. In fact, for some people social security entitlements exceed wages under the pastoral award because award wages are only paid for days worked, and because welfare payments are adjusted for number of dependents whereas wages are not.

The introduction of social security payments to Aboriginal communities like Warmun has resulted in a phenomenon that I term the 'welfare trap'. When receiving welfare, Aboriginal people are able to pursue distinctly Aboriginal prerogatives, particularly participation in ceremonial activity, movement between communities in the wider social network, and a concentration on community affairs. In short, with welfare, people can maximize their economic autonomy. Welfare payments are stable and are paid year round, unlike wages that are only paid on the basis of regular work attendance and (in the pastoral industry) on a seasonal basis. Furthermore, the marginal returns from wage employment over welfare are minimal particularly as people are able to supplement their welfare cash income with part-time or occasional employment and to supplement their total income by participating in subsistence activities. Over the past decade, people (particularly the young who frequently have known nothing else) have become used to welfare and it has become an attractive option.

Some influential members of the Warmun community share the concern of policy makers with the high degree of welfare dependence, but for very different reasons. Most members of the Warmun community aged over 40 were employed in the pastoral industry in the 1960s. Consequently, they were inculcated with a work ethic that frequently required work effort over long periods under harsh conditions. These people are concerned at the level of youth unemployment at Warmun and the loss of authority over the young that has resulted from their potential economic autonomy with welfare payments. In short, older people at Warmun want to introduce 'work-for-the-dole' schemes (at a community level) that will override the rights of individuals to gain access to welfare benefits as a means of re-asserting traditional authority structures.



It is primarily for this reason that the community has welcomed the opportunity to partake in the CDEP scheme that will be introduced at Warmun in June 1987. The scheme has two distinct advantages. Firstly, while the wages component of the scheme provides the equivalent of unemployment benefits (at the community level) and hence has no marginal cost to the public sector, a 20 per cent on-costs component will provide discretionary capital to establish projects. Secondly, the scheme has the potential to placate wider concerns about low income status, for CDEP is recognised as having a goal of generating income without income testing. In short, the 'welfare trap' is largely circumvented with CDEP. It is left to participating communities to define work, and it is recognised that this can be of cultural rather than material worth.

##### 5. Development goals

Given the above economic considerations, I end with an attempt to define the development goals of members of Warmun community, and an assessment of how these aims may relate to tourism. It is suggested here that besides being caught in a 'welfare trap' people at Warmun are also caught in an 'ethnic trap' that constrains their options for economic advancement. It is also suggested that Warmun community members may be seeking involvement in tourism for social and cultural, rather than economic reasons.

The 'ethnic trap' is a concept developed by Wiley (1967). While this concept has been primarily used in conjunction with sociological stratification theory, it identifies a dilemma that is faced by many Aboriginal communities in north Australia: is it possible to maintain a distinctly Aboriginal cultural identity while participating in the national economy? The 'ethnic trap' (or perhaps, in the Australian Aboriginal context, the 'indigenous trap') concept indicates that there is an inevitable tradeoff between ethnic identity and socio-economic mobility: the more strongly a group maintains its ethnic identity and cultural values, the less likely it is to enjoy economic advancement.

This trap is of particular relevance at remote locations like Warmun where economic opportunities are extremely limited. Consequently, to get ahead economically, individuals or families must break ties with kin and community and migrate in search of employment or business opportunity elsewhere. In East Kimberley parlance, this dilemma can be expressed in the following way: does one want to remain a 'countryman' or does one want to be a 'burnt potato', a colloquialism for assimilated Aborigines who are black on the outside but white in the middle? At present, there are indications that community ties and Aboriginal cultural prerogatives are of greater importance to members of the Warmun community than improved income status and a more materialist lifestyle. In short, the Aboriginal social relations of production are proving resilient and are limiting incorporation into the mainstream economy.

Under these circumstances, it seems that development goals may stress social and cultural aspirations rather than material ones. While some groups in the East Kimberley have a land base, there is no doubt that for landless Aboriginal people in the region, gaining access to land remains the paramount priority. Since 1977, people in the East Kimberley have become increasingly aware of the range of property rights to land enjoyed by many NT Aborigines who have benefited from the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act. In the early 1980s there was a concerted

campaign to introduce similar statutory rights in Western Australia (see Seaman, 1984), but to date no land rights legislation has been passed in this State.

It is important to recall that Warmun people have close links with the Barramundi Gap and other sites (like Devil Devil Spring) that have been desecrated by the establishment of the Argyle Diamond Mine. People have seen pastoralists and miners come to the Kimberleys and they now see tourists as the new wave. Two of the terms of reference for this research (proposed developments within the Bungle Bungle area and how to maintain a measure of control over tourist development) indicate that people are concerned about growing tourist visitation. It could be argued that Warmun community's interest in tourism is closely linked with the possibility of gaining property rights to areas (like the Bungle Bungles) and to controlling possible tourist trespass onto sacred sites and areas of cultural significance. This has analogies with Aboriginal involvement in the pastoral industry, for it remains unclear (see Young, forthcoming) whether Aboriginal aspirations for involvement in this industry have been for commercial or social reasons.

In short, it is hypothesised here that a combination of the welfare economy, access to community capital under the ASIG and GNP schemes and available employment opportunities, have satisfied the material priorities of most Warmun community members and have dampened people's incentives to engage in private sector economic activity. In any case, there appear to be few commercial opportunities in the local economy and people lack essential entrepreneurial and commercial skills. A number of issues related to development and tourism will be re-examined in Part Three, but two stand out. Firstly, what economic opportunities will tourism growth in the East Kimberley region provide to Warmun residents? Secondly, there is a distinct possibility that the Community Council's articulated desire for greater involvement in tourism is about many issues *other than* commercial gain.

## PART TWO: TOURISM IN THE KIMBERLEY REGION

### The tourism industry today.

While the focus in this working paper is specifically on the East Kimberley region, most of the statistical data collected by the WATC treat the Kimberley as one commercial sector. The region defined as 'the Kimberley' by the WATC includes the towns of Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Kununurra and Wyndham; it is identical to the Kimberley Statistical Division defined by the ABS. Initially, data on the whole Kimberley region are presented before an attempt is made to disaggregate data into regional components.

In Table 8, information is presented on salient features of the tourism industry from the *Western Australian Tourism Research Monitor* that is prepared for the WATC by the consultants Cameron McNamara. The data are for the June years 1984/85 and 1985/86, but only include overnight visitors. Visitors are defined as any person staying one or more nights, but less than 90 nights, at least 40 kilometres from home. It is estimated by Cameron McNamara (1985, 1986) that 70,000 people visited the Kimberley region in 1984/85 and 58,000 in 1985/86. The marked decrease (of 17 per cent) in visitor numbers is unexplained, but is offset by an increase in average length of stay from 3.6 to 5.1 nights. While most visitors came for a holiday, a significant number visited for business reasons. The overall value of the tourism industry is estimated to be \$17 million (in gross tourist expenditure terms) in 1985/86; the bulk of expenditure is in accommodation, food and beverages and local transport. An unusual feature of tourist visitation to the Kimberley is the low proportion using coaches as the main means of transport to the region. However, according to Cameron McNamara, this proportion increased markedly between 1984/85 and 1985/86, from 4 to 16.5 per cent of visitors.

Cameron McNamara's surveys cover the whole of Western Australia and therefore provide the opportunity to place the tourism industry in the Kimberley in wider state terms. Overall, 8.252 million visitor nights were spent by tourists in WA in 1985/86; the Kimberley accounted for 3.6 per cent of the state total. Direct expenditure by tourists in WA amounted to an estimated \$417 million; the Kimberley accounted for 4.1 per cent of this. It is evident that in aggregate terms the Kimberley tourism industry is not particularly significant to the WA State economy. This relative insignificance is reflected in part in the limited allocation of WATC resources to the Kimberley.

In Tables 9 and 10, data on tourist visitation to the Kimberley from the ABS publication *Tourist Accommodation Western Australia (Catalogue No. 8635.5)* are presented. In Table 9, information on arrivals at commercial accommodation (hotels, motels, guesthouses and caravan parks) is presented. It is important that arrivals are not confused with overnight visitors; arrivals can stay at any number of establishments whereas overnight visitors only enter the region once per trip. Consequently, the number of arrivals at commercial establishments are far higher than the number of overnight visitors, but are lower than visitor nights because a proportion of visitors stay in private (non-commercial) accommodation. The data in Tables 9 and 10 are for the years ended 30 September, because these are the most recent figures available.

TABLE 8: SALIENT FEATURES OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN THE KIMBERLEY REGION, 1984/85 AND 1985/86

		1985/85	1985/86
Visitors		70,000	58,000
Average length of stay		3.6 nights	5.1 nights
Visitor nights		256,000	298,000
for holiday	(%)	79.7	72.0
for business	(%)	12.1	22.9
other reason	(%)	8.2	5.1
Expenditure	(\$m)	14.877	17.058
accommodation	(\$m)	4.500	4.700
	(%)	30.2	27.6
food & beverage	(\$m)	4.500	4.700
	(%)	30.2	27.6
pleasure shopping	(\$m)	1.9	1.2
	(%)	12.8	7.0
local transport	(\$m)	3.4	5.6
	(%)	22.8	32.8
other expenditure	(\$m)	0.6	0.8
	(%)	4.0	4.7
Main means of transport			
air	(%)	36.1	39.6
coach	(%)	4.0	16.5
private vehicle	(%)	54.7	39.0
rented vehicle	(%)	0.0	0.3
other	(%)	5.3	4.6

Source: Cameron McNamara (1985, 1986).

The information in Table 9 substantiates the finding in Table 8 that visitor numbers fell between 1985 and 1986. The figures also demonstrate the marked seasonality in tourist visitation to the Kimberley: the March quarter is particularly quiet with guest arrivals in that quarter accounting for 8.4 per cent and 9.4 per cent of the total in 1985 and 1986. There is a similar variability in room occupancy rates: in the March quarter 1986 this rate was 31 per cent whereas in the September quarter it was 72 per cent. This seasonality is not unusual for northern Australia and is evident (although not to the same degree) in the Northern Territory. The trough in tourism visitation during both the December and March quarters acts as a brake on the commercial development of tourist accommodation that could result in greater visitation during the popular June and September quarters.

TABLE 9 : TOURIST ACCOMMODATION IN THE KIMBERLEY REGION, GUEST ARRIVALS  
(,000)

Period	Arrivals <sup>a</sup>		Total (,000)
	Hotels, motels, etc. (,000)	Caravan parks (,000)	
December 1984	19.3	24.7	44.0
March 1985	12.9	4.2	17.1
June 1985	26.3	26.3	52.6
September 1985	40.4	49.3	89.7
1984/85	98.9	104.5	203.4
December 1985	18.7	10.7	29.4
March 1986	14.3	4.0	18.3
June 1986	28.3	27.2	55.5
September 1986	32.7	58.4	91.1
1985/86	94.0	100.3	194.3

<sup>a</sup> Arrivals are not to be confused with overnight visitors to the Kimberley region. Arrivals can stay at a number of establishments whereas overnight visitors arrive in the region once per visit.

Source: ABS Catalogue No. 8635.5.

As in Table 8, data on the takings from commercial accommodation show an increase from 1984/85 to 1985/86, implying an increase in visitor length of stay in the Kimberley. While in 1984/85 there was little difference in guest arrivals during the December and June quarters, in 1985/86 there was a marked difference; this is reflected in data on takings from accommodation in Table 10. It is important to note that takings from accommodation exclude revenue from food and beverage sales. It is of interest that estimated takings from accommodation in Table 10 for 1984/85 and \$6.5 million for 1985/86) exceed the estimates made by Cameron McNamara in Table 8. This anomaly is important on two counts. Firstly, the ABS survey data are collected on the basis of self-reporting by the management of commercial accommodation. It is frequently felt in the tourism industry that this results in under-reporting. Secondly, Barrington Partners (1986), who conducted the comprehensive *Kimberley Tourism Development Plan*, preferred Cameron McNamara data to that collected by the ABS.

The ABS survey data also provide an opportunity to gauge the significance of the Kimberley Statistical Division relative to the whole of Western Australia. For the year ended 30 September 1986, takings from hotels, motels and guest houses totalled \$102.5 million, and \$19.5 million from caravan parks; the Kimberley accounted for 4.8 per cent and 8.2 per cent of these takings respectively.

TABLE 10: TOURIST ACCOMMODATION IN THE KIMBERLEY REGION, TAKINGS FROM ACCOMMODATION (\$,000).

Period	Takings from Accommodation		Total (\$,000)
	Hotels, motels, etc. (\$,000)	Caravan parks (\$,000)	
December quarter 1984	1,002	191	1,193
March quarter 1985	655	115	770
June quarter 1985	522	439	961
September quarter 1985	1,931	688	2,619
1984/85	4,110	1,433	5,543
December quarter 1985	979	209	1,188
March quarter 1986	687	119	806
June quarter 1986	1,297	482	1,779
September quarter 1986	1,918	790	2,708
1985/86	4,881	1,600	6,481

Source: ABS Catalogue No. 8635.5.

While it is obvious that in aggregate WA terms the Kimberley is relatively insignificant, the region is gaining significance, particularly with inter-state visitors who are travelling around Australia on the totally bituminised Highway 1. The majority of visitors to the Kimberley however, remain WA residents (58.4 per cent in 1985/86) with overseas visitors accounting for a relatively insignificant 1.1 per cent of total visitor nights. Visitors from New South Wales and Victoria accounted for about one-third of visitor nights (Cameron McNamara, 1986).

Of greater significance to this working paper is the regional perspective. The Kimberley region, like many remote parts of Australia, is experiencing significant economic change in the 1980s. The mainstay of the regional economy this century has been the pastoral industry, but the recent *Kimberley Pastoral Industry Inquiry* (Jennings, 1985) indicates that this industry is at best stagnating and more probably is in decline. This is indicated by data on cattle production for the period 1973-85 in a regional profile compiled by the Department of Regional Development and North-West (1986). This decline has resulted in the closure of the Wyndham meat works in 1985 (Dillon, 1986). The Ord River Irrigation Project, completed in 1972, did not result in successful large scale cropping as originally anticipated. This is demonstrated in a critical review of the project by Graham-Taylor (1982). In the 1980s, the mining sector has grown spectacularly in the Kimberley, particularly with the establishment of the Argyle Diamond Mine. However, a study by Gibbs (1984) noted that the Argyle mine does not produce major flow-on effects for the regional economy.

In the absence of national accounts data (by region) or input-output information, it is extremely difficult to assess the current significance of tourism to the Kimberley. Barrington Partners (1986) attempt to provide an overview of the Kimberley economy and an estimation of the economic impact of tourism at the beginning of their study. They estimate that in the 12 months ended June 30 1985, tourists generated final demand for goods and services in the Kimberley region of between \$14.7 and \$15.8 million. This expenditure sustained an estimated 1,195 full and part-time jobs (Barrington Partners, 1986:30). While up to date information on the size of the Kimberley labour force is not readily available, 1981 Census data (Jennings, 1985:235) suggest that tourism provides a significant 15 per cent of jobs.

In Table 11, the bases for Barrington Partners (1986) estimate of the contribution of visitor expenditure to regional gross domestic product are presented. It is important to note that unlike the ABS and Cameron McNamara, Barrington Partners add expenditure by day trippers (that is, Kimberley residents going on day trips within the region) to that by overnight visitors in commercial and non-commercial accommodation. Initial expenditure (for 1984/85) is primarily based on the Cameron McNamara (1985) survey. This is updated by me using 1985/86 data from Cameron McNamara (1986). Barrington Partners assume that 40 per cent of tourist expenditure is immediately transferred outside the region. Their estimates of direct and indirect income multipliers are based on research undertaken by the Bureau of Industry Economics (BIE), although it is unclear if Barrington Partners were using the BIE's superseded 1979 study (*Economic significance of tourism in Australia*) or the more recent 1984 study (*Tourist Expenditure in Australia*). In their report, Barrington Partners (1986:27) state that no State tourism multiplier has been developed for the Western Australian economy; consequently they estimate this to be 1.45 (or 0.45), 80 per cent of BIE's (1979) national estimate. However, the BIE (1984:74) does estimate a WA State tourism income multiplier of 0.598 (or 1.598 in Barrington Partners terms).

Bearing in mind that regional multipliers are generally far lower than State or National multipliers (because of leakages), Barrington Partners estimate that the overall tourism income multiplier for the Kimberley region is 50 per cent of the national income multiplier, and set this multiplier at 0.28. This assumption appears realistic, but it is unclear in the Barrington Partners report (1986:28) why State and regional multiplier effects are applied to residual expenditure in the Kimberley. Logically the State multiplier should have been applied to the transfer expenditure and the regional multiplier to the residual expenditure.

The assumptions upon which the analysis in Table 11 is based appear realistic. The total contribution of tourism to Kimberley regional income in 1984/85 was about \$15 million and in 1985/86 about \$17 million. As already noted, these estimates could have been higher if ABS data (on expenditure in commercial accommodation) were used in preference to Cameron McNamara data.

TABLE 11: VISITOR EXPENDITURE IN THE KIMBERLEY REGION: CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT 1984/85 AND 1985/86

	1984/85 (\$m)	1985/86 (\$m)
Initial expenditure	19.60 <sup>a</sup>	22.10 <sup>b</sup>
Transfer expenditure <sup>c</sup>	7.84	8.84
Residual expenditure <sup>c</sup>	11.76	13.26
Regional multiplier effects <sup>c</sup> :		
direct (0.18)	2.12	2.39
indirect (0.10)	1.18	1.33
Total contribution to regional gross domestic product	15.06	16.98

<sup>a</sup> Utilising Cameron McNamara (1985) expenditure estimate for overnight visitors in commercial accommodation and Barrington Partners (1986) mid-range estimate for visitors using non-commercial accommodation and day trippers.

<sup>b</sup> Utilising Cameron McNamara (1986) expenditure estimate for overnight visitors in commercial accommodation and Barrington Partners (1986) high estimate for visitors using non-commercial accommodation and day trippers.

<sup>c</sup> Transfer expenditure and multipliers estimated by Barrington Partners (1986).

Source: Barrington Partners (1986) and Cameron McNamara (1985, 1986).

It is particularly interesting that Barrington Partners (1986:29) note that the benefits of tourism alone do not provide an indication of its impact on the economy of the region, as costs in both the public and private sectors must be deducted from benefits. Barrington Partners (1986:30) make no effort to quantify these costs, but merely note that they are unknown and that consequently it is impossible to gauge the net economic impact of tourism on the region. They do note that tourism in the private sector must generate net benefit because of the commercial viability of tourism enterprises in this sector, but make no attempt to gauge whether private sector net benefits outweigh public sector net costs. This raises the public policy issue of whether a Tourism Development Plan for an entire region should be based on such an indecisive foundation. This policy issue will be re-examined in Part Three when the future of the industry in the Kimberley region is discussed.

#### Area 7: Bungle Bungle-Turkey Creek.

At the Kimberley Tour Operators Forum held in Kununurra in March 1985 (WATC and Kimberley Tourism Association (KTA), 1985), the Kimberley region was divided into eight major actual or potential tourist destination



areas. Area 7 is defined as Bungle Bungle-Turkey Creek and is described as a [potential] special zone offering a unique product and cultural experience. Turkey Creek in particular is envisaged as a transshipment and staging post for the Bungle Bungle region. It should be noted that while the Forum was held some two years ago, development of the Bungle Bungle National Park, initially recommended in 1984 (Bungle Bungle Working Group, 1984), has stagnated. A Plan of Management for the Bungle Bungle Nature Reserve is currently being prepared by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) and should be completed in 1987. At present there are no facilities in the Bungle Bungle region and access options are currently limited to four wheel drive vehicles during the dry season and aerial viewing.

The tourism resources identified in Area 7 are limited to the Bungle Bungle and the Osmond Range, the Argyle Diamond Mine (not currently open to the public) and the Turkey Creek community (that is similarly restricted). At present, the region is primarily viewed from the air, with air charter companies out of Kununurra providing a long duration flight of about 90 minutes that covers the Bungle Bungle, Lake Argyle and the Argyle Diamond Mine. These are the three major natural features of the East Kimberley, none of which can be easily viewed from vehicles. The potential for aerial viewing of the Bungle Bungle is high, even for those people who also view the massif from the ground. Aerial viewing also provides year round access and an overall perspective that is not attainable from the ground. It is estimated that in calendar year 1986 a maximum of 3,000 tourists visited the Bungle Bungle overland, with a small proportion partaking in commercial tours offered by AAT Kings, Centralian, Ametz, East Kimberley Tours (a small local operator based at the Turkey Creek roadhouse until October 1986) and an Aboriginal operator residing at Warmun community.

Barrington Partners (1986) in their chapter 'Regional Tourism Product Analysis', locate the Bungle Bungle in the Kununurra Precinct, presumably on the basis that the majority of tourist utilisation of the massif is currently by air ex-Kununurra. Turkey Creek on the other hand is placed in the Kimberley Adventure Precinct- Great Northern Highway Link. In describing Turkey Creek, Barrington Partners note that:

Turkey Creek performs a service centre function for the local Aboriginal community and passing traffic...it is the closest town to the Bungle Bungle...the town is currently a base for safari tours to the Bungle Bungle which have been introduced by two groups- one Aboriginal and one non- Aboriginal (1986: 145).

This description fails to elucidate that Warmun community and the Turkey Creek roadhouse are two quite distinct entities. Furthermore, while East Kimberley Tours were located at the roadhouse in 1986, their operation was fairly low key. The Aboriginal 'tour operator' did take small groups into the Bungle Bungle (he is the senior traditional owner for the region mentioned in Part One). but these groups were primarily specialists associated with the development of the national park, the East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project, or white visitors associated with the Warmun community. This tour operation was tentatively brochured in 1986 as 'Purnululu Safaris' and was trialed on a number of occasions. Currently it does not appear to be commercially viable. Barrington Partners

(1986:145) prognosis for Turkey Creek is realistically constrained - they note that there is scope for Turkey Creek's role (as a service centre) to expand as the Bungle Bungle increase in popularity.

#### **Current economic spinoffs to Warmun from tourism.**

Turkey Creek is located on the Great Northern Highway half-way between Halls Creek and Wyndham or Kununurra. As such, the community is located adjacent to the roadhouse that it now part-owns. Most tourists visiting the Kimberley region would see no more of Turkey Creek than a row of houses across a fence; while it is not strictly legal for passing motorists to pull into Turkey Creek, it is not unusual for this to occur, particularly with overlanders who see the store and its petrol bowsers from Halls Creek and assume that this is the roadhouse (which is located two kilometres further on). The current manager of the Wungkul Store is quite happy for this additional trade. In the past the community had approached the Halls Creek Shire Council for permission to open the community store to the tourist trade, but this application had been refused, partly because of the location of the store on an Aboriginal Land Trust lease and partly because of the restricted covenant on petrol sales enjoyed by the roadhouse that prohibits competitors operating within 150 kilometres. Now that the roadhouse is majority-owned by the community this is no longer an issue.

The current economic spinoffs from tourism to the Warmun community can be assessed in two ways. The first is by reference to the cross-sectional data collected in Part One on the structure of the Warmun community. Data in Table 3 indicated that no-one at Warmun was directly employed in the tourism sector in August 1986 when the employment survey was undertaken. Two men in the community at that time were indirectly involved in tourism, producing artefacts that were sold to Waringarri Arts and Crafts in Kununurra. Information in Table 6 shows that artefact production contributed less than one per cent of total household income in August 1986.

It seems likely that these cross-sectional data would understate the significance of tourism to the community, particularly since the Turkey Creek roadhouse was purchased by the community (in partnership with a white entrepreneur) in September 1986. The second approach attempts to gauge the impact of tourism expenditure on the Warmun community in annual terms since the purchase of the roadhouse. An attempt will also be made to estimate the employment and income effects of the roadhouse for Warmun community members.

On a regional basis tourism statistics for the Kimberley region are extremely limited. Early in 1987, the ABS in its publication *Tourist Accommodation, Western Australia* (Cat. No. 8635.5) began to divide the Kimberley Statistical Division into the Fitzroy and Ord Statistical Sub-divisions. The former Sub-division includes the shires of Broome and Derby-West Kimberley and the towns of Broome, Derby and Fitzroy Crossing. The latter includes the shires of Halls Creek (where Warmun community is located) and Wyndham-East Kimberley and the towns of Halls Creek, Wyndham and Kununurra. In the September quarter of 1986, the ABS estimated that takings from accommodation at hotels, motels and guest houses in Ord amounted to 44 per cent (\$843,000) of the Kimberley total and takings from accommodation at caravan parks totalled 26 per cent (\$204,000) of the Kimberley total. While these data are only for one

quarter they indicate that total takings from commercial accommodation in the Ord Statistical Sub-division accounted for about 39 per cent of the Kimberley total. The sub-division breakdown approximates the general geographic distinction made between the West and East Kimberley and shows that tourist expenditure is more significant in the West Kimberley, primarily owing to the importance of Broome as a tourist destination.

In Table 11, I estimated that in 1985/86 total expenditure in the Kimberley was \$22.1 million. Assuming that tourism expenditure in the Kimberley is currently in the region of \$22 million per annum and that the 39 per cent spent on commercial accommodation in the East Kimberley (versus 61 per cent in the West Kimberley) is replicated in total expenditure terms) at about \$8.6 million per annum. While these assumptions are tenuous, it must be emphasised that they are only made in the absence of more reliable regional statistics.

The turnover for the Turkey Creek roadhouse for 1986/87 was estimated to be \$1.25 million prior to purchase (Vin Hindmarsh, pers comm). If it is assumed that 60 per cent of this projected turnover would be sales to tourists, then in gross terms, about 9 per cent of total tourist expenditure in the East Kimberley region would have occurred at the Turkey Creek roadhouse.

In the same year, the Waringarri Corporation (1986:22) estimates that Waringarri Arts and Crafts would purchase in the region of \$50,000 from regional artefact producers, retailing about \$44,000 in the region and wholesaling \$34,000 elsewhere. It is likely that about 20 per cent of purchases from regional producers (\$10,000) would have occurred at dealers in Perth and at the local Wungkul store. In total, artefact production would currently net the community in the region of \$15,000 per annum although all final sales would not be to tourists. Assuming a similar proportional breakdown between wholesale and retail sales to the Waringarri estimate, artefact sales to tourists would have totalled about \$8,700 per annum (in producer prices) and about \$13,000 in retail terms. Both contribute less than 0.2 per cent to the total value of the tourist industry although they do provide important sources of cash income to producers independently of social security entitlements (particularly to the two very active producers Paddy Tjaminji and Rover Thomas).

The safaris undertaken by Raymond Wallaby into the Bungle Bungle (Purnululu) would similarly have had a limited impact on his household's income, but would have had a negligible impact on the Warmun economy.

In locational and regional (Halls Creek shire) terms, the Turkey Creek roadhouse and its adjoining caravan park and motel units (some of which are currently occupied by staff) are significant. This is particularly because the bulk of tourism activity in the Ord Statistical Sub-division occurs in the north, in the shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley. Most attractions (Lake Argyle, Kununurra and the Ord Irrigation Scheme, and Wyndham) are in this shire and Kununurra plays a pivotal role as the 'Gateway to Western Australia' for overland travellers from the Northern Territory. The importance of Wyndham-East Kimberley shire is also reflected in the relative number of hotels, motels and caravan parks in this shire in comparison to Halls Creek shire: there are six hotel/motels and six caravan parks in the former and only three hotel/motels and two caravan parks in the latter (including Turkey Creek's modest facilities).

Despite the regional significance of the Turkey Creek roadhouse, it has had extremely limited income and employment effects on the Warmun community to date (May 1987). Warmun Community co-owns Canila Pty Ltd (the Turkey Creek roadhouse still known as 'Harry's Place') with a white businessman who has a ten per cent stake in the venture. Warmun has a 40 per cent equity stake in the roadhouse, although this stake will increase as loans from the ADC and AEC are repaid with ASIG and GNP moneys and operating surpluses. To date there have been no dividends paid from Canila to members of the Warmun community. It seems unlikely that any dividends will be paid for some time as all operating surpluses will either be reinvested in improving the physical infrastructure of the roadhouse and staff accommodation or repaying loans (Vin Hindmarsh, pers comm).

Similarly to date there have been few employment opportunities for Warmun residents at the roadhouse. This is primarily because Warmun residents lack the skills and/or aspirations to hold regular award wage positions at the roadhouse. While there have been discussions about the desirability of employing local Aboriginal people at the First (1 October 1986) and Second (27 November 1986) Meetings of Directors, employment has mainly been discussed in terms of DEIR work experience or training schemes or CDEP. Early in 1987 four men from Warmun were employed on a DEIR work experience scheme to undertake landscaping work on the roadhouse's entrance to the Great Northern Highway and there are plans to employ four men at the roadhouse under CDEP from June 1987. The potential economic impact of the roadhouse on Warmun will be discussed in more detail below.

### PART THREE: FUTURE DEMAND AND SUPPLY OF TOURISM

#### The growth of tourism in the Kimberley region.

Tourism is regarded as a potential leading sector of economic growth in Australia from national to regional levels. This is primarily a response to changes in the world economy in the late 1970s and 1980s that are having a profound effect on Australia. At the national level there is a shift in policy emphasis from export concentration in agricultural and mineral commodities (with depressed international markets) to a greater reliance on exports of services like tourism (Kennedy, 1987).

The national attempts to broaden the export base are amplified in northern Australia by attempts to broaden the entire economic base. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, the economic base of northern economies (particularly the NT and the Kimberley) has been particularly narrow and over-reliant on the pastoral economy and minerals. With depressed world beef prices, increasingly restricted overseas markets and the introduction of the costly Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Control Program, there is a possibility that the pastoral economy will never re-establish its past significance for the north. While it is currently impossible to predict the future of mineral markets, there are indications that the spinoffs from resource development projects on remote regions are limited. Secondly, northern economies have been extremely reliant on the public sector in the post-war period. This reliance has in the NT case been on the Commonwealth government and in the Kimberley on both State and Commonwealth governments. Southern subvention of northern Australia has taken two major forms: provision of capital and recurrent budget funding and a range of direct, indirect and cross-subsidies to compensate for locational disadvantage (Holmes, 1985). With the recent downturn of the Australian economy and the associated fiscal squeeze, the Commonwealth Government has decreased its subvention of the north (although in the case of the NT this decrease has been largely offset by increased defence spending) and increasingly embraced user-pay practices.

There are important differences, of course, between the tourism drive of the nation, which is entirely aimed overseas, and the tourism drives of remote regions that are looking for domestic as well as overseas visitors. In national terms the former strategy will have an impact akin to an export multiplier on the national economy (and will have positive balance of payments effects) while the latter (in so far as it is reliant on domestic tourism) is a zero sum exercise.

These factors have combined to result in tourism growth being a regional development strategy actively encouraged by the WA State Government. All indications point to the growth of tourism in the Kimberley over the next decade. This is partly because of the lack of any other industries in which the region has any comparative advantage. From the regional perspective there are two potential problems that could result from the rapid growth of tourism. Firstly, the tourism sector is renowned for its instability; the leisure industry has a high elasticity of demand and when economic conditions decline, demand for this service drops off quickly. This could lead to longer term instability in the regional economy. Secondly, as noted above, there are indications that many of the spinoff benefits from tourist expenditure in the Kimberley are accruing to the state and national economies, rather than to the region. There is a danger that with tourism growth, metropolitan, inter-state and

overseas interests will invest in large scale facilities. This could result in a further erosion of regional economic benefits from tourism growth. These are two issues that need to be addressed by the people of the Kimberley generally and not just Aboriginal people.

Barrington Partners (1986) divide the current visitor market into a number of segments that include a business visitor segment, accommodated coach tour visitors, private vehicle trippers, the rest and recreation holiday market and the four wheel drive adventure market. All of these segments are assumed to have positive growth rates for the period 1986-1990, with the fastest growth rates being in the private vehicle trippers and the four wheel drive adventure market (former averaging growth rate in visitor numbers estimated at between 9% and 14% per annum and the latter between 8% and 10%). These estimated growth rates were obtained by using the Delphi technique: a panel of experts were asked to independently estimate growth rates in visitor numbers. It does not seem that Barrington Partners utilised growth estimates made elsewhere in Australia (at a national or state level) nor did they utilise historical data (and least squares regression) to make alternative estimates of growth rates. Barrington Partners (1986:100) estimate that visitor volume to the growth rate would be largely due to the sealing of the Great Northern Highway (completed in 1987) and is based on an assumption that existing facilities (particularly accommodation) would be more fully utilised. Given that there are identified bottlenecks in accommodation (particularly at Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek and Kununurra during peak visitor times), increased visitation must be linked to a more even spread of visitation over the year, a trend that is occurring to some limited extent in the adjacent Northern Territory. The growth rate of 37 per cent by 1990 is assumed to be the underlying growth trend that will result from existing developments in the Kimberley region.

TABLE 12: FORECAST OF VISITORS TO THE KIMBERLEY REGION, 1986-1990

Year	Estimated overnight visitor numbers		
	Low	Medium	High
1986	92,038	93,072	94,106
1987	96,248	98,321	100,394
1988	100,376	104,132	107,896
1989	109,722	116,605	123,489
1990	118,013	127,491	136,970

Source: Barrington Partners, 1986.

It is noteworthy that while Barrington Partners identify a range of external and internal factors that may affect future visitor growth (in Appendix III of their report) they undertake no sensitivity analysis in their projections and present no scenario where there may be a decline in tourist numbers. This is an important oversight, given the previous problems that remote regions have experienced as a result of over-reliance

on a narrow economic base. It is not spelt out clearly in the Barrington Partners report that participation in the tourism industry in remote regions can be a high risk investment, particularly given changes in tourist industry demands that can be quite independent of the quality of the service provided. There are numerous examples from overseas of both regional and national economies that have become highly dependent on the fast growing tourism sectors and have then experienced recessions as these sectors have stagnated or declined. It seems important that regional planners and Aboriginal communities considering participation in tourism enterprises are made fully aware of the risks inherent in the provision of a service 'export' to a highly volatile market.

It is interesting in this respect that Cameron McNamara (1985, 1986) estimate that the number of visitors to the Kimberley region declined from 70,000 to 58,000 between 1984/85 and 1985/86. However, visitor nights, the more significant statistic for the tourism industry, increased from 256,000 to 298,000 (see Table 7).

In Table 13, Barrington Partners projections of tourism growth are presented on the assumption that all components of their recommended strategy are implemented. It can be seen that they forecast a growth rate of about 100% in visitation in the period 1986-1990 and additional visitor expenditure that starts at \$1 million in 1988 and peaks at nearly \$30 million in 1993. This Regional Tourism Strategy is predicated on commercial capital costs that will total over \$57 million in the period 1987-90 and public sector costs (in physical infrastructure development) that while unspecified appear to be significant.

Whether the WA State and Commonwealth Governments will fund physical infrastructure developments in the Kimberley region to the extent required in the Tourism Development Plan is a question that has both political and economic dimensions. At the political level, tourism may not be regarded as a particularly important growth sector after the final cost/benefit analyses of the America's Cup Defence in Fremantle are calculated. Preliminary indications are that there was a marked tourism expenditure shortfall in comparison to projections made in 1986 (see Centre for Applied and Business Research, 1987). The other political issue is how successful a small and remote region like the Kimberley will be in attracting WATC and other State Government support vis-a-vis other regions in WA. At the economic level there are indications, supported by Barrington Partners estimates of multipliers, that the rest of WA benefits more from tourism expenditure in the Kimberley than the region itself. Again there is a comparative issue- how do these State (and national) flow-on benefits compare with other regions in WA? Presumably, when final Regional Tourism Plans for all Western Australia are available, there will be pressure to distribute public resources for tourism development in a politically acceptable, and possibly economically rational, manner.

TABLE 13: FORECAST OF VISITORS TO THE KIMBERLEY REGION BASED ON ASSUMED IMPLEMENTATION OF TOURIST DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Year	Estimated overnight visitor numbers		
	Low	Medium	High
1986	92,038	93,072	94,106
1987	96,553	98,631	100,709
1988	105,231	109,796	114,362
1989	123,215	130,771	138,327
1990	151,937	165,745	179,553
1991	172,245	190,997	209,749

Source: Barrington Partners, 1986.

TABLE 14: THE GROWTH OF TOURISM EXPENDITURE WITH AND WITHOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Year	Without tourism plan		With tourism plan	
	Tourists <sup>a</sup>	Expenditure <sup>b</sup> (\$,000)	Tourists <sup>a</sup>	Expenditure <sup>b</sup> (\$,000)
1986 <sup>c</sup>	93,072	27,435	93,072	27,435
1987	98,321	28,983	98,631	29,074
1988	104,132	30,696	109,796	32,365
1989	116,605	34,372	130,771	38,549
1990	127,491	37,582	165,745	48,858

a These estimates are based on Barrington Partners (1986) medium growth rates for overnight visitors only.

b Expenditure is in 1985/86 terms and is based on data in the Cameron McNamara (1986) survey. It is assumed that tourists stayed an average 5.1 nights in the Kimberley region and spent \$57.8 per night. Presumably if the Tourist Development Plan was fully implemented, visitor average length of stay (and possibly daily expenditure) would increase.

c In 1985/86 (see Table 7) visitor numbers to the Kimberley declined by 17% but visitor nights increased by 16%. This was due to an increase in average length of stay from 3.6 nights in 1984/85 to 5.1 nights in 1985/86.

Source: Barrington Partners (1986) and Cameron McNamara (1986).



In Table 14, increased tourist expenditure based on Barrington Partners estimate of tourism growth (with and without the Regional Tourism Strategy) is estimated. This is an exercise that Barrington Partners did not undertake, preferring to concentrate on a benefit-cost analysis of their recommended strategy (which yielded a benefit to cost ratio of 1.26 *excluding* public sector costs). My estimate is based on average expenditure per visitor night in 1985/86 (WA Tourist Commission and Cameron McNamara, 1986) and while it is in 1986 dollars it is far more conservative than Barrington Partners projection that is based on the gross income of all commercial projects identified in a development prospectus appended to their report.

It must be recognised that the analysis undertaken here is markedly different from the Barrington Partners exercise. As tourism consultants, Barrington Partners were required to identify growth areas in the Kimberley tourism industry and to provide an integrated regional plan aimed at providing maximum growth of this industry. My terms of reference are far more modest and emphasise the possible economic impacts of growth in tourism on one particular Aboriginal community. The divergence in our estimates of the potential growth of tourism expenditure in the Kimberley reflect both our different terms of reference and our different clients. Irrespective of this divergence, current indications are that the tourism sector will grow rapidly to 1990 and it is likely that this will be the fastest growing sector of the Kimberley economy. However, the qualification stressed above must be reiterated. The rapid development of tourism is partially a consequence of the lack of alternative commercial opportunities in the Kimberley and partially because of its current limited significance - growth is accelerating from a low base.

#### **Proposed developments affecting Warmun community.**

With or without the Regional Tourism Strategy, the Warmun community will be affected by increased tourism to the East Kimberley region. While it is likely that the community will be able to isolate itself from many of the social costs associated with tourism growth (by maintaining the living areas at Warmun as an area prohibited to tourists), the community has become a participant in the tourism industry through its investment in the Turkey Creek roadhouse. Furthermore, members of the Warmun community are recognised, in a de facto if not de jure sense, as traditional owners of the proposed Bungle Bungle National Park. It seems highly likely that not only will Aboriginal living areas be established at one or more locations within the national park, but that Aboriginal people will also be involved in the management of the park and possibly in the establishment of commercial enterprises, including a Wilderness Lodge within the park.

Interestingly, Barrington Partners (1986) do not discuss the Turkey Creek roadhouse or its accommodation facilities in their report. Accommodation adjacent to the roadhouse currently consists of ten caravan bays with power and water to each site and two single and four family motel units. This may have been because of the secrecy associated with the proposed community purchase of the roadhouse in April and May 1986 when Barrington Partners' consultants visited the region. Nor is there any discussion of the existence of the Turkey Creek airstrip and the locational advantage that Warmun enjoys if it chose to locate charter flights for aerial viewing of the Bungle Bungle (only some 15 minutes flying time away) at this airstrip. While it is unlikely that Turkey

Creek itself will ever develop into a tourist destination, it could become an important transshipment point for the Bungle Bungle. Such a possibility would depend on the location of the access road into the proposed national park and a rapid growth in tourist visitation to the Bungle Bungle. Irrespective of developments in the Bungle Bungle, there is no doubt that with increased tourist traffic the roadhouse could become extremely profitable. In the immediate future it is the roadhouse that will have the most direct economic impact on the Warmun community.

Two specific proposals identified in the Development Prospectus (Appendix V of the Barrington Partners report) could also have important economic impacts on Warmun community. Both are medium term projects targeted for construction during the period 1 January 1987 to 31 December 1989.

The first project is an Aboriginal Cultural Centre that could be located in Kununurra or Derby. The location of such a centre would obviously be of great significance to Warmun community. Members of the community have close ties to Aboriginal resource organisations and Aboriginal people in Kununurra, whereas ties to Derby are relatively limited. Barrington Partners estimate that the capital cost of such a centre would be \$750,000 and assume that by year 3 the visitor centre will achieve a visitor volume of 90,000 and total revenue (in 1986 dollars) of \$1.125 million (assuming expenditure per visitor of \$12.5). Barrington Partners suggest that experience from central Australia indicates that an entrance fee of \$2.50 could be charged and that expenditure per visitor would average \$10. While Barrington Partners do not state on which cultural centre their data are based, the only such enterprise in central Australia is the Maruku Arts and Crafts 'craft camp' located within Uluru National Park. Data that I have collected there in 1985 and 1986 (see Altman 1987a, 1987b) indicate that sales at the craft camp only average \$1 per visitor to Uluru National Park. Retail sales at the craft camp in 1986 were in the region of \$200,000 and this centre is the most successful in Australia. Furthermore, the craft camp/cultural centre at Uluru does not charge an entrance fee because it is believed that such a charge may deter potential clients. On the basis of this information, it seems that the Barrington Partners estimate of revenue to the centre is too high.

The indicative cash flow projections for the Aboriginal Cultural Centre appear extremely optimistic. While Barrington Partners state that the facility should be able to operate along commercial lines without the need for a subsidy, it is interesting that all the potential sources of finance that they identify to establish the Centre are agencies that either provide soft loans or grants. If the Cultural Centre is potentially viable, then why are commercial sources of venture capital (like banks) excluded from the list of potential financiers?

What is of crucial significance to members of the Warmun community is whether they would wish to partake in the operation of a cultural centre at Kununurra or Derby or whether they would rather establish a community enterprise either at the roadhouse or else at the recently completed community centre. It seems likely that a Cultural Centre at Kununurra or Derby would only have indirect benefits to Warmun, as a location where community produced artefacts could be retailed, while an outlet at the roadhouse could have more direct spinoffs (in terms of income and employment).

The second is the Bungle Bungle Wilderness Lodge comprising 20 chalets that Barrington Partners estimate would cost nearly \$3 million to construct. This development cost seems low given the remoteness of the Bungle Bungle and the current quality of overland access (that currently restricts access during the Wet). Furthermore, Barrington Partners estimate of annual income of \$1.85 million by year 3 (assuming occupancy of 65%, which is far higher than the Kimberley-wide room occupancy rate of 48% estimated by the ABS for the year ended September 30 1986 and the 40% estimated by Cameron McNamara (1986) for the year ended 30 June 1986) not only appears high, but also seems insufficient to make the investment appealing. It is also based on a chalet rental rate of \$250 per night (in 1986 dollars) which seems high for the likely market segments (four wheel drive adventures and private vehicle tripper) that are likely to visit the Bungle Bungle. The destination does not seem particularly suited for holiday destination and business visitors.

In assessing the feasibility of the Wilderness Lodge, Barrington Partners assume that visitors will stay up to seven nights in the Bungle Bungle. This estimate seems very optimistic, particularly given the inability of other resorts in north Australia to establish themselves as holiday destinations. After three years of operation, the Yulara tourist facility is still utilised primarily as accommodation near Ayers Rock, rather than as a resort (see Altman, 1987b, 1987c).

In the Barrington Partners feasibility assessment, the return on funds employed establishing and operating the Wilderness Lodge (before finance charges, depreciation and taxation) is estimated at only 26 per cent. This figure seems quite low given the risks involved. It is also assumed that the WA State Government will provide ancillary facilities (particularly road access) without charge to the developers of the resort.

There are two important issues in relation to the Wilderness Lodge that Barrington Partners do not address. Firstly, throughout their report there is no reference to the recommendations of the Bungle Bungle Working Group report (1984) with respect to Aboriginal interests. Barrington Partners envisage the creation of up to 20 positions in the operation of the Lodge, including employment opportunities for Aborigines. However, they do not appear to embrace the underlying principle in the Working Group report that Aboriginal traditional skills and cultural knowledge should be used for the benefit of park interpretation and management. The Working Group (1984:75) notes specifically that it is envisaged that there will be employment opportunities for traditional owners of the Bungle Bungle in interpretative work, in management, regeneration and development projects and in concessions to run tours in the proposed national park. While admittedly it was difficult for Barrington Partners to put forward a concrete proposal for the Bungle Bungle in the absence of a declared national park and a management plan, there are indications that they do not regard the proposed tourism facility and the national park as closely connected.

Secondly, Barrington Partners mention the joint venture agreement between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal commercial interests at Watarka (Kings Canyon) in the NT with reference to the development of a Wilderness Lodge. However, they fail to mention that the Aboriginal 20 per cent equity stake in the Kings Canyon development was gained on the basis of major concessions from the NT Government (in return for a gas pipeline easement). Furthermore, the joint development proposal for Kings Canyon

put together by the Central Land Council and Bill King's Destination Australia Marketing emphasises the Aboriginal cultural component to a far greater extent than the Barrington Partners proposal for the Bungle Bungle (see Altman, 1987c). It should be noted that the Kings Canyon Wilderness Lodge is about three times as expensive as the Bungle Bungle proposal despite the fact that Kings Canyon has relatively good conventional vehicle access.

#### **Supply of tourism services by Warmun community.**

Dillon (1987:11) notes that Aboriginal communities need property rights to tourism resources if they are to positively control the impact of tourism on their communities rather than merely alleviate social impacts associated with tourism enterprises owned and controlled by non-Aboriginal interests. He also notes (see Table 11 above) that the bulk of tourism expenditure in northern Australia is directed to general services and not to 'cultural tourism goods and services' like artefacts, ceremonial dances or tours with a specific Aboriginal component. While this observation is quite accurate, it begs the issue, because to date there are few items of Aboriginal culture being marketed in north Australia. However, the important point that Dillon makes is that Aboriginal communities must recognise their locational advantages in providing normal tourism services. This point was discussed when examining the potential locational advantages that Warmun community has in the provision of tourism services.

The likely economic impacts of tourism on the Warmun community must be differentiated. Firstly, irrespective of any developments in the Bungle Bungle the roadhouse in which the Warmun community has the majority holding will attract increased business as utilisation of the Great Northern Highway expands. The issues that the Warmun community faces are the level of involvement it desires in the roadhouse, how the community would like to see the roadhouse develop and how the community can ensure that the roadhouse is run efficiently as a profitable enterprise.

Currently, the roadhouse is managed by non-Aboriginal people, and realistically there is no possibility that local Aboriginal people will be in a position to manage the roadhouse within the next 5-10 years, even assuming that some local person wants the responsibility and pressure associated with this position. However, there are problems in the ownership structure that has evolved in this joint enterprise. In particular, members of the Warmun community only comprise two of the five directors on the Board of Canila, the company that owns the roadhouse. It is unusual that representatives of two organisations (AEC and ADC) that lent money to Warmun to procure the roadhouse have members on the Board. It seems that as the majority owner of the roadhouse, Aboriginal interests should have greater Board representation, or at least the right to nominate members of the Board. An added structural problem is that Aborigines from Warmun appear to have extremely limited input into the decisions made by the Canila Board (V. Hindmarsh, pers. comm. and Minutes of Meetings of Board of Directors). This is not surprising for as Byrt (1981) notes even in Australian (non-Aboriginal) companies, there are doubts about the influence of owners of companies vis-a-vis managers in commercial decision-making.

It seems that within Aboriginal companies, this problem is exacerbated: white managers and white directors can easily exclude Aboriginal interests from decision-making processes unless structures are established that ensure effective Aboriginal representation. Given that Warmun community members (and directors representing the community's interests) have had very limited experience in commerce, there is a real danger that Aboriginal owners will not have sufficient input to policy and management decisions. However, it is essential that the broad policy decisions that may affect the community are made by community members, otherwise the advantages of a commercial stake in the tourism industry are lost.

In the Warmun case this situation is further complicated by the fact that the community totally owns the Wungkul store that has its own store committee and commercial objectives. There is some evidence of competition between these two Aboriginal-owned enterprises that ultimately may not maximise economic and social benefits to the Warmun community. This is an issue to which I will return later, but it is imperative that the community amalgamates these two enterprises so as to enjoy economies of scale, allow the cross-subsidisation of the community store, increase overall Aboriginal equity interest in the roadhouse and ultimately maximise the Aboriginal role in policy formation.

The policy objectives issue is particularly pertinent because it was my impression, gleaned in discussions with some senior members of the Warmun community in August 1986, that the community wanted to purchase the roadhouse for social and cultural, rather than commercial, reasons. In particular, people saw that ownership provided them with the only means to prevent alcohol sales at the roadhouse (the vendor had proposed to apply for a liquor licence) and to prevent East Kimberley Tours operating out of the roadhouse. Local people were concerned about the operations of this tour company because it regularly visited sites of significance to traditional owners of the Bungle Bungle. On the other hand, community members were sceptical about the potential of the roadhouse to make significant financial returns for the community. This scepticism appears to be well-founded given the size of the community, the turnover of the roadhouses and the experiences of other Aboriginal communities (like Yalata) that have purchased roadhouses. The purchase was more to do with control of tourists than with commercial aspirations. However, to effectively exert some regional constraints on tourism the roadhouse must remain commercially viable.

The future development of the roadhouse is rather obviously closely tied with developments in the Bungle Bungle. It has already been noted that Turkey Creek itself will not develop into a tourist destination in the immediate future, but its role as a service centre could change dramatically if road access to the proposed national park was improved. As the WATC/KTA Forum in 1985 noted, Turkey Creek could develop into a transshipment and staging post for the Bungle Bungle region. While it is currently unclear what overall development strategy for the Bungle Bungle that plan of management will take (for example, where will road[s] into the park be located; will accommodation be available within the proposed park; will conventional drive vehicle access be available, and so on) each of these factors could affect the operations of the roadhouse.

Unfortunately, there is little that the owners of the roadhouse can do to take advantage of future commercial opportunities until the plan of

management is completed and ratified, but the Warmun community must already consider all possible options. If the Bungle Bungle National Park develops into a destination that is as important as Ayers Rock (Uluru National Park) or even as Kings Canyon, then the roadhouse will occupy a pivotal niche in regional development. Not only will there be a need for expanded accommodation facilities, but there will also be increased opportunities for basing local tour companies and charter flights at Turkey Creek.

It seems that ownership of the roadhouse and the location of Warmun community could result in Aboriginal interests having effective control over tourism developments in the immediate vicinity of Warmun and in the Bungle Bungle. It may already be commercially feasible to base an air charter company at the Turkey Creek airstrip for flights over the Bungle Bungle. While it does not seem that there are personnel at Warmun who have the tourism industry skills to operate a tour company, there may be a possibility of establishing a joint venture with an experienced tour operator (like Sam Lovell) to operate out of the roadhouse.

Again it is imperative that members of Warmun discuss and clarify their objectives. If people merely want to control tourism for social and cultural reasons, to minimise the potential negative social impacts of tourism on the Warmun community, then it must be recognised that ownership of enterprises and an effective role in policy decision making are required. If on the other hand, people want involvement in the tourism industry for commercial reasons, to generate employment, wages and profits for community members, then it is important that people are provided with realistic information on what commercial involvement in this industry entails. In particular, there are indications that Aboriginal people are unaware of the enormous demands and constraints that result from commercial participation (as managers or employees) in this service industry. There are also indications, discussed in Part A, that Warmun residents lack the occupational backgrounds, educational status, communications skills and personal financial incentives to become fully involved in the tourism industry.

### **The role of cultural tourism.**

In comparison with the adjacent Northern Territory, the Aboriginal component of the Kimberley region is hardly marketed or advertised. In the NT, major tourist destinations like Kakadu, Katherine and Uluru National Parks are brochured with a heavy emphasis on their Aboriginal component. This is partly because Aboriginal people are the statutory owners of Kakadu and Uluru, and Katherine is currently under land claim. Furthermore, substantial Aboriginal communities reside at all these locations, although places of residence are usually remote from areas of tourist use. It is interesting that while Aboriginal people constitute about 40% of the Kimberley' population and while they were its only long term residents till merely one hundred years ago, they are not prominent in advertising for the Kimberley.

Cameron McNamara (1985) indicate that the main attractions for holiday/recreation visitors to the Kimberley region are the scenery, beaches and water, and the sunny weather. The most common activities (for groups of holiday/recreation visitors) are pleasure driving (33.1%), boating and sailing (21.4%), the beach and surf (11.6%) and galleries and

museums (8.7%). Barrington Partners (1986:70-72) similarly found that touring and sightseeing are the major activities in which tourists participate when in the Kimberley region, with fishing, camping and dining out being of secondary importance. Using the Delphi technique, a panel of 'experts' (regional operators) were asked to independently rank the region's attractions. The four most important regional attractions from the panel's point of view are the outback scenery and atmosphere, the climate, fishing resources and the gorges of the region. These observations correlated closely with the Cameron McNamara survey results. Aboriginal culture and art, included as a category in the panel survey, received consistently low rankings. According to Barrington Partners (1986:72) this reflects a lack of suitable facilities, limited access to [rock art] sites, and a guarded attitude on the part of Aboriginal communities.

These observations assume that there is a tourist sector demand for Aboriginal culture and art (or cultural tourism) that is merely waiting to be supplied. However, this observation may be erroneous primarily because there have been no tourist industry attempts to provide cultural tourism independently of the desires of Aboriginal communities. In the Northern Territory there is a similar limited supply of cultural tourism (provided by Aborigines), so the tourism industry provides this component itself or it is provided by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff of National Parks authorities (see Kesteven (1987) with respect to Kakadu and Altman (1987a, 1987b) with respect to Uluru). It seems likely that for a high tourist demand for cultural tourism to develop, either the Kimberley region must be brochured as a tourist destination with an Aboriginal cultural component, or else individual enterprises (like Aboriginal owned art and craft outlets in Broome and Kununurra or Aboriginal owned and operated tours like Sam Lovell's safaris ex-Derby) must advertise. Lovell does in fact advertise widely via Airlines of Western Australia and runs an extremely successful safari operation, although it is arguable whether his tours can be defined as provision of cultural tourism.

The issues inherent in the demand for, and supply of, cultural tourism are complex. They have been addressed in some depth elsewhere and will not be discussed in detail here (see Kesteven, 1987; Dillon, 1987 and Altman, 1987a, 1987b). The critical issues for a community like Warmun are: what can be supplied; if cultural tourism is supplied how can the community ensure that it accrues financial benefit; and how can the community ensure that possible cultural costs, like the uncontrolled transformation of Aboriginal culture (Dillon, 1987:9), are limited. The issue of the supply of cultural tourism by the Warmun community will be addressed as a separate policy consideration below.

#### **Warmun and tourism: economic policy issues**

This working paper ends by considering the economic policy issues that need to be addressed by the Warmun community in relation to its involvement in the tourism industry. These issues subsume the five terms of reference that provided the parameters for this research. A number of the issues raised are not necessarily specific to the Warmun community and could provide a useful point of departure for discussions about Aboriginal involvement in tourism elsewhere in the Kimberley and in north Australia. Some of the issues are presented as dilemmas, partly because there are no clearcut answers to many questions that Aboriginal people ask

when assessing the desirability of involvement in the tourism industry and the potential economic (and socio-cultural) impacts of such involvement. Aborigines, like non-Aborigines, do not have an unambiguous position about involvement in tourism; the difference is that in the Aboriginal case such decisions are usually addressed at a community, rather than individual, level. Furthermore, a number of the issues are inter-dependent. In this concluding section brief examples will be used, based on field research undertaken in the Northern Territory from April to August 1986 and in November 1986.

### 1. Identifying and defining objectives.

It is extremely important that Aboriginal communities clarify to what extent aspirations for involvement in tourism development are about commercial, as distinct from socio-cultural, objectives. Commercial objectives include the desire for employment and/or income generation (in salaries, wages, profits or subsidised services) from tourism enterprises. Social objectives may include the desire to limit liquor outlets (as at the Turkey Creek roadhouse) and cultural objectives may include a desire to limit tourist trespass onto sites of significance. If Aboriginal groups and communities are seeking involvement in tourism enterprises as a means to control the activities of tourists then it is important that this is recognised from the outset (Dillon, 1987). It is becoming increasingly apparent that Aboriginal interests need to differentiate socio-cultural from commercial objectives otherwise they run the risk of fulfilling neither. Alternatively, if groups acknowledge divergent aims then policies can be devised that accommodate these.

It must be recognised that in the absence of property rights in land in the Kimberley region, the ownership of commercial ventures in the tourism industry provides Aboriginal interests with a legitimate means to control developments in the industry. However, it should also be recognised that there are other means to control unfettered tourism development. For example, Aboriginal people are in the majority in Halls Creek shire and there is no reason why this majority can not be reflected in membership of the Shire Council, thus providing a political means to control tourism.

It is equally important that Aboriginal interests differentiate ownership of tourism enterprises from management and employment in these enterprises. This is an issue that will be amplified below. When Aboriginal people seek direct involvement in the tourism industry, they should aim to take up opportunities where they have a distinct comparative advantage. This suggests that Aboriginal people should be involved in the provision of cultural tourism rather than in the provision of services in the hospitality industry in which they have had limited experience. However, this does not mean that Aboriginal interests cannot own such enterprises. For example, the Gagudju Association is outright owner of the Cooida Hotel in Kakadu National Park, but only a few Aboriginal people from the region work at the hotel (see Kesteven, 1987).

### 2. Information on the tourism industry.

There is an urgent need for Aboriginal communities in the East Kimberley to receive information about the economics of the tourism industry. Without such information, it is impossible for communities like Warmun to make rational decisions about objectives. There are features of the



industry that make it relatively unsuitable for Aboriginal community participation. This is particularly the case given the limited aspirations that Aborigines in remote communities like Warmun have for assimilation into the mainstream economy (see discussion that concluded Part One). The tourism industry is a service industry that is extremely demanding. Visitors require access to services on a regular, punctual and seven-days-a-week basis. In this industry the maxim that 'the customer is always right' is of paramount importance because visitation is often of a one-off nature and a bad experience is not excused by the customer.

Many of these features of the tourism industry make service delivery extremely difficult for non-Aborigines involved in the industry in north Australia; these problems are exacerbated for Aborigines for a number of reasons. Firstly, there are communications problems that are due to cultural differences as well as to a lack of a common language between many locals and visitors. This problem is exacerbated with clients from overseas who often speak little English, are from different cultures and have different demands from most Australians. Many white Australians involved in the industry in north Australia have difficulty interpreting, and providing for, these demands. For Aboriginal people who already have difficulty in communicating with people from southern Australia, this is an additional hurdle. Secondly, there is the fact that few Aborigines in remote regions either have an occupational background or formal training in the service industry. Thirdly, there are a range of cultural factors. For example, traditionally oriented Aborigines are frequently uncomfortable with total strangers, yet involvement in tourism requires daily and relentless social interaction with such people. This lack of comfort is frequently amplified in commercial interaction. Aborigines in the East Kimberley have only had a short involvement in the monetised (or market) economy; their experience has primarily been in handing money over to non-Aborigines (when paying for goods and services) rather than in receiving money.

Then there are the financial realities of involvement in tourism enterprises. Aboriginal people often feel that there are immense profits that can be accrued from involvement in tourism. But this is not the case. It is generally accepted in the industry that a lead time of three years is required before an enterprise can be regarded as financially established and before it will return net profits. (This is partly due to the long lead times required to brochure new enterprises). There are many non-Aboriginal people in north Australia who go bankrupt every year. These are usually small tour operators, but there are also instances in the Northern Territory of motel operators funded by the (now defunct) Northern Territory Development Corporation going into liquidation. It is important that Aborigines are provided with realistic information about the risks inherent in tourism enterprises; about the problems of seasonality; instability in financial returns; and the extent of returns on capital invested (see further discussion below about the commercial viability of enterprises).

Many of these issues are addressed here in general terms, but it is imperative that Aboriginal communities, like Warmun which is already involved in the industry, are provided with additional information. The Northern Territory Tourist Commission has produced a video called 'Tourism Awareness' and an associated information booklet that explain the benefits and problems associated with tourism (see Land Rights News, June 1987). Aboriginal communities in the East Kimberley should utilise this material

in order to be in a position to make informed decisions about involvement in the industry. There is also a strong case for a similar video to be produced (funded by the WA Tourism Commission) that deals specifically with Kimberley issues.

### 3. The proposed Bungle Bungle National Park.

The proposed development of the Bungle Bungle regeneration reserve as a national park is of concern to Aboriginal people at two quite different levels.

At one level, there is a group of traditional Aboriginal owners of the Bungle Bungle region who either reside within the proposed national park or have plans to establish outstations there. These people are concerned that in the absence of property (land) rights to the area, they are adequately consulted about developments that may impinge on their living areas or sites of religious and cultural significance. The Bungle Bungle Working Group (1984) took the interests of these traditional owners into account in their report. It seems likely that Aboriginal people residing within the proposed park will have a role in park management and policy formation.

People who will reside in the park are also concerned with a range of economic issues. In particular, they are interested in formal employment opportunities with the Department of Conservation and Land Management that will administer the park. There are also Aboriginal people residing in Halls Creek and Wyndham who are keen to have concessions for any commercial developments (particularly retail outlets, accommodation facilities and tours) that may become available. Finally, groups that plan to reside in the park are interested in establishing small cattle projects (either within the park or in the regeneration zone) and rights to utilise flora and fauna for subsistence.

Specific commercial opportunities that can be undertaken within the proposed park cannot be assessed until the Plan of Management is available. However, there does seem to be some analogy between the Wilderness Lodge proposed by Barrington Partners (1986) and developments within Kings Canyon in the Northern Territory (Altman, 1987c). The assessment of the Barrington Partners proposal undertaken above indicates that the financial viability of a Wilderness Lodge may be questionable. It is imperative that Aboriginal interests undertake an independent feasibility study prior to making any capital commitments to a Wilderness Lodge project. At Kings Canyon, Aboriginal groups residing at three living areas within the proposed Kings Canyon National Park have concessions to run horse trail and 'bush tucker' tours. These tours are not yet operating but have two positive features. Firstly, they are closely integrated with the Wilderness Lodge concept that emphasises the Aboriginal cultural component of Kings Canyon. The tours will be marketed by the management of the Lodge. Secondly, it is recognised that tours will be provided on a flexible basis and there is only small scale capital investment required to establish them. The joint venturers involved in the company Minga Tjuta (particularly the Central Land Council company Centrecorp and Bill King's Destination Australia Marketing) could provide invaluable advice to Aborigines with an interest in establishing enterprises in the Bungle Bungle.

At another level, the Warmun Community Council is concerned about proposed tourism developments within the Bungle Bungle area because it is the closest community to this region. Hence any developments in the national park that result in a growth of tourist visitation will have potential impacts on the community and on community enterprises like the Turkey Creek roadhouse. As noted earlier, a sub-set of the Warmun population has a direct interest in the proposed national park as traditional owners. It is generally believed that once access to the national park is improved and some minimal services are provided, these people will decentralise to live at communities within the park. Currently only Kawarra outstation has access to water (from a bore sunk in 1986), but even this community is not yet occupied on a year-round basis. It is not yet clear whether members of Warmun community who are not recognised traditional owners of the Bungle Bungle are interested in finding employment or taking part in business ventures within the national park.

It is perhaps worth emphasising that the Bungle Bungle and the proposed national park was a subject that was extremely topical during my short visit to Warmun. Indeed, Chris Burchett, the Aboriginal Liaison Manager of the NT Tourist Commission (who visited Kununurra and Warmun in August 1986) and I were asked specifically to discuss the commercial potential of Purnululu Safaris with Raymond Wallaby. It was our impression that Purnululu Safaris could not operate as a viable enterprise given the financial resources and support available to Raymond Wallaby (who is a pensioner), his lack of commercial skills and current market demand. We also concurred in the opinion that as a senior traditional owner for the Bungle Bungle, Raymond Wallaby was more concerned with controlling the utilisation of the region by unregulated commercial tours and private visitors than with making a living from being a tour guide. In short, it appeared to us (and he confirmed this) that his objectives were socio-cultural rather than economic. It is anticipated that consultation with Raymond Wallaby when the Plan of Management is compiled, and implemented, will result in the protection of many sites of significance that were unrestricted to visitors in 1986. It is also anticipated that he may have a role to play as a cultural adviser to the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

#### 4. The commercial viability of tourism enterprises

It is important that Aboriginal communities are provided with realistic assessments of the economic viability of enterprises (in the tourism sector and elsewhere). In the absence of alternative opportunities, tourism is increasingly being presented to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people of north Australia as the economic panacea. However, there are real limits to the income and employment spinoffs from tourism. This is a particularly pertinent issue for Aboriginal communities, because as will be explained below, they frequently invest in ventures at a community level. It is important then that the potential commercial profitability of enterprises is translated for communities into meaningful parameters, such as how many jobs will be provided and what income will accrue to community members.

Unfortunately, there are few examples of long term Aboriginal involvement in tourism enterprises which could provide comparative information. The Yalata community in South Australia owns a roadhouse on the Eyre Highway, but this enterprise has had limited employment and income spinoffs to the Aboriginal community. Certainly it is impossible

for the entire Yalata community to live off this one roadhouse. Similarly, the Mutitjulu community in Uluru National Park owns the Malpa Trading Company and Maruku Arts and Crafts. Both enterprises are profitable and successful (although Maruku requires an operating subsidy from the Aboriginal Arts Board). However, as has been illustrated elsewhere (Altman, 1987a and 1987b) these enterprises provide few employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and economic benefits that are primarily of an indirect nature. Finally, the Gagudju Association is sole and outright owner of the Cooina Hotel in Kakadu National Park. Over the past six years the association has invested in the region of \$5 million in this venture, yet to date this investment has earned minimal profits, well below the opportunity cost of the capital invested.

It is important to recognise that during their establishment phase, and possibly in the longer run, Aboriginal tourism enterprises will only supplement community incomes. It is perhaps most suitable for Aboriginal communities to regard enterprises as a means to provide some employment and to meet community-wide economic objectives. For example, the operating surpluses of Malpa Trading at Uluru are used to subsidise the cost of goods and services (at the community store and garage) to community members (see Altman, 1987a).

It is equally important that the experiences of remote Aboriginal communities in other commercial enterprises are considered when contemplating involvement in tourism enterprises. The history of Aboriginal involvement in pastoral stations over the past decade indicates that these enterprises have not been commercially successful for a variety of reasons. On the one hand this lack of success has resulted from commercial factors: stations purchased were often marginal and have subsequently been overpopulated, undercapitalised and, at times, poorly managed. Cattle prices have also been depressed. On the other hand, Aboriginal groups have frequently been unsure if they were pursuing social (access to a land base) or commercial (running a profitable enterprise) objectives. This issue has been mentioned above. It is increasingly being recognised that social objectives can be achieved as long as commercial viability is not jeopardised. Alternatively, without commercial viability, the means to achieve social aims are usually undermined. Similar constraints will apply to Aboriginal owned and operated tourism enterprises.

##### 5. The corporate structure of tourism enterprises

A critical issue that must be addressed by both Aboriginal communities and funding agencies (like the ADC, AEC, and DAA) relates to the corporate structure of Aboriginal enterprises. Funding for Aboriginal enterprises, whether as loans or grants, is invariably provided to incorporated Aboriginal communities or Aboriginal companies whose shareholders and office bearers are community members. There are numerous problems associated with communal ownership of businesses given the small scale of many Aboriginal enterprises. One structural problem is that there are too many potential beneficiaries. This situation results in a disincentive for those people directly involved in the business - they are frequently required to subsidise people who are not directly involved, but have a stake in an enterprise on the basis of traditional ownership, residential rights or other cultural bases.

There is misguided belief in Aboriginal affairs policy and practice that Aboriginal communities (that are usually very loosely defined in an incorporation constitution) are the appropriate corporate owners of Aboriginal businesses. This implies in part that the incentives required by businesses in the private sector in the major society are not required by Aboriginal businesses. It also ignores decision-making and other difficulties that arise when operating a 'communally-owned' enterprise. An additional problem associated with such widespread ownership of enterprises is that it often results in limited accountability and limited adherence to standard business practice. The issue of community, as distinct from family or individual, ownership of small businesses was raised in the Miller Report (1985).

The corporate structure of Aboriginal tourist enterprises, like the Turkey Creek roadhouse that is part-owned by the Warmun community, can be contrasted with white Australian ownership of small tourist businesses in north Australia. For whites, these businesses are usually family owned and owner-operated and managed. This results in an immediate correlation between work effort (that is extremely high in the hospitality industry, particularly during the dry season) and financial returns. As already noted, these returns frequently do not occur during an establishment period that extends over three years (on average). For white Australians, the financial returns from a successful small venture may not occur until the business is sold and capital gains and compensation for good will are realised. The direct correlation between profits, capital gains and returns for good will are rarely available to Aboriginal people who are involved in service industries.

One solution to this problem is for smaller groups, like family groups, to establish businesses. This strategy has been adopted in a number of instances in the Northern Territory. For example, the three small communities residing at living areas within Kings Canyon will each have their own tourism enterprise. Similarly, an outstation community (a family group) at Ipolera, near Gosse's Bluff, has set up an enterprise in association with Ansett Trailways in Alice Springs. Sam Lovell owns and operates a family tour business out of Derby in the West Kimberley. Small group businesses however, frequently have insufficient financial and human resources to run a viable operation. This was the case with the proposed Purnululu Safaris enterprise. The appropriate corporate size and structure will obviously vary between enterprises, but this does appear to be an issue that requires urgent consideration.

There are other considerations that need to be acknowledged when Aboriginal businesses are established. In particular, traditional rights to land (that may not be recognised in Australian common law) may influence rights to establish businesses. For example, groups that have traditional claim to the Bungle Bungle may receive priority in establishing businesses in the proposed national park. There may be a case for small groups to consider following the Kings Canyon model and establishing rights (from both park authorities and other Aboriginal people) to operate in different parts of the park. It is frequently felt that people can establish rights based on 'Aboriginal tradition'. While this is no doubt true, there is a case for articulating these rights in appropriate corporate structures to maintain the profitability of enterprises and incentives for participants. In the Bungle Bungle case it seems likely that groups will establish rights to establish businesses on the basis of widely recognised traditional and contemporary rights to the region. Conversely, groups without such rights may have only secondary

rights in the national park. This is an issue that may be addressed in the Plan of Management.

It was suggested earlier that the Turkey Creek roadhouse has an inappropriate corporate structure because Aboriginal residents of Warmun (who have a majority stake in the enterprise) are under-represented on the Board of Directors. Furthermore, it seems counter-productive for the community to own a community store that is in many ways in direct competition with the roadhouse. The roadhouse and store have different managers and different directors (in the case of the community store there is only a store committee as it is owned by Warmun Community Inc). It seems important that the Warmun community considers amalgamating these two businesses.

A final point is that Aboriginal corporations enjoy sales tax and, in some cases, income tax exemptions on the basis of being charitable institutions. When the financial viability of enterprises is assessed, it is important that the value of such concessions is not overlooked. This is of particular relevance if some sections of a community do not accrue benefits from community ownership of an enterprise, but lose concessions that have been granted on the basis of their relative poverty.

#### 6. Access to management and entrepreneurship

Aboriginal managers and entrepreneurs are particularly scarce human resources throughout the Kimberley. This is partly a function of Aboriginal culture that does not encourage individualism and material accumulation. It is also a consequence of limited Aboriginal experience in the private sector economy and limited access to formal educational opportunities. However, Aboriginal businesses need good managers, possibly to a greater extent than non-Aboriginal businesses, because of the difficulties under which many Aboriginal enterprises operate.

The obvious solution to this shortage is to hire high quality managers and entrepreneurs. However, for a number of reasons Aboriginal businesses frequently experience difficulties in attracting top level executives. Part of the problem is the physical isolation of many communities. A greater problem though is the lack of attractive remuneration packages offered to managers of Aboriginal businesses. Management is frequently provided with a salary only and no incentives to work for the success of the business. There may be a case to consider providing incentives (for example, in the form of a share of profits) to managers of Aboriginal businesses. Managers often face problems in operating Aboriginal businesses in accordance with sound commercial practices because of the obscurity in business objectives. Another complication is that managers frequently find themselves accountable to both Aboriginal owners of enterprises and to funding bodies (especially when they are government instrumentalities).

It was noted earlier that at times owners and managers of businesses pursue divergent objectives- this is not a problem that is limited to Aboriginal businesses. But it is a problem that is exacerbated with Aboriginal owned businesses, particularly in the tourism industry, where Aboriginal priorities may be socio-cultural rather than commercial. Under these circumstances, it is essential that management is sympathetic to Aboriginal requirements. It is equally important that managers spell out realistic business options and provide guidance in policy formation for

Aboriginal directors as a means to increase their understanding of the commercial world.

#### 7. The utilisation of scarce capital resources.

Because of their poverty, Aboriginal communities and groups have extremely limited capital resources to invest in businesses. This situation is alleviated to some extent by the availability of 'soft' loans from bodies like the ADC. The issue of how Aborigines should utilise funds at their disposal is closely linked to the issue of objectives- if groups want financial returns from their capital then there may be sounder investments than roadhouses or tour companies. On the other hand, if groups want to invest for social and cultural reasons and to provide economic opportunities to future generations then tourism enterprises may be suitable.

The issue of utilisation of scarce capital is particularly pertinent for Warmun and other communities in the East Kimberley, as they have access to large sums of relatively discretionary capital from the Argyle Diamond Mine. Currently, the financial policies of both the ASIG Scheme and GNP do not allow for capital accumulation. Aboriginal beneficiaries of these schemes are required to expend their allocations on goods of a capital nature. At present, it is tempting to invest these moneys in tourism ventures (like the Turkey Creek roadhouse) because it is the only means available to communities to invest these moneys. The operations of the ASIG Scheme and GNP is a separate issue that will be investigated elsewhere (see Altman and Ross, forthcoming). However, it should be noted that these 'compensatory' schemes should provide Aboriginal communities with the option of saving and investing their allocations. It is only in this way that groups will be able to realistically assess the opportunity cost of investing their compensation funds in regional tourism enterprises.

#### 8. The supply of cultural tourism

It was noted earlier that while Aboriginal communities may have a locational advantage in the provision of services to tourists, their true comparative advantage is in the provision of Aboriginal culture. It was also noted that there is little clear indication in the Kimberley of the level of tourist demand for Aboriginal culture. This of course begs an important issue: Aborigines can influence the current level of demand by both advertising cultural products and by providing high quality products for the tourist trade.

The critical question is just what 'cultural tourism', in the Kimberley context, is and what Aboriginal communities are willing and able to supply. Potential cultural tourism products include Aboriginal artefacts and Aboriginal cultural and interpretative displays (at cultural centres). Aboriginal-led interpretative tours and talks that deal with a range of subjects that can include the Aboriginal way of life (traditionally and today), environmental issues (including identification of flora and fauna) and subsistence (the utilisation of these resources). Rock art and material culture (subjects and meanings), description of unrestricted Aboriginal mythology and the performance of ceremonial dances could also be regarded as cultural tourism. (See Altman (1987b) for a discussion of the demand and supply of cultural tourism in the Uluru National Park context).

The full range of possibilities available to Aboriginal communities or individuals who want to supply cultural tourism cannot be comprehensively canvassed here. The focus will be on some opportunities available to members of the Warmun community.

As noted in Part One, a number of artists at Warmun are already supplying artefacts for sale both in the East Kimberley and elsewhere. It seems likely that when the Waringarri outlet in Kununurra is completed in August 1987, there will be an increased demand for artefacts. This increased demand may mobilise other individuals with the requisite skills to manufacture artefacts to participate more regularly in production. There is also a possibility that Warmun producers may wish to sell artefacts at the Turkey Creek roadhouse. The main problem with such direct marketing is that there is no community craft advisor (at Warmun) to assist with marketing, to provide quality control and to price artefacts for sale. Such work is specialised and cannot be undertaken by untrained people. One potential problem in the production of artefacts is that the tourist industry invariably makes demands that artefacts are modified to suit the requirements of tourists. This is a problem that artefact producers at Uluru have frequently faced. It is important that the cultural integrity of artefacts is maintained to ensure that the comparative advantage of Aboriginal producers is protected and that production of artefacts for market exchange does not result in the 'commoditisation' of Aboriginal culture.

The main possibilities for Aboriginal participation in interpretative tours will be within the Bungle Bungle. While some Aboriginal people in north Australia are operating as independent tour guides, it is more common for Aborigines undertaking this role to be employed as rangers by park authorities. However, as Kesteven (1987) and I (Altman, 1987b) have noted there is a shortage of Aboriginal people who seek work that requires continuous social interaction with strangers. It seems likely that the provision of interpretative tours in the East Kimberley context will occur in conjunction with the State parks body, the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

The other possibility for Warmun is to provide cultural tourism in the controlled environment of a cultural centre. It was noted earlier that Barrington Partners (1986) propose the establishment of such a centre at Kununurra or Derby. These locations would provide limited opportunities for direct involvement by Warmun community members. Another possibility for Warmun is to establish a cultural centre either at the Turkey Creek roadhouse or in the more public (non-residential) part of Warmun. The latter option was discussed with some community members in August 1986 who generally disapproved of the idea of opening the community to the passing tourist trade. The proviso that should be made here is centres (both in Australia and overseas) are not financially attractive enterprises, unless they are linked to active marketing of artefacts. It is also likely that there is a real limit to the number of such centres that the market will bear. The establishment of a centre in Kununurra could undermine the financial viability of a centre at Warmun. There has been much discussion about establishing Aboriginal cultural centres in Kakadu National Park, Katherine National Park and Uluru National Park since 1982. To date, no cultural centre with interpretative, historical and contemporary displays has been established.



There is obviously a need for further research in the Kimberley to determine the current success of outlets selling Aboriginal artefacts; to establish what tourists want; to assess what Aboriginal people are willing to supply; and to identify areas where this supply can be marketed. It should be noted that the supply of cultural tourism, like any other service or commodity in the tourist industry, must meet the rigorous standards set by this industry. Tourism is a ruthless business because the client is frequently a once-only customer who requires satisfaction from the outset. The comparative advantage enjoyed by Aborigines in the provision of cultural tourism could be eroded if the product is not marketed in an acceptable manner.

#### 9. Direct and indirect involvement in tourism

In considering the options available in the tourist industry, it may assist Aboriginal communities like Warmun to differentiate between 'direct' and 'indirect' involvement in tourism (Aspelin, 1977).

Direct tourism is a fairly straightforward concept- it involves people in direct interaction with tourists, either as employees or as owner-operators of tourist enterprises. It was noted earlier that many Aborigines in remote parts of Australia do not enjoy working in an environment that requires direct social interaction with strangers. However, there are also examples of Aboriginal people who do enjoy such work, particularly when it is undertaken in a physical environment that is familiar to them. Three examples are some of the rangers who work for the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service (ANPWS) at Kakadu and Uluru National Park and take part in interpretative work; some of the artists and artisans who produce artefacts for Maruku Arts and Crafts at Uluru, and who seek employment selling these items directly to tourists and demonstrating their manufacture; and individuals like the Lovells in Derby, the Aldersons at Kakadu and the Malbankas at Ipolera who have interpretative ventures. While these examples are the exceptions, there is a possibility that in the future Aboriginal people may participate more fully in explaining their culture to non-Aboriginal tourists. This would certainly be preferable to non-Aboriginal tour guides explaining (and at times, misrepresenting) Aboriginal culture to tourists.

In contrast to direct tourism, indirect tourism can have two quite different meanings. Indirect tourism may involve the production of goods and services that do not require a direct interaction between producers and consumers. For example, people can manufacture artefacts at Warmun; the sale of these items at the Kununurra outlet of Waringarri Arts and Crafts, or wholesale to Perth or inter-state galleries, does not require the producers' assistance. Similarly, environmental or construction work that may arise in the Bungle Bungle as the national park is developed could be undertaken by Aboriginal people without direct contact with tourists. The benefit of this form of involvement in tourism is that people can gain economic benefits from the industry without experiencing any social costs.

Indirect tourism can also result from Aboriginal investment in enterprises in the tourist industry. Examples of such investment are increasingly common in north Australia. As has been emphasised throughout this concluding section, such enterprises can be managed and operated by non-Aboriginal specialists. Similarly, the returns from such investments can be social as well as financial. Aboriginal communities are

increasingly recognising that it is only through ownership of tourist enterprises that the objectives and practices of these businesses (that frequently have a social impact on adjacent Aboriginal communities) can be influenced. While in the Northern Territory Aboriginal groups have tended to invest at locations (usually on Aboriginal-owned land) where they have commercial concessions, in the Kimberley Aboriginal groups will need to purchase or establish tourist ventures on the open market in competition with white business interests. Concessions may be granted to Aboriginal groups in areas like the Bungle Bungle national park.

#### 10. Tourism growth, reduced dependence and economic development.

To end this working paper, the inter-relationships between tourism growth, reduced dependence and economic development are briefly investigated. In the discussion that concluded Part One, it was suggested that the economic aspirations of members of remote Aboriginal communities like Warmun may be markedly different from the Australian norm. These differences are partly due to structural factors: remote communities, like Warmun, are located in areas devoid of mainstream economic opportunities. Such a shortage of opportunities is exacerbated further by the low formal economic status of community members, as shown by a range of current social indicators that include employment, income, educational and housing statuses. It was suggested that while the arrival of the welfare economy at Warmun has insulated residents from extreme poverty, it has also resulted in a high economic dependence on the state.

At another level, a range of cultural factors have combined to dampen the relative poverty of Aboriginal people as they perceive it. These factors include access to subsistence foods, different expenditure patterns, low material aspirations and a realisation that participation in the mainstream economy could undermine the family and community ties that are an integral part of contemporary Aboriginal society. These factors were summarised in an ongoing dilemma termed 'the ethnic trap'. Aboriginal people recognise (often at an ideological level) that the maintenance of their culture can frequently be incompatible with economic incorporation and advancement. Recently, I have argued that for many Aboriginal people self-determination and government economic policies (to reduce economic dependence and increase economic status) may be incompatible (Altman, 1987d).

Tourism growth and increased direct Aboriginal participation in the industry is often seen by policy makers and bureaucrats as a means to reduce Aboriginal dependence on welfare and program funding (see Miller, 1985; Kennedy, 1987). However, there are already indications from situations where Aborigines are involved in tourism that this involvement will not radically alter people's economic relations with the state. This is primarily because the industry in remote regions is just not significant enough to replace the state's subvention of Aboriginal communities. Hence the bulk of household income at locations like Kakadu and Uluru continues to come from social security entitlements or from employment in program funded positions.

There are also indications that involvement in tourism will not radically improve people's economic status. At locations like Kakadu and Uluru National Park where Aboriginal people own tourism enterprises, and where tourist visitation is high, the income spinoffs from these businesses are limited. This is again linked to the scale of the industry

and to the fact that these enterprises do not create sufficient employment opportunities or generate enough profits to markedly alter community-wide income levels.

Under these circumstances, it may be preferable to regard tourism as a means to reduce overall dependence on the state by allowing some generation of supplementary income. In particular, involvement in indirect tourism (like the production of artefacts for sale) may allow Aboriginal individuals and households to increase income levels without foregoing the highly valued economic autonomy provided by welfare payments. The capacity of such production for market exchange to improve economic status would be enhanced if suitable programs (like CDEP) that are not income tested were available and if marketing arrangements, both locally (to tourists) and elsewhere, were streamlined. The establishment of cultural centres may assist the marketing of artefacts.

Ultimately, it must be recognised that the tourist industry is not going to provide a rapid solution to what is often termed Aboriginal underdevelopment. It is important to acknowledge that the comparative advantage that Aboriginal people enjoy is in the strength of their distinct culture. It will take time for groups and communities to devise strategies to market this 'product' if they choose to do so. At present there is no danger that 'Aboriginal culture' will disappear, but if groups are pressured to market their culture in an inappropriate manner this situation could change rapidly. The emphasis that Aboriginal communities in the East Kimberley and in the Northern Territory place on socio-cultural, rather than commercial, objectives demonstrates that they recognise this danger and that their priorities differ from those of policy makers.

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**ATTACHMENT 1  
EAST KIMBERLEY WORKING PAPERS 1985-87**

- 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  
ISBN 0 86740 182 6  
ISSN 0816-6323
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Dr W. Christensen  
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- 1985/4 Pastoral Resource Use in the Kimberley : A Critical Overview.  
M.C. Dillon  
East Kimberley Working Paper No.4  
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- 1985/5 Preliminary Report : Ethnobotany in the Bungles.  
Dr Deborah Bird Rose  
East Kimberley Working Paper No.5  
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ISSN 0816-6323
- 1985/6 A Preliminary Account of the Ethnobotany of the Kija People of Bungle Bungle Outcamp.  
N.H. Scarlett  
East Kimberley Working Paper No.6  
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- 1985/7 An Aboriginal Economic Base : Strategies for Remote Communities. Extracts from the Report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs.  
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ISBN 0 86740 190 7  
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1985/8 A Preliminary Indication of Some Effects of the Argyle Diamond Mine on Aboriginal Communities in the Region : A Report to the Kimberley Land Council and the National Aboriginal Conference.  
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M.C. Dillon  
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Stan Stevens  
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- 1986/11 An Assessment of the Social Impact of Argyle Diamond Mines on  
the East Kimberley Region.  
Frank Donovan  
East Kimberley Working Paper No.11  
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ISSN 0816-6323
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Perspective.  
Michael Gracey and Randolph M. Spargo  
East Kimberley Working Paper No.12  
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ISSN 0816-6323
- 1987/13 Annotated Bibliography on Tourism and Aorigines. Prepared for  
the East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project and the Central  
Land Council.  
Compiled by Ian White  
East Kimberley Working Paper No.13  
ISBN 0 86740 X  
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1987/14 Aborigines in the Tourist Industry.  
Sue Kesteven  
Aborigines and Tourism in North Australia: Some Suggested  
Research Approaches.  
M.C. Dillon  
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ISBN 0 86740 276 8  
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Aboriginal Developments on Aboriginal Land.  
Sue Kesteven  
East Kimberley Working Paper No.15  
ISBN 0 86740 277 6  
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- 1987/16 Conservation Priorities in North-Western Australia.  
Richard J-P. Davies  
East Kimberley Working Paper No.16  
ISBN 0 86740 282 2  
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- 1987/17 Social Impact Assessment Bibliography  
Compiled by Donna Craig  
East Kimberley Working Paper No.16  
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