

East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project

ABORIGINAL CATTLE STATIONS IN THE
EAST KIMBERLEY: COMMUNITIES
OR ENTERPRISES

Elsbeth Young*

East Kimberley Working Paper No. 21
ISBN 0 86740 324 1
ISSN 0816-6323

A Joint Project Of The:

Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies
Australian National University

Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies

Anthropology Department
University of Western Australia

Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia



The aims of the project are as follows:

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

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

Address correspondence to:

The Executive Officer
East Kimberley Project
CRES, ANU
GPO Box 4
Canberra City, ACT 2601

ABORIGINAL CATTLE STATIONS IN THE
EAST KIMBERLEY: COMMUNITIES
OR ENTERPRISES

Elsbeth Young*

East Kimberley Working Paper No. 21
ISBN 0 86740 324 1
ISSN 0816-6323

* Department of Geography and Oceanography, University College,
University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy,
Canberra.

April 1988.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
The Problem	1
Land	2
Land Purchase	2
Land Tenure	4
Land as a Resource Base	7
Community	9
Population	9
Social Structure	10
History of non-Aboriginal Contact	12
The Enterprise	13
Management	13
Funding	15
Profitability	18
 CATTLE STATIONS IN THE EAST KIMBERLEY	 20
 DOON DOON	 20
Physical Environment	20
History	21
Ownership and Purchase	21
Earlier Operation of the Business	24
The Community	26
Population	26
Social Structure	27
Infrastructure	29
Services	30
The Enterprise	32
Operation	32
Employment	36
Management	37
Funding	40
 GLEN HILL	 43
Physical Environment	43
History	43
The Community	44
Population	44
Social Structure	45
Infrastructure and Services	45
Employment and Business	47

BOW RIVER	50
Physical Environment	50
History	52
Purchase of the Lease	52
Operation of the Business	54
The Community	55
Population and Social Structure	55
Infrastructure	57
Services	58
The Enterprise	59
Operation of the Business	59
Funding	61
BAULU-WAH (VIOLET VALLEY)	64
CATTLE STATION COMMUNITIES OR ENTERPRISES: CONFLICT AND COMPROMISE	66
Land	67
The Community	68
The Enterprise	70
COMMUNITIES OR ENTERPRISES - SOME PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	74
Community Level Recommendations	74
Recommendations concerning External Agencies	75
Land	75
Funding	76
REFERENCES	77

Abstract

This study examines socio-economic issues affecting communities on Aboriginal-owned pastoral properties. After considering existing evidence under the general themes of land, community and enterprise it focusses on case-studies from the East Kimberleys - Doon Doon, Bow River, Glen Hill and Violet Valley. These highlight a number of problems which have affected both the commercial performance of the properties, and the maintenance of social and cultural stability among their residents.

The economic viability of these stations has been beset by physical problems. Their purchase prices were low because they are in marginal country, isolated with rugged terrain; and they had poorly maintained cattle herds and few improvements at the time of purchase. Overstocking by previous non-Aboriginal owners led to severe soil degradation and a decline in the pastoral potential of the land. For these properties to be commercially viable the Aboriginal owners would have needed immediate and large levels of investment. Such investment was rarely forthcoming. These stations currently receive funds from two main sources; the Aboriginal Development Commission and, through the Good Neighbour Programme/Argyle Social Impact Group, Argyle Diamond Mines. Funds granted by the former are specifically for enterprise maintenance and development, while in the latter case, although other more social needs can be met, funds must be used for the purchase of capital equipment and not for maintenance. In both cases the commercial development of the stations is stressed.

However the residents of these stations also have community and social needs, which not only affect the commercial performance of the cattle enterprise but also have to be met if people are to have a satisfactory lifestyle. These include specifically Aboriginal needs, such as maintenance of customary practices and subsistence, but also needs such as health, education and housing. Many people perceive these aspects to be more important than the commercial viability of the station. To them station ownership is valuable for social and religious reasons as well as providing an opportunity to generate some degree of economic self-sufficiency. Support for these elements is less readily available. The resultant conflict between social and economic priorities must be resolved if these cattle station groups are to achieve what they really want.

Acknowledgements

Fieldwork in the Kimberleys was funded by the University of New South Wales. I received advice and assistance from many people both in the Kimberleys and elsewhere. These included Pudden and Lorna Brockman, Tiger Moore and others from Doon Doon; Joe Thomas, Timmy Timms and their families from Bow River; Sandy Thomas from Violet Valley; and John Toby and his family from Glen Hill. Others from Warmun and Bow River who helped included Vin Hindmarsh, Fred Spring and Charlie Buckley. In Kununurra Ian Kirkby, Steve Irvine, Reg Cox, Alex Granville and Milton Newman all contributed; and others who provided valuable information and insights include Howard Patrick (ADC, Canberra) and Colin Thackrah (AAPA' Perth). My colleagues in the project, Nugget Coombs, Nancy Williams, Helen Ross, have all contributed much through discussion, and I am very grateful to Paul Ballard for drawing the maps.

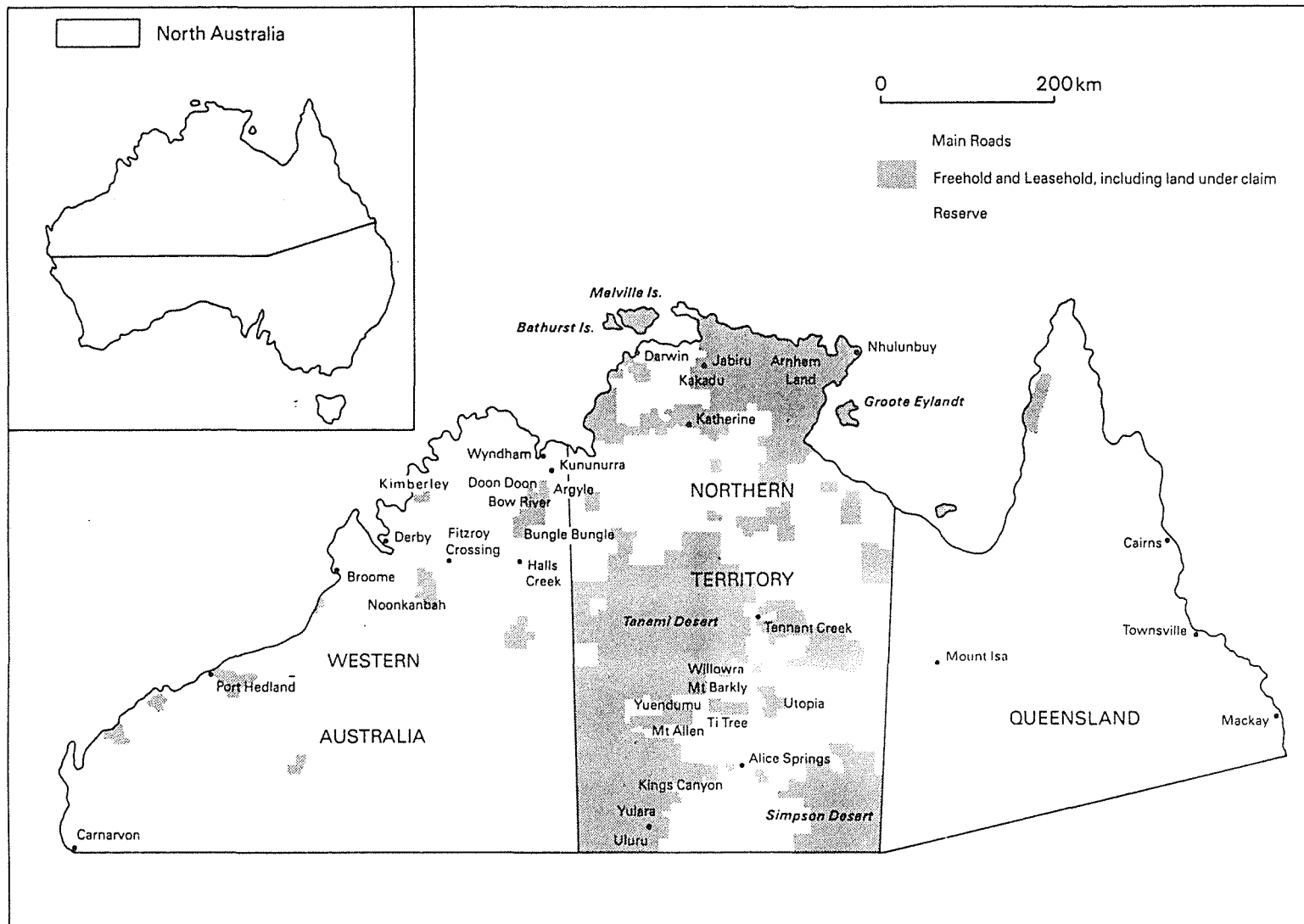


FIGURE 1: ABORIGINAL LAND AND SETTLEMENTS IN NORTH AUSTRALIA

The Problem

Land purchase has figured prominently among the many measures designed to promote policies of self-determination and self-management for Aborigines. But its role in that context has rarely been clearly defined. Definitions change according to perspective, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. In the non-Aboriginal sense land purchase supports self-management primarily through economic development, by giving Aboriginal groups a resource base which can be exploited to provide financial gains. But in the Aboriginal sense land purchase can be viewed on a social as well as economic basis. Tenure of the land under Aboriginal law, a right which Aborigines believe was never legally surrendered even when they were chased away from their territory by non-Aboriginal settlers, gives people the essential meaning of life, the country of their ancestors. This is not only of great religious significance to them, but also provides the basis for the social and cultural integrity of their group. When they are also granted such tenure under non-Aboriginal law these rights are fully recognised by all. While economic factors, including the value of the land's resources in monetary or subsistence terms, may well be appreciated and realised, these social values may well remain paramount. A further consideration is that by obtaining tenure to the land it is possible for Aboriginal groups to receive funding for basic amenities such as housing, permanent water supplies and power, and services such as schools and clinics, all of which go far towards enhancing the quality of life. Such amenities and services play an obvious social role and, through employment generated in their construction and maintenance, also have an economic role.

These perspectives on land mean that its acquisition and subsequent use pose many questions which raise dilemmas for both Aborigines and non-Aboriginal administrators. These dilemmas are particularly important in the case of pastoral properties purchased through government funding for Aboriginal use. This study examines these problems, focussing specifically on the situation of Aboriginal-owned cattle stations in the East Kimberley region of Western Australia. Three general factors

affecting the development of these stations and their communities are considered:

- a) factors relating to the land, its tenure, its purchase and its well-being as a pastoral resource base;
- b) factors relating to the community, its social structure and history of non-Aboriginal contact;
- c) factors relating to the pastoral enterprise, its profitability as a business, its management and its funding.

Although separately distinguished these factors overlap, and it is this overlap, it is argued, which is the main cause of confusion over responsibility of different support organisations for the cattle station communities as entities. In particular, while the second factor can be termed primarily social, and the third primarily economic, the first, the land, has both social and economic components and is the basis which fuses the other two together. After a general discussion of these factors, in which evidence is drawn from earlier studies of Aboriginal cattle stations in other parts of northern Australia, this report focusses on the socio-economic situation in four East Kimberley communities - Doon Doon, Glen Hill, Bow River and Violet Valley . It concludes with a reconsideration of the operation of these factors and makes some recommendations about changes which would assist the solution of some of the problems.

Land

Land Purchase

The purchase of land for Aboriginal groups dates mainly from the period following the election of the Whitlam Labor government in 1972. Immediately following that election two purchases on which decisions had been long awaited were completed - that of Pantijan station in the West Kimberley, for people living on the Mowanjum Mission near Derby; and that of Willowra, on the eastern edge of the Tanami Desert in the northern Territory, for the resident community on the station. Both purchases were based primarily on the social needs of Aboriginal groups claiming strong traditional attachment to the land. By 1974, following the Woodward Commission reports on the land needs of Northern Territory Aborigines, the Commonwealth agreed to establish an Aboriginal Land Fund

Commission (ALFC) to purchase land for Aborigines in all parts of Australia and the ALFC Act was passed in that year. The Land Fund Commission itself, with a majority of Aborigines among its commissioners, began to function in 1975. It received a flood of requests from Aboriginal groups in all states and, lacking the necessary funds to meet more than a small number of these claims, set certain priorities for purchase. These included the following:

- a) Land to which the applicants had a proven traditional claim and which would apparently offer them some economic advantage
- b) Land to which a traditional claim could be established, on the assumption that when those involved in the claim began to live on the land an economic base would develop
- c) Land purchased primarily on the basis of economic need

Purchases included large pastoral properties, one of which, Doon Doon (then Dunham River Station) forms one of the case-studies considered here; and small areas of land in many different environments including the periphery of small towns in New South Wales, town blocks and other regions in which Aborigines had an interest. Following purchase the ALFC carried no further responsibility for the cattle station communities or their businesses, leaving that to come under the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) or appropriate state departments. These took responsibility for funds for housing, power supplies and essential services and, where necessary, for the support of the enterprise, including manager's salaries, pastoral extension programs, training programs for Aboriginal pastoralists and the maintenance of improvements and infrastructure sufficient to allow the business to operate according to community and/or government wishes.

This system ceased in 1980 with the establishment of the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC), a new body which took over the functions of ALFC, the Aboriginal Loans Commission and the enterprise section of DAA. ADC's charter under Section 8 of its Act (1980) is 'to further the economic and social development of Aborigines'. It is administered by an all-Aboriginal Council consisting of ten commissioners appointed to represent broad regional interests. The ADC's role, by virtue of its origins, is considerably broader than that of the ALFC, and includes briefs:

- a) to assist communities and groups of Aborigines to acquire land

- b) to assist Aborigines to engage in business enterprises
- c) to assist Aborigines to obtain finance for housing and for other personal needs, and to provide such finance
- d) to assist in the training of Aborigines in relation to matters related to the functions of the Commission
- e) to administer and control the Capital Account

In effect, if the ADC purchases land it may also be expected to fund housing for those who live there and to support the economic development of that land. While, because of different funding arrangements at different times and in different states, it may not always fulfil all these roles the possibility is there. It seems to be a major source of conflict. ADC's funds come from two sources, the Capital Fund, which provides capital for investment so that the Commission may eventually become financially independent; and the General Fund, consisting largely of annual government allocations and the earnings from Capital Fund investments. The latter provides all the resources for grants and loans for land purchase, enterprise development and housing. If land is purchased and then fails to provide an economic base that fund is drained. As a result ADC's land purchase role has become focussed more and more strongly on economic worth, the commercial viability of the enterprises established on it. Social values of land acquisition have faded into the background. Since ADC was formed (1980-86) land purchase has accounted for \$12 million, only four per cent of its total expenditure. In the same period enterprise support has accounted for approximately 17 per cent. In the past two years (1985-87) ADC has purchased no land.

Land Tenure

Land tenure is a vital factor in assessing the situation of Aboriginal cattle station communities. It varies between states, and also through time. In the Northern Territory, although properties were originally purchased as pastoral leases, all groups have subsequently lodged claims to have the land declared as Aboriginal Freehold title under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NT) 1976, and some, such as Utopia, Willowra, Daguragu and Mt Barkly, have now been granted such claims. This both makes the land inalienable and also means that lease covenants, specifying levels of stocking, improvements etc., no longer have to be upheld. This means that

the Aboriginal owners are free to use the land for whatever purpose they wish, either to continue running cattle as a commercial enterprise, or to introduce other forms of commercial land use, or merely to live on the land and use whatever subsistence resources it offers. It must also be stressed that it effectively removes the land from the marketplace, making it ineligible for sale and therefore impossible to use as security for raising financial loans through mortgage. In addition, under the present conditions of the Act, Aborigines have the right to veto exploration on their land, and hence to safeguard against mining. Although under 1987 amendments to the Act permission to carry out exploration is now judged to be permission for subsequent mining, the prime right of veto remains. All those factors have caused major concern with the Northern Territory government who talk about productive land going out of commercial use, and the fact that since there is no guarantee that the economic base will be maintained on Aboriginal stations, welfare dependency may in effect increase.

In Western Australia the land tenure situation is somewhat different. Pastoral leases such as those of Doon Doon and Bow River run under their current covenants until the year 2015 and will then have to be renegotiated. This means that all have obligations to meet in terms of stocking and improvements. And there is no assurance for the future as far as the Aboriginal communities on these cattle stations are concerned. The Western Australian government is therefore proposing a system whereby the area where people live is excised as a special purpose lease, giving the community a living area on a 99 year basis. The rest of the land would then remain under the pastoral title, thus allowing it to be forfeited, or sold if necessary. Sale negotiations might of course be much more difficult if one or more areas, which could well include the central homestead, had already been excised. This proposal is seen as politically much more acceptable than converting a pastoral lease to the same 99 year title now being offered on reserves and for excisions. For the current Western Australian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, also the representative of the East Kimberley region, to allow pastoral leases to be converted and renege on their covenants would be politically unwise.

Thus, at the present time, Aboriginal cattle stations in the Kimberleys

have to meet their covenants. This situation may change in the future. Two recent reports (Department of Regional Development and the North West, 1985; Department of Premier and Cabinet, 1986) have considered the problems and future of the Kimberley pastoral industry and pastoral land tenure respectively. In the latter report options considered included perpetual leases, with or without provisions taking into account the current state of the land or management of the enterprise; freehold title; and continuous 'rolling' pastoral leases. While no definite option was recommended, the study group did discard the concept of freehold title, seeing this as granting perpetual control over land to only relatively few companies and individuals, and thus failing to ensure that it is properly cared for. But at the same time the group stated that the new system should allow continuous use, and include improved conditions for security, compensation for resumption of land, and should allow future changes of land use even within existing covenants. This last provision could give the Aboriginal cattle stations some flexibility in the use of their land even before their current leases expire in 2015.

The former study identified lack of secure tenure as a major inhibitor to investment and hence improvement of pastoral land in the Kimberleys, and recommended a complete land use study of the area, to examine and reassess pastoral capacity. Areas then identified as of high potential should be given greater security of tenure; the remaining land should be granted as grazing licences. It envisaged possible restructuring of leases to ensure maximum commercial viability. The land use study here recommended is currently underway and as yet no decisions have been made. Decisions over the redistribution of land in the former West Kimberley Emanuel properties, now held by the government EXIM corporation, and on two of the former ALCO stations are now being finalised. The agreement states that at least 25 per cent of this land should be allocated to Aboriginal groups, and the areas chosen are Bohemia Downs, on the watershed of the Fitzroy and Ord systems; and part of GoGo station (Mt Pierce), in the Fitzroy Valley. While such redistribution will go some way towards catering for the land needs of Kimberley Aborigines the concern over co-ordinating appropriate land use with acceptable tenure remains. Clearly the land use and tenure studies are interdependent and it seems a pity that the project considering alternative forms of land tenure

occurred before the land use proposals recommended in the other study could be finalised. At present, without decisions on either set of recommendations, it is unclear what options may be open for land tenure for Aboriginal pastoralists. But it seems likely that present conditions will change, making the year 2015 less important as a turning point, and that conditions regarding lease covenants may become less restrictive. These could then be extended to include alternative forms of land use.

Land as a Resource Base

With the limited funds available to the ALFC, and later the ADC, it is scarcely surprising that the pastoral leases purchased for Aborigines were in general cheap. They were cheap for a number of reasons; because the land lay on the margins of that area considered viable for pastoral activity; because they were physically isolated, and included rugged and inaccessible terrain; because the cattle herd had not been properly monitored or maintained; and because improvements such as fences, bores and tanks, station roads, outhouses and living quarters were in a sorry state of repair. This means that in many cases Aborigines acquired properties which would have needed vast levels of investment if they were to function as profitable enterprises. Such investment was almost non-existent. Evidence for such situations comes from different parts of the country. Pantijan station, situated in a part of the West Kimberleys so remote that access is difficult even during the dry season; Chilla Well, not really a pastoral lease but rather a holding paddock where the previous owner had periodically grazed his stock while in transit across the Tanami Desert from Halls Creek to Alice Springs. These two 'stations' had tin sheds for homesteads and virtually no improvements. Willowra, a property in good heart at the time of purchase, lies on the extreme western edge of Central Australian pastoral land and does not even have a boundary fence separating it from the wastes of the Tanami Desert to the west. Although it could on average be expected to carry about 6000 beasts its capacity in drought times was no more than 1000 and it then provided a very meagre income. And Ti Tree, part of which includes land assessed as having some of the most useful ground water supplies in the whole of the Central Australian region, was, at the time of its purchase in 1976, described as thoroughly run-down.

'The cattle ... would give the impression that the herd is only an average to poor (one) by Central Australian standards ... The main trucking yard is just not useable ... The homestead yard is not worth having. The station is in default of its covenant, requiring two more bores to be sunk...' (DAA 77/166).

In addition to vulnerability resulting from rainfall unpredictability, many Aboriginal stations included areas of extremely rugged terrain where access, except on horseback, was almost impossible. Such country might have been useable for extensive grazing under earlier pastoral husbandry, when stockworkers camped out with their herds for weeks on end, 'shepherding' them in ways more common with sheep or goats. But, with an industry based on vehicles, helicopters, fuel and other items of capital equipment, such methods have become obsolete. In the East Kimberley many properties today make very limited use of their back country. In examining old station maps of the region it is interesting to see that in the past there were a considerable number of separate back country properties, mostly of which have now been amalgamated with others. Two of these, Speewah and Greenvale, formed part of the Aboriginal stations here discussed - Doon Doon and Bow River respectively. The abandonment of these remoter areas, too small to be viable on their own, has almost certainly contributed to land degradation elsewhere, because overgrazing has occurred on regions more easily reached.

Another factor to be considered is the extent of general land degradation, brought about through overgrazing. This has received little comment in surveys conducted before purchase by the ALFC or the ADC. And contemporary studies to develop future plans for individual properties also virtually ignore the issue. Yet, as Ledger (1986a) has pointed out, the signs of soil erosion and of spinifex invasion of once productive pastures are all too obvious, both on non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal properties. Such signs are not confined only to acknowledged problem areas such as the Victoria River region, but can also be seen in the Alice Springs area. They are very clear in the Kimberleys. As Fig. 1 shows, the pastoral potential of the East Kimberley is generally low, and on the Aboriginal properties hardly any land is classified as being of high value.

Recognition of these problems of land as a resource base makes it even more important to take into consideration alternative forms of land use which Aboriginal owners may see as attractive. Land abandoned for pastoral purposes then begins to recover. Natural food resources such as wild yams or solanum regenerate in areas from which they have been eradicated by the hooves of cattle, and Aborigines can begin to gain more of their sustenance from subsistence. Utopia station in Central Australia, where Aborigines showed little or no interest in maintaining the cattle operations, and where the land appeared to have suffered from years of overgrazing by the time of purchase in 1976, now provides bushtucker and game which is avidly sought by residents of the outstations established within the boundaries of the former lease. Mt Barkly, to the west, has similarly proved to offer good subsistence resources. As has been suggested elsewhere, a combination of such forms of land use along with cattle husbandry on a scale seen as appropriate by Aboriginal pastoralists may offer a good compromise, effectively allowing the kind of land and resource conservation which was formerly practised in the Aboriginal economy (Young, forthcoming). Unfortunately, before such approaches can be adopted in the Kimberleys, the changes in land tenure already referred to would have to be enforced. Otherwise Kimberley Aboriginal pastoralists will have to maintain the status quo, and use their leases to graze cattle.

Community

Population

Cattle properties purchased for Aborigines have had various population groupings with different characteristics, dependent on historical factors which in the past caused displacement and dispersal of human settlement. The main Aboriginal stations in Central Australia, such as Willowra, Ti Tree or Utopia, have all had substantial Aboriginal resident groups. Many of these residents have claimed traditional attachment to the land, and the older people recount tales of living semi-nomadic lives in these areas before non-Aboriginal settlement was established. Since purchase, the populations on all these properties have been augmented by immigration of relatives who, although holding responsibility for the area in a ritualistic sense, have been living elsewhere. Altogether cattle station groups in this

region are now large, ranging from 100 to over 500, and have a high proportion of children and a balanced gender ratio. The large size of these groups has some advantages in employment terms, ensuring that there will always be sufficient young men to support the stock-camp and at the same time allowing for continual turnover in individual labour participation so that people can make the choice between wage jobs and other activities. It is, however, seen as a grave disadvantage in some quarters such as the ADC who cite the large population groups as a factor undermining the commercial viability of the cattle enterprise (McPherson, 1987). Such a concern highlights the continuing conflict between the roles of community and business, the social and economic functions of the situation.

Not all cattle station groups have been as fortunate as those in Central Australia. As the East Kimberley case-studies show, Aboriginal populations elsewhere have suffered much more drastically from generations of conflict and neglect and their numbers have both fallen and been dispersed. As a result some Aboriginal stations may in fact have difficulty in assembling a core population with both traditional links to the area and sufficient active adults to provide a large enough workforce. Without that group they are also likely to lack children and therefore be unable to qualify for funding for a school. These situations obviously hinder the viability of both the community and the enterprise.

Social Structure

Cattle station groups are, on the whole, relatively cohesive. Many residents hold customary responsibility for places within the property boundary, and may never have lived for any length of time elsewhere. Since that land came under non-Aboriginal ownership they have formed the core of the pastoral workforce and therefore combined an attachment to the area in an Aboriginal customary sense with an involvement, albeit limited, in the introduced enterprise. Willowra is a prime example of such a situation, an isolated property where the existing Aboriginal families, Lander River Warlpiri, were never evicted, and where the social cohesion of the whole group was well maintained.

In other cases Aboriginal population groups had already scattered and

reformed before the station was established, but those who subsequently moved back to form the workforce were those with customary responsibility for the land. At Mt Allen the station workforce was signed on in nearby Yuendumu settlement because no Aborigines remained within the area of the lease when the property was established. But those who agreed to go were primarily from families whose mothers were 'owners' of honey-ant dreaming country on Mt Allen, and who therefore were responsible for guarding highly significant religious sites. The cohesion of this group, like that at Willowra, has also remained strong.

Stations like Willowra and Mt Allen also include families long associated with the workforce but, in the conventional sense, lacking ownership or guardianship responsibility for the land. Ti Tree has a higher proportion of such people. However their long residence in the community has in some cases conferred such responsibility and they have become classified as landowners. Their ceremonial knowledge is often as detailed and respected as that of others tracing ancestry through bloodlines, in fact perhaps more so because they have been specifically recognised as important in these capacities. Their children and grandchildren, conceived and born within the community have, as far as Aborigines are concerned, even stronger claims on traditional rights. Thus, even although a cattle station group may apparently have some population mixture, long residence and the acquisition of important knowledge can give the same sense of social identity as that in groups little affected by in-migration.

In other situations the relationship of the resident group to the land is much less clear. Where Aboriginal groups were decimated through early conflict with non-Aborigines, and dispersed to other more congenial locations, local workforces could have been very mixed. And if no traditional owners were present it is unlikely that such people, even after long residence, would learn the necessary customs to carry out rituals. Thus, not only is the population of mixed family origin but also essential ritual linkages are missing. Such a community finds it much harder to resist pressures arising through social stress, and also to work towards common goals, whether of an economic or social nature. Altogether differences in social structures can have a considerable bearing on how both the community and enterprise fare. The East Kimberley cattle station

groups tend to fall between these two extremes. They have suffered more than many of their Northern Territory counterparts from dispossession and displacement; but they have also managed to retain sufficient contact with their land for ceremonial life and a sense of common identity to survive.

History of Non-Aboriginal Contact

As has been suggested above, the contact history of cattle station groups goes far in explaining contemporary social structures. But actual dispersal of the Aboriginal population is not the only factor to be considered. The attitudes of individual non-Aboriginal pastoralists have also played their part and may well be responsible for some contemporary problems such as lack of initiative, lack of confidence in dealing with non-Aborigines, or enmity between the two groups. Willowra people lived in a situation of benevolent paternalism, working for 30 years for a pastoralist for whom they had a great deal of respect; that respect was reciprocated. Those feelings were confirmed through the actions of the pastoralist who, for over five years, stood firmly by the decision that the property should be purchased for the Aborigines. This absence of conflict, and a trust which was not broken has, I feel, been fundamental in the Willowra community's ability to work together, and take firm decisions on what they want to do. On other stations Aborigines were severely repressed and relate horrific stories about physical punishment, being chased away from camps around the homestead because they did not have jobs, and being prevented from carrying out ceremonies at the times and in the places required. Such experiences are recalled by some people in Ti Tree, and subsequent difficult relations with non-Aborigines may be partly attributed to this.

Another type of relationship is that which suppresses much Aboriginal initiative, and restricts Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal contact largely to the employer/employee relationship. Such a situation seems to have occurred to some extent at Mt Allen where, following purchase by the ALFC in 1976, the former owner was appointed as manager and later as cattle consultant. This has hindered many Mt Allen Aborigines from realising that they are now the employers. Although the continuing relationship has certainly helped the commercial performance of the enterprise, it has perhaps

inhibited the development of Aboriginal management expertise.

The Enterprise

Management

Although many Aborigines have had decades of experience in the pastoral industry that experience has been almost entirely limited to stockwork and repair and maintenance of fences, bores and other improvements. Their detailed and intimate knowledge of the country and of its natural resources has also been extremely valuable in cattle operations, generally contributing much more than has been recognised. But few have had experience in management, either in the financial side of the business, or in operations concerning cattle transport, dealing with the meatworks or with marketing aspects in general, or in the paperwork and controls necessary to meet the rules and regulations contained within pastoral lease covenants. This lack of experience has been recognised at the time when Aboriginal properties were acquired, and funding agencies have taken a number of measures to deal with it.

A common policy, initially followed with most properties purchased in the 1970s and into the early 1980s, was to appoint a non-Aboriginal manager, whose salary would be paid out of the funds allocated for the operation of the station. Such appointments were either made through contract with consultancy companies, such as Australian Agricultural Consultancy and Management (AACM), who would then provide the manager as their own employee, or through agreements with individual managers known by reputation to the government officials involved. In each case the manager was to be acceptable to the Aboriginal community but in reality it is doubtful that they had much opportunity to influence the decision. In effect managers appointed in this way tended to see their primary responsibility to the government funding organisation, and to treat the Aboriginal pastoralists as a poor second. This in some cases led to conflict. In 1977 Willowra community, after four years with AACM managers, informed DAA that they wished to dispense with AACM's services and manage the property themselves, following the so-called policy of self-management and self-determination. This decision also

demonstrates the determination of the Willowra people to control the resource - the property and the cattle - themselves. Similar steps were taken elsewhere.

When such government-controlled management was abandoned two alternatives could be adopted. One was to opt for Aboriginal management, and the other was to employ a non-Aboriginal manager but to pay his salary from the profits of the business rather than from government funding, and hence ensure that he knew where his loyalties lay. Both measures have caused problems. In most cases where the community have tried to manage the business by themselves they have found that they did not have a person or persons with the necessary experience, even with the assistance of a book-keeper; they have been forced to fall back on non-Aboriginal support, particularly if they needed government assistance. However it has been possible for such support to be provided in a fairly unobtrusive way, still allowing the Aboriginal directors of the cattle enterprise to take major decisions and exert a strong measure of control in management. In the case of Willowra, after only twelve months in Aboriginal management with a non-Aboriginal book-keeper, the pastoral company employed a non-Aboriginal stockman whose wife was in charge of the clinic. For the next seven or eight years he worked as a stockman, employed by the community but not as manager, and was able to provide valuable additional support because of his understanding of many aspects of the industry within the non-Aboriginal context. But he always tried to leave the main decisions to the Aborigines, a practice which could be hard to follow because other non-Aborigines were inclined to interpret his role differently. They treated him as the manager, and, when visiting the station would automatically consult with him and possibly pay scant attention to the desires of the Aborigines. His position was also, for him, a source of frustration because he did not agree with all the instructions he was given, and could not deal authoritatively with all problems. In 1983, for example, Willowra had to abandon a partly completed testing programme to eliminate a small number of reactors to tuberculosis in the herd because clean and dirty cattle were allowed to mix in the same paddock. Instead they were forced to destock the entire herd to meet the terms of the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Campaign (BTEC).

The employment of non-Aboriginal managers by the community has also caused difficulties because of the problems of recognising a person's skills, honesty and ability to relate to Aborigines. Some stations, such as Ti Tree, had years of management problems, resulting in conflict with members of the Aboriginal community. Few managers stayed for long, and the ensuing high turnover in a position where some continuity is of great importance has hindered the development of the enterprise.

Whatever course management has taken one common factor has emerged. In hardly any instance has there been any real attempt to provide Aborigines with appropriate training in management. For this reason above all others it seems unlikely that those communities aiming to run cattle as an enterprise will, at least in the foreseeable future, be able to do so without non-Aboriginal support.

Not every community on its own pastoral property is concerned with management problems. In some cases, such as Utopia, it has been unnecessary to provide such expertise because the people themselves have seen the acquisition of the land as a social base rather than as a business, and have not received enterprise funding for many years.

Funding

Following purchase, all Aboriginal-owned cattle stations have required financial assistance. Funds have been needed for a whole range of reasons, including the payment of salaries to non-Aboriginal consultants and managers; the improvement of the capital infrastructure of the station to enable the enterprise to operate; the purchase of new breeding stock to improve herds; and for basic community needs such as housing, reticulated water, power, health services and schools. Such needs reflect not only the need for external support in the management of the business, but also the poor state of the stations at purchase and the fact that their resident Aboriginal populations had few facilities or services. Funds for all these needs are inevitably allocated through different government agencies and as a result the financial backing for the Aboriginal cattle stations has had an extremely complex structure.

Enterprise funding, for the employment of managers and for station improvements, has come primarily from DAA, until 1980, and subsequently from ADC. Initially such funding aimed at keeping the enterprise going and building it up to the point where it could become commercially viable, i.e. generate enough profits to cover its costs, including wages. Funding bodies, recognising the poor state of the properties and the fact that all had resident populations far above that which could be supported by the profits of the business, never anticipated that the stations would become big money earners. Since ADC took over the role of enterprise funding the rules regarding commercial viability seem to have been more strictly enforced. This may partly be due to time factors, since it is now clear that a number of cattle stations purchased and funded in the 1970s are most unlikely ever to be run on a commercial basis. Not only would they require large investment to set up the operation, but their residents have really shown little interest in the business. Other factors include heavy demand on ADC funds, which has made the Commission increasingly wary of providing financial support for activities which give no return on investment. The transition to this stricter set of rules has been very difficult, particularly where station groups previously received grants from DAA and now find that ADC do not view their applications with favour. Resentment also arises because ADC is supposedly an Aboriginal-controlled government organisation and therefore people feel that Aboriginal, people-oriented, interests should take precedence over commercial interests. ADC investment of funds in urban buildings in Canberra and, more recently, Alice Springs, is viewed with scepticism by some people in the bush, a situation which demonstrates a general lack of understanding by rural people of the workings of such a financial organisation.

Employment, as a component of enterprise funding, is another element in which support had changed. Stockcamp wages, it was assumed, would come from profits, not from the enterprise vote. But where the enterprise is being built up no profits are generated and cattle station workers have had to be paid from other sources. These have included unemployment benefit, with workers in effect working for the dole; grants through the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR) (now the Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET)) for training

projects in aspects including fencing, bore-pulling, stockwork, saddlery repair and management; Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) schemes which include the stockworkers as part of the community workforce; and a variety of other schemes including Special Works Programs (SWP), and Commonwealth Employment Programs (CEP), the funds for which have come from different government departments. The complexity of such arrangements adds greatly to the difficulties of getting the enterprise running smoothly. It also affects the workforce, whose members can never be sure when they will be paid Award Wages, or when they might have to be on the dole. The resultant insecurity is clearly destructive, and the variations in income undermine the commitment which people might otherwise have to the business.

Funding for shelter and for essential and social services comes from different sources. In the early 1970s DAA took prime responsibility for those aspects in the Northern Territory but since 1978 the Northern Territory government, like state governments, has assumed this role. ADC is also involved because of its responsibility to fund Aboriginal housing. In the mid 1970s discussion focussed strongly on whether these communities were in fact enterprises or communities; that is, who should fund them and for what. Community funding at that time tended to be very limited and as a result enterprise funding was often diverted to meet social needs. The opposite could also occur. The resultant conflict, as the title of this report suggests, is not a thing of the past. Specific examples of the problems which arose include the use of store takings at Willowra to fund part of the cattle enterprise, thus making the store bankrupt and disadvantaging the whole community in 1978; and the use of vehicles owned by the pastoral companies for community purposes such as travelling to attend ceremonies elsewhere. Since the late 1970s/early 1980s the community status of the cattle stations has been more clearly recognised, and state governments have funded their essential services and taken more note of their shelter needs. Schools are more difficult, since Departments of Education will normally only support such facilities if there is a schoolage population of at least ten, a figure which some cattle station groups would have difficulty in achieving.

Profitability

Assessment of the profitability of Aboriginal cattle stations is difficult both because of the variable nature of the pastoral industry over time, and because of the need to consider factors such as the size of the community population, and the extent to which it depends on the income of the enterprise. As the above discussion indicates, most properties were not generating high profits at the time of purchase. Moreover the period of early buying, from 1973 to 1978, was a low period in the north Australian cattle industry, when pastoralists deferred selling because prices were so poor. Continuing good rains throughout this period enabled this to happen because heavy stocking was possible. As a result many Aboriginal stations failed to make any money during the early years. Many were roundly criticised for this by people who failed to understand the overall state of the market at this time. In 1979/80, when prices rose rapidly, Central Australian properties such as Willowra and Mt Allen sold heavily and generated high turnovers, over \$600000 and \$1 million respectively. Considerable surpluses ensued, later used in very different ways. Mt Allen, following conventional financial practices on cattle stations, invested their money against later periods of loss. They also spent part of it in buying an Alice Springs wholesale business, with the idea that they could become middlemen in the Aboriginal community retail trade. This was not a success, primarily because the business was too small to effectively compete with large interstate dealers sending bulk orders from Adelaide. Mt Allen's decision was essentially the decision of the former owner of the property, their cattle consultant, and may not have really reflected what community priorities would have been. Willowra used \$150000 to buy the neighbouring Mt Barkly station, a property with few improvements and, since stock were excluded from the sale, empty of cattle. Although they perceived this as a good opportunity to allow Willowra stock, which by early 1979 had probably increased to double the average numbers, to spread out along the Lander River watercourses, their main purpose in buying the station was undoubtedly social. Mt Barkly contains the main significant sites on the traditional father's and grandfather's country for several prominent Willowra families, and the purchase brought these important places back under Aboriginal control. Today, with both Willowra

and Mt Barkly declared as Aboriginal freehold land, that control has been totally achieved.

During the 1980s the financial fortunes of Aboriginal stations have, like others, fluctuated along with prices. Other factors have, in the Northern Territory, included BTEC. All Northern Territory stations have been forced to undergo rigorous testing for brucellosis and tuberculosis. While some Aboriginal stations, like Ti Tree, had a relatively large number of diseased cattle and were advised to destock completely, most, like most of the non-Aboriginal stations, had only a few problems and embarked on a testing program. But such a program demands very strict control of stock and therefore depends on good fencing with holding paddocks which are adequately watered. Because of underinvestment, from long before the properties were bought for Aborigines, few Aboriginal stations could actually carry out a proper testing program. Subsequently some were forced to abandon this approach and destock after all. As a result many Central Australian properties have had their stock numbers virtually reduced to zero, and, in the last two years, have been forced to decide where their future lay. If they wished to restart the operation they had to find funds, principally from ADC. ADC required proof that the intentions to run the business were firm, and decisions on that basis have been hard to reach. In 1987 an alternative source of funds has been tapped for restocking, the Aboriginal Benefit Trust Account (ABTA), money derived from Northern Territory mineral royalties. Over \$ 1.1 mill. has been channelled through the Central Australian Aboriginal Pastoralists Association (CAAPA) , a high proportion of which will be used for restocking purposes.

The main points to be stressed with regard to the profitability of Aboriginal cattle stations are first, that many were openly acknowledged to be unprofitable at the time of purchase; secondly that their performances must be judged within the context of the whole cattle industry, not as separate entities; and thirdly that these stations not only generate low profits, but there is no chance that their profits will ever be sufficient to support all families resident in their communities. Too often cattle station people are criticised for still drawing unemployment benefits and pensions, a criticism which ignores that a property which

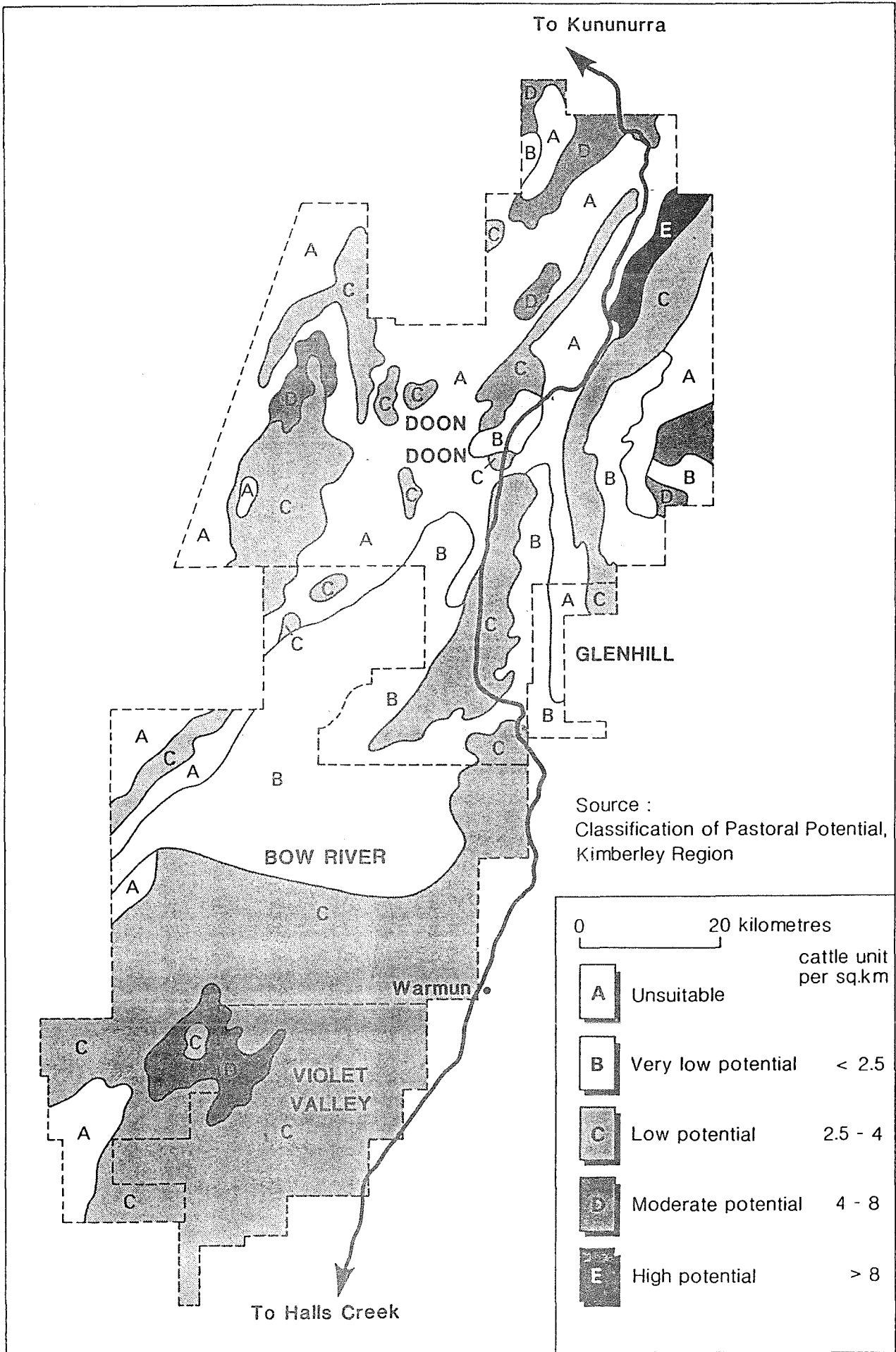


FIGURE 2: PASTORAL POTENTIAL OF ABORIGINAL CATTLE STATIONS IN THE EAST KIMBERLEY

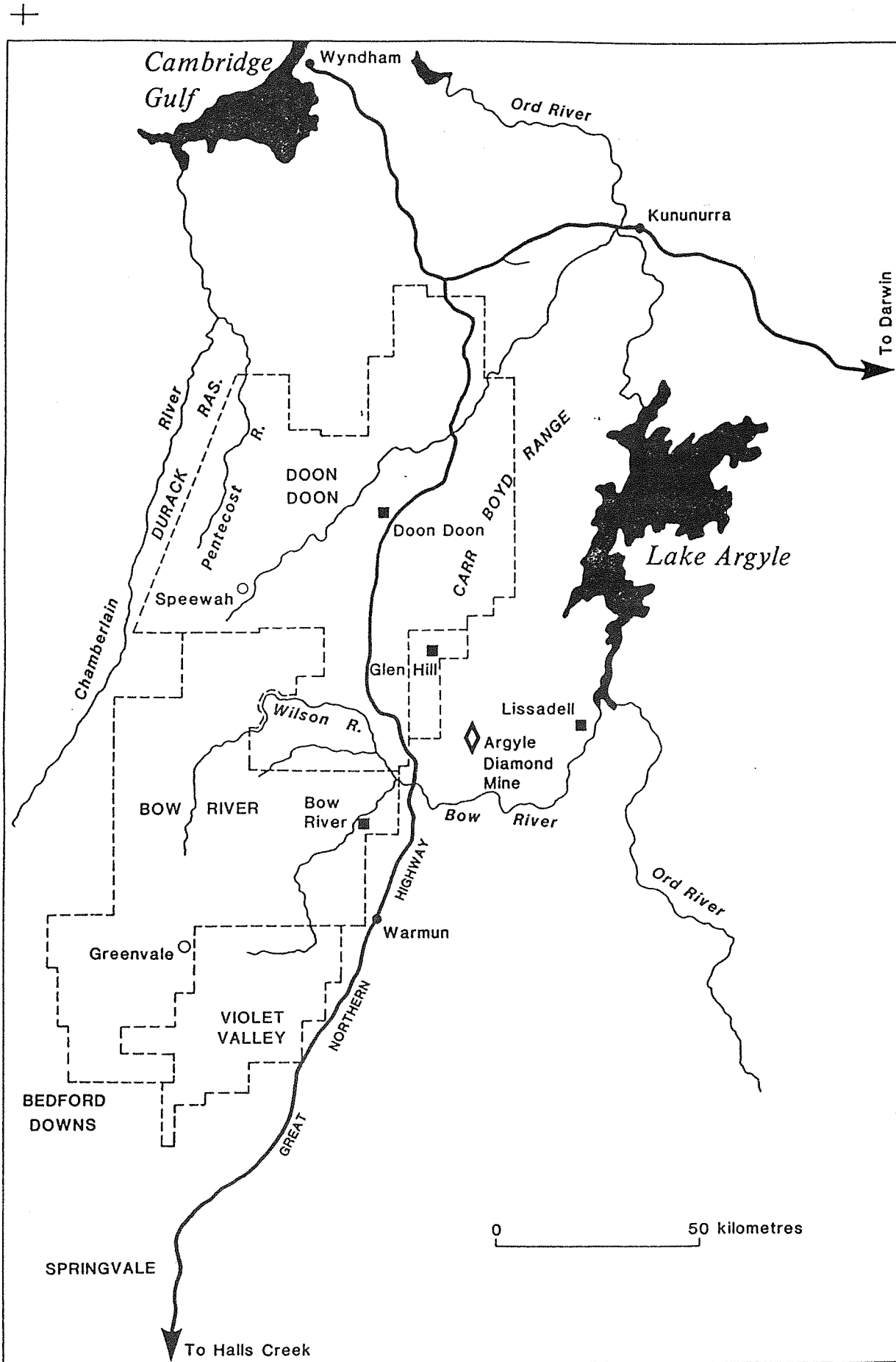


FIGURE 3: ABORIGINAL CATTLE STATIONS IN THE EAST KIMBERLEY

formerly supported one non-Aboriginal family may now have more than fifty Aboriginal families in residence.

This brief overview has drawn extensively on examples of Aboriginal cattle station communities from beyond the East Kimberley, primarily the Northern Territory. But the discussion is highly relevant to the East Kimberley situation. Here factors related to the land, the community and the enterprise also affect the contemporary situation of these population groups. An additional factor is the presence of Argyle Diamond Mines (ADM), a close neighbour of East Kimberley's Aboriginal pastoralists. This not only introduces an additional source of funding for the capital improvement of these properties but also affects components such as social and community development. The overall input is not, as will be discussed later, entirely beneficial.

CATTLE STATIONS IN THE EAST KIMBERLEY

Doon Doon

Physical Environment

Doon Doon pastoral station (formerly known as Dunham River) lies to the southwest of Kununurra, approximately equidistant from that town and the town of Wyndham. The lease, 3964 kms sq in area, is traversed throughout its length of 90 kms by the Great Northern Highway, and extends into the Carr Boyd Ranges to the east and the eastern edges of the Durack Ranges to the west (Fig.3). It is drained by three major river systems; the Dunham River, which drains the northern and eastern areas; the Pentecost, on the western edges; and the Wilson, which flows through southern parts of Doon Doon before joining the Ord upstream of Lake Argyle.

Doon Doon, as Figure 3 suggests, consists largely of rugged hill country, including a number of ranges which trend in a north east-south west direction, and which separate well-watered valleys containing country suitable for stock grazing. Although the relief amplitude of these ranges rarely exceeds 200 metres, their exposed rock surfaces and steep slopes are sufficient to hinder vehicle access to many of the interior valleys, and

to cause considerable difficulties in operating the station efficiently. Klepacki (1984:5-9) records 14 recognised land systems on the property, five of which are broadly described as rugged hilly country, 'too rough or stony for stock'. He estimates that these account for 68 per cent of the lease, and can be considered as virtually useless for grazing. The remainder of the lease is estimated to have a carrying capacity of up to ten thousand beasts. Good land is almost non-existent nowadays, although until 1968 the Dunham River lease did contain some areas with irrigation potential in the north eastern corner. Goddard, the owner who sold Doon Doon to the ALFC for the Aboriginal community, developed this area for fattening and irrigated grain cultivation and had it excised from the station. It was excluded from the sale. Fig.2 further confirms the limited pastoral potential of the area now included within Doon Doon.

Climatic factors also affect the potential of Doon Doon as a cattle station. Like other parts of the East Kimberley Doon Doon has a marked summer wet season, lasting for about five months in the year, and is otherwise arid. Rainfall variability is high. Such a pattern of precipitation results in a concentrated pasture growth season, limited to about 18 weeks in the year. By the end of the dry season in October/November heavily grazed parts of Doon Doon such as the paddocks near the homestead hardly seem to have a blade of grass on them. A further disadvantage of the climate is that much rainfall occurs as storms, and by the end of the wet season many exposed areas of station roads have been washed away and vehicle access is impossible. Road maintenance therefore becomes an expensive item in station operation. Altogether, Doon Doon's physical environment and configuration is not an easy one in which to run a successful pastoral station, a factor which has been all too frequently ignored in discussions about contemporary management priorities for the station.

History

Ownership and Purchase

Doon Doon, under the name of Dunham River, was first operated by the Durack family, owners of the neighbouring Argyle, Ivanhoe and Lissadell properties. In 1901 Galway Jerry Durack, brother of Patsy , the progenitor

of the Durack grazing empire in the East Kimberley, was killed by Aborigines at the station homestead. His son Patsy owned and ran the property thereafter until his death in the 1930s, and is still recalled as a fair man. Older people tell a story of how he tried to save some Aboriginal prisoners, sent back to Springvale station from Wyndham gaol with instructions to the owner to kill them on return, by dissuading them from continuing on their journey. Apparently only one took his advice, and the remainder were killed by strychnine poisoning after they reached Springvale. Doon Doon passed out of Durack hands following Patsy's death, and immediately before it came on the market in 1972 was held by a Texan, Mr Goddard from Dallas, an absentee owner.

In the intervening years the boundaries of the lease changed, incorporating Speewah, a small lease on the western side at one stage owned by a family called Martin. Several of the Aboriginal families now resident at Doon Doon were born at Speewah, and some individuals were related to Martin through their mother who was at one stage Martin's wife. Martin's part-European children are their half siblings. These Speewah people still talk about it as a separate entity, and have frequently discussed returning there to establish an outstation. In other terms also, as Woolah language speakers, they form a group distinct from the Djaru and Gidga speaking people also living at Doon Doon. Another small lease effectively amalgamated with Doon Doon is Glen Hill. In 1970 Goddard bought up shares held by the leaseholder, and thereafter ran the two leases together. Glenhill at that time had the reputation of being a 'poddy-dodger's' lease, non-viable in itself because of water problems and the rugged nature of the terrain, and from which the owner had been making a living by rustling cleanskins from the neighbours. A further change, referred to above, was the excision of about 40 kms sq of low lying land adjacent to the Dunham River near the northeastern boundary of the station. This area, known as Kingston Rest (Fig.3), was developed by Goddard as an irrigated farming project with cattle fattening based on millet cultivation. Water for this development came from the Arthur Creek Lake, a reservoir formed by the damming of Arthur Creek. This excision effectively took one of the most valuable pieces of land out of the station before it came on the market. Goddard's manager, who had been combining the rangeland grazing operation with cattle fattening at Kingston Rest, suggested during early discussions on the purchase of Doon Doon that the new Aboriginal owners

might like to continue this type of operation as a joint venture.

Doon Doon station, including the Glen Hill lease, came on the market in July 1972, with an opening asking price of ' a million dollars for a million acres'. In 1973 Stan Brumby, an experienced East Kimberley Aboriginal stockman, wrote to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs suggesting that they should buy the station for the local Aboriginal community, and stating that about 14 Aboriginal families, most of whom had already lived and worked on the station, were likely to take up residence. DAA's response was favourable, as they saw this as an opportunity to acquire a landbase for a largely landless group, and also give them a possible share in tourist developments which might arise on nearby Lake Argyle. Negotiations thereafter were extremely protracted, and their history provides a very good example of the kinds of problems which have dogged the process of land acquisition for Aborigines almost everywhere.

In 1974 consultants from Australian Agricultural Consulting and Management Co. Ltd.(AACM), who had been engaged by DAA to examine Doon Doon, reported that \$1 million was a vastly inflated price, both overestimating the potential of the land and present state of the station and its improvements, and the actual number of stock it carried. They suggested that, far from having a herd of at least 10000 plus an unknown number of cleanskins, the station probably had only about 6000 head. While they felt that the carrying capacity was around 10000 they acknowledged that this figure was unlikely to be reached because of the presence of large numbers of feral donkeys, then of the order of about 2000. Goddard had estimated the carrying capacity at 20000. AACM's new assessment was that DAA should offer no more than \$600000. One month later, May 1985, Goddard reduced his price to \$650000 and negotiations began. Meanwhile, however, doubts had arisen about the structure of the Aboriginal community to be associated with Doon Doon. Preliminary anthropological investigations suggested that the area was not of prime significance in terms of the traditional ownership of sacred sites, and that, combined with pressure exerted on DAA to purchase land elsewhere and the problem of defining who belonged to the Doon Doon group, led to the whole deal being pushed into the background by July 1974.

Approximately a year later Aboriginal interest in acquiring Doon Doon was revived. Further letters were dispatched to DAA and sent on to the newly formed Aboriginal Land Fund Commission who actually had Doon Doon listed in any case as a possible purchase (ALFC.). By this time cattle prices had slumped and \$600000 was considered to be far too high a value for the property. A new valuation from the Taxation Department suggested a figure of around \$200000, and ALFC were advised to see if they could buy it within the range \$200000 to \$270000. They began negotiations, spurred on by a new anthropological report which stressed the significance of Doon Doon for the Woolah people, and stated that sacred objects, important not only to Woolah people but also to people living at Oombulgurri on Forrest River to the north, were actually buried on the western side of the lease. This report also mentioned important snake dreaming tracks along the Dunham River, and the fact that people congregated on Doon Doon to hold ceremonies. These points are still made by contemporary residents of the community. In January 1976 ALFC agreed to a price of \$240842 for both the Doon Doon and Glenhill leases, including all cattle with the appropriate brands, all the stationary improvements but excluding Kingston Rest. For the next six months the efforts of ALFC to finalise the sale, and to establish the new Aboriginal owners on their property were further frustrated by restrictions invoked by the WA Department of Lands, who stated that no single owner was allowed to hold a single lease of more than one million acres. This hitch was finally overcome by vesting the titles of Doon Doon and Glenhill separately, the former with the Doon Doon Pastoral Company (still to be incorporated) and the latter with the West Australian Aboriginal Lands Trust (WAALT). Settlement of the deal was finally completed on the 19th of August, 1976.

Earlier Operation of the Business

The new Aboriginal owners of Doon Doon not only found themselves with an extensive land base for forming a stable community for themselves and their children; they also held an area of land supposedly of commercial value for pastoral operations. But the state of this land, and of the infrastructure of the station, left much to be desired. Many of Doon Doon's subsequent problems have stemmed from their inheritance of a rundown property, and from the failure of government officials to acknowledge this

fundamental fact.

When Doon Doon was offered for sale in 1972 the property combined extensive rangeland grazing of a shorthorn herd with irrigated farming which offered facilities for fattening some of that herd for sale. Aerial mustering was the normal practice and small airstrips had been constructed in most parts of the lease. Portable yards were used to muster cattle at these points. This technique was considered by Goddard and his manager to be essential in rugged, inaccessible country such as that found on most of Doon Doon. It was, of course, expensive and did not involve the employment of a large workforce. It also resulted in neglect of conventional improvements, such as permanent stockyards and fences. Both of these facilities were reported by AACM as being in a poor state at the time of their survey in 1974.

An additional issue concerns the stock carried on Doon Doon, and its stocking capacity. Goddard's initial estimate of a stocking capacity of 20000 has received no support from others, with the exception of a former head stockman on Doon Doon who stated that numbers approaching that had been carried there when he was an employee. That could well mean that the property had been overstocked in the past, a factor which could certainly explain current obvious degradation of pastures. Another important point is that Doon Doon has in recent times carried a significant herd of feral donkeys, whose presence would reduce cattle capacity. When the sale of the station was first discussed initial cattle stock estimates were around 12000. No bangtail muster, where the entire herd is rounded up for counting, was undertaken, primarily because such an operation on Doon Doon would be very difficult, but AACM estimated that at the time of sale the stock numbers were in fact only about 6000, and prices were negotiated on that basis. Between 1972 and the sale of the station in 1976 no mustering occurred, no cattle were sold, and the station was merely a holding operation. As Klepacki (1984:12) points out, this also meant that no male cattle were castrated during that time, and the proportion of bulls to cows in the herd became far too high. As a result females were over-serviced, a significant number would have died and many would have been barren. This appears to have been the type of herd purchased for the Doon Doon people, a very poor basis on which to commence commercial

cattle operations. Subsequent statistics on the herd seem to confirm these suspicions.

A further factor affecting subsequent operation of the station was the stability of the Aboriginal community. Under Goddard, as mentioned earlier, the station was run on capital intensive lines and only required a small stockcamp of about twelve. During the four years when sale was under negotiation there was little employment, and in fact by 1975 most Aboriginal families had left Doon Doon because they received no wages. Thus, although discussions with Aborigines in the region mention figures of forty or fifty people in residence, and an additional interest from people living in Kununurra and Halls Creek, the property did not really have a stable Aboriginal community in residence when it was purchased. Those who wished to live there had to make deliberate decisions to return from elsewhere. This would obviously affect the establishment of both the community and the enterprise.

The Community

Population

In October 1986 the Doon Doon community consisted of 26 people with the following population structure:-

Age Group	Males	Females	Total	
	No.	No.	No.	%
0 -14	5	5	10	38.5
15-59	7	6	13	50.0
60+	1	2	3	11.5
Total	13	13	26	100.0

In itself such a structure is typical of that of outback Aboriginal populations in general, comparatively young and with an even gender balance. But for the operation of a cattle station it presents obvious problems. With only seven men between the ages of 15 and 59 it does not have a sufficiently large number of young men to work in the stock camp, build fences and carry out other tasks. This problem has existed at Doon

Doon ever since the property came under Aboriginal ownership. Although there have probably been larger numbers of people at some times in the past, there would never have been enough men for the stockcamp to be run with a high labour turnover, a characteristic of most of the stockcamps in the Northern Territory Aboriginal properties. Such a turnover not only spreads the skills and experience widely through the community, but also allows people to choose when they wish to work and when they wish to do other things. If Doon Doon people needed to attend meetings or visit relatives elsewhere the work of the station would undoubtedly suffer. A major reason for starting a school at Doon Doon in 1987 is that it may attract related families who, because they have young children, have preferred to live in Wyndham or in Guda Guda, a community nine miles out of Wyndham. This would increase the potential workforce.

Social Structure

When the sale of Doon Doon was being negotiated, the strongest traditional Aboriginal interest in the lease appeared to come from the Woolah people, and the community was subsequently incorporated as the Woolah community. This rather restrictive definition has affected the structure of the Aboriginal community ever since. It seems that Doon Doon, and more specifically the Speewah part of Doon Doon, would have been on the extreme eastern edge of Woolah country. The Woolah language group in fact extends much further to the west, and Woolah speakers today live in places such as Mowanjum, near Derby, and on Mount House and Mount Barnett stations on the Gibb River road. By calling Doon Doon a Woolah community, and drawing up a constitution which prevents non-Woolah people from holding positions of responsibility either in community or business affairs, population growth has been inhibited and others with interests in the station discouraged from participating in the enterprise.

Doon Doon people today consist of a small number of closely related families, all with links to the Woolah group originally living at the old Speewah homestead, about 45 kms. east of the present Doon Doon homestead. While older members of the community are Woolah speakers, younger adults seem to have little knowledge of the language today, and most of them are married to non-Woolah people, either Djaru or Gidga. This

gives them links to families in Warmun, Halls Creek, Wyndham and Kununurra. They also have ties with other smaller groups such as those who now hold Bow River station, some of the families living at Glen Hill and families who lived at Rukan (Crocodile Hole) outstation at the southern end of Doon Doon until it was abandoned following the death of a leader in 1986. The Djaru people living at Doon Doon are not only there through marriage links, but also through long residence. One family, the Brockmans, grew up on Doon Doon and have periodically worked in the stockcamp there for three or four decades. This gives them some traditional responsibility for the area also. More recently some other Woolah people from Mowanjum have come to live at Doon Doon. Two brothers from that community visited some years ago, stayed to work in the stockcamp, and subsequently married young women from Doon Doon families. The extensive kinship linkages of the Doon Doon group are undoubtedly responsible in part for its mobility, a factor frequently referred to as undermining commitment to the enterprise. People visit Wyndham and Halls Creek when they have the resources, and it is from those centres that alcohol reputedly has often reached the group. Because Doon Doon is on the main road it is easy not only for the people themselves to travel out and bring alcohol back, but in the past taxi drivers from town apparently took part in a fairly lucrative grog-running trade.

While it seems that younger people at Doon Doon now have only limited knowledge of significant places and the myths associated with the area, older people are concerned about these responsibilities and about the threat posed to them by the activities of companies such as ADM. The destruction of the barramundi site at Argyle has upset everyone from the surrounding region, and has made people apprehensive that similar things could happen elsewhere. Interests occurring on Doon Doon itself include additional barramundi sites, snake dreaming associated with the gorge of the Dunham River at the northern end of the lease, and other sites concerning women's interests near the southern boundary. There is no doubt that Doon Doon, like other country, has a wealth of Aboriginal interest associated with it, and also that those now living there realise that although their detailed knowledge of some of these traditions may now be limited, they are the present day custodians.

Although the Doon Doon community is now concentrated at the homestead, there are interests in living at other locations within the lease. Rugan, established in 1982 on the Wilson River near the southern boundary, had a population of about twenty people until it was abandoned in August 1986, and good water supplies, five houses and a small food garden. It is still doubtful whether it will be re-established, partly because of mourning rites and customs, but mainly because some of the main leaders of the Rugan community are also the leaders of the Bow River group and see better prospects there. Speewah has often been mentioned as a prospective outstation, both because older members of the Woolah families were born there and have traditional responsibilities to maintain there, but also because it is a well-watered area, less heavily grazed because of its inaccessibility, and less affected by outside influences from the main highway. A major component of these influences is reputedly the stealing of cattle for killers. In 1987 Doon Doon has elected to allocate most of its Argyle Social Impact Group/Good Neighbour Program (ASIG/GNP) money to the development of Speewah, and therefore it seems that this outstation will go ahead. It will require completely new buildings and improvements since only parts of the walls of the original mudbrick homestead can still be seen. A vital improvement is the access road, rough and eroded even during the dry season, and impassable in the wet. It remains to be seen whether people will want to remain at Speewah on a semi-permanent basis. The other community associated with the Doon Doon lease is Glenhill, effectively on a separate lease held by the Woolah community, but with access to the resources of the Doon Doon lease itself (see below).

Infrastructure

The Doon Doon community currently has five houses in addition to the original homestead complex, which includes workshop, cold store, and other outbuildings. These new houses have been built with funds granted by the ADC. All except one are connected to reticulated water supplies, but not yet to power, which is still provided only to the homestead through a small diesel generator. In 1986 the community used its ASIG/GNP money to build a school, but the opening of this facility still awaits the extension of the power supply, to be funded by DAA. DAA allocated \$130000 for power in 1986/87 but were later informed that the costs

would be close to \$180000. The need for additional funds has further delayed construction.

Services

For many years Doon Doon people have been concerned that the lack of a school has pulled families away from the community and undermined its stability. At the end of 1986 six of the children living at Doon Doon were of school age, but most had never attended school. One had been at the Warmun school but, because he was unhappy staying in that community without his parents, had left. Other children live with family at Guda Guda or Wyndham, and attend the school in the town. With its present population Doon Doon would not be eligible for a school provided directly by the WA Department of Education. However, following the precedent of Glen Hill, it appears that if the community provides appropriate buildings it will be allocated a teacher. Because Doon Doon has access to \$150000 per year through ASIG/GNP funds, to be spent solely on capital items, it has been able to make such provision. It remains to be seen if the opening of the school has the desired effect of increasing the number of younger residents, and stabilising the community.

Doon Doon has no official health service, although one of the women keeps a first aid kit to deal with minor problems. Since the community has an STD phone it is easy to make contact with medical services in Kununurra if necessary, and health staff will pay visits on request. While theoretically the replenishment of medical supplies at Doon Doon should probably be the responsibility of the Kununurra health centre, effectively this appears to be done through the ADM liaison officer, and presumably is paid for with Doon Doon's GNP funds.

Until April 1987, when Doon Doon started a Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), the Woolah community obtained almost all its cash income from social security. Lack of income from the cattle enterprise has meant that for some years all workers have been on unemployment benefit. The administration of social security is clearly of central importance to the group. This has been the responsibility of the non-Aboriginal book-keepers, all of whom have been non-resident. The

method of administration has varied from one book-keeper to another. While some, recognising the essential linkage between delivering cheques, cashing them and providing food for people to buy with the cash, have been willing to organise a retail facility along with social security, others have not wanted to take on this extra responsibility. During 1985/86, when the book-keeper only wanted to deliver mail and deal with community accounts, people had to find transport to take their cheques to the Turkey Creek roadhouse or to Kununurra to obtain cash and food. This is obviously disruptive, causing money to flow straight out of the community, providing no service which is on the spot, and increasing the likelihood that people will spend a large part of their resources on alcohol in town. Since July 1987 social security has been administered by the ADM liaison officer, who took over responsibility for the books after ADC refused to fund Doon Doon for that service. CDEP is now apparently being administered under the same arrangement.

Doon Doon has, from time to time, had a small retail store providing basic groceries and other items in frequent demand such as tobacco. The shop has usually been organised by the book-keeper, who has been responsible for ordering stores, pricing and payment of bills to wholesalers. Some younger adults in the Aboriginal community have periodically worked as assistants, and people have expressed an interest in running the store on their own. Such a move would obviously be an important positive step in terms of taking responsibility for their own affairs, and maximising Aboriginal employment. However there do seem to be some pitfalls which have affected the store in the past and which would have to be avoided. Past shops at Doon Doon have normally worked on book-down, whereby customers have obtained goods on credit, paying off their debts when their next cheque arrives. Such a system assists budgeting, and spreads cash resources evenly over the fortnight. However it can only succeed if people also cash their cheques at the shop, which can then control the flow of money. At times when members of the Doon Doon community moved frequently between the station and the towns the book-down system collapsed because people took their cheques to town and failed to pay their bills. In 1982 the shop had to close because of its debts, which included a bill of over \$14000 to Baruwei, the Katherine based Aboriginal wholesale organisation. Subsequently the book-keepers did provide a limited retail

service by bringing goods to sell on pension days.

At present the community has a similar type of service. The ADM liaison officer runs a store from one of the outhouses adjacent to the homestead. This shop is open only during his weekly visits, for cheque cashing and food purchase. He purchases all the stock, referring to a list which is given to him over the telephone before he leaves town; does the pricing; and keeps the books, an important undertaking because the community, to whom the shop theoretically belongs, has opted for the book-down system. The shop is designed as a non-profit making venture, to provide the people with goods at prices lower than they would pay at the Turkey Creek roadhouse, and to cut out the need for travelling solely to cash cheques and buy food. But, unfortunately, it does not employ any Doon Doon people even although there are some younger women who not only have sufficient education but have even had some experience of store checkout operation while living at Warmun. Also, it is only open once a week. People still plan to take more responsibility for this service, and provide a facility which would be more appropriate to their needs.

The Enterprise

Operation

On purchase Doon Doon had been run as an extensive rangeland shorthorn grazing property, heavily reliant on aerial mustering and with an associated irrigated farming project to provide feeding supplements for fattening. For over four years it had remained dormant. Under Aboriginal ownership the plan was to continue with the rangeland operation, using a larger labour supply to cut costs, provide maximum employment and make as much use of the interior inaccessible parts of the lease as possible. This plan has met with very little success. Reasons for this include the state of the cattle herd, and further uncontrolled depredations on the stock; lack of management expertise, and of financial support to provide necessary advice; the poor state of fences, bores, access roads and other improvements; and the state of the land, both because of the inherently difficult physical environment, and because of degradation.

The story of recent changes in Doon Doon's herd size is very confusing. The property, even at the lowest estimate, had 6000 cattle in 1976; but in 1982 it was estimated following a partial muster that there were no more than 900 cattle on Doon Doon, over 800 of which were bulls. During that same period turnoff figures, of doubtful accuracy, were as follows:

1977	374
1978	222
1979	1305
1980	739
1981	439
1982	482
1983	74
Total 1977/83	3235

Thus turnoff is far less than the total decline in numbers (5100) and, presuming that there was some natural increase, the discrepancy could be of the order of 3000 head. Explanations for the loss of stock include systematic but uncontrolled killing of the herd for beef; rustling by the neighbours; and the fact that the herd contained far too many bulls even in Goddard's day. All probably contain a grain of truth. Aboriginal people undoubtedly saw Doon Doon not only as their first extensive land base in the East Kimberley, but as a source of cheap beef. Easy access along the highway made it simple for people from town or from Turkey Creek to take killers, probably without payment or record, and it is likely that it was not only Aboriginal people who were involved in this practice. Killers would be taken indiscriminately, and young heifers, of which there were far too few anyway, were probably far easier to take than wily bush bulls which had rarely come into contact with humans. This would further destroy the structure of the herd, and make it even more likely that remaining cows would be barren because of over-use by the bulls. Current discussions about establishing part of the operation at Speewah are related to the problem of losing cattle from paddocks near the road. Rustling, mainly of cleanskins, has been suggested as a factor, particularly along the western and southern borders with El Questro and Bedford Downs and, before it became an Aboriginal station, Bow River; and has also been mentioned in relation to Kingston Rest, the irrigated area

retained by Goddard. And the herd structure, already referred to, would undoubtedly be another factor. Too many bulls would mean that cattle deaths exceeded births. Whatever the main cause it seems that by 1983 Doon Doon carried no more than 600 shorthorns, all extremely wild and mostly within the rugged ranges to the west of the highway. It also carried an enormous number of donkeys, possibly around 6000 in that same year although a successful 1983 culling may have reduced their numbers by about half. With a non-viable herd such as this the Aboriginal owners were clearly not meeting the terms of the lease covenant, and therefore under threat of losing their lease.

1983 saw a change in policy for the operation of Doon Doon. Following discussions with the ADM liaison officers, both of whom had some experience of cattle operations in the Kimberley, the community decided to purchase some Brahman cattle with ASIG money, and establish a stud Brahman herd. In 1983 156 Brahmans were purchased, half for Doon Doon and half for Glen Hill. In 1984 a further 170 Brahman cows were bought and the current Doon Doon Brahman herd is probably between 300 and 400. Although it was assumed that sales would begin in 1986 this did not eventuate, and hence it is anticipated that the Brahman herd will bring in its first earnings in 1987. While prices should be good, possibly around \$400 per heifer and \$250 per bull, the management of this herd has meant considerable investment. Fencing and new paddocks in the vicinity of the homestead have accounted for over \$80000 of ASIG/GNP money in the last two years and there has been additional input from DEIR who paid training allowances to those who constructed the stockyards. Thus the return to investment in the Brahman herd may be quite small. Also, by confining the Brahmans to that one area soil degradation has become an even greater problem in the vicinity of the homestead, and improvement of grasses will be necessary if the existing intensive grazing practices are to be continued. For these reasons advisors, such as the pastoral inspector employed by the WA Department of Agriculture, have expressed doubts about this whole operation, and have stated that if Doon Doon is to be run at all it should be under an extensive rangeland system as before, with minimal fencing, a combination of aerial mustering and a large Aboriginal stockcamp, and an improved shorthorn herd. The existing feral shorthorn herd should, as far as possible, be eliminated. Certainly they are few in

number, as was apparent when it took about eight hours to find a killer in the northeastern end of Doon Doon in October 1986; and they are also extremely wild and, according to Doon Doon people, to be treated with caution, even when one is in a vehicle.

Another important aspect of the current operation of Doon Doon is the agreement for Glen Hill to run a herd of Brahman cattle on the eastern side of the station. This agreement has never been legally recorded, but is accepted by both the Doon Doon and Glen Hill people. It allows for Glen Hill to extend their herd from their paddocks adjacent to their community on the old Glen Hill lease into the whole area of Doon Doon to the east of the highway. In the process mustering should clear any feral shorthorn cattle from this area, and these would be sold to be credited to Doon Doon. The two groups already have different brands and therefore identifying the separate herds of cattle is straightforward. In October 1986 Doon Doon and Glen Hill people combined to build a new stockyard in the northeast corner near Sugarloaf Hill. This will be primarily for the management of Glen Hill cattle when they spread into this area. This operation is being encouraged by ADM who see the establishment of a cattle enterprise at Glen Hill as a clear demonstration of their interests in the present and future welfare of the traditional owners of the destroyed barramundi dreaming site at Argyle. Similar discussions over running separate herds have occurred between the Rugan community and Doon Doon, regarding the southern end of the lease. However, with the abandonment of Rugan and purchase of Bow River, these many now be of little importance.

One of the problems to be faced in the operation of the enterprise is the maintenance of adequate equipment. Doon Doon, because of its access to ASIG money, has been able to obtain basic vehicles such as a cattle truck, another large truck and a grader; the community also had, in late 1986, two other small vehicles. All were purchased for the operation of the enterprise but, as has happened elsewhere, there has been frequent conflict over the use of these vehicles, often in demand for community rather than cattle station purposes. This conflict was one factor influencing ADC in their decision to cease funding as they saw enterprise money being used for non enterprise functions. Both the grader and the cattle truck are in demand from Bow River, which lacks the funding

resources of Doon Doon. Bow River people have felt this to be particularly unfair since in 1985 and 1986, when they were working hard to muster and sell cattle, Doon Doon appeared to be doing very little. In fact, while Doon Doon appears to own sufficient vehicles, these are not in a good state of repair, and the current lack of skilled management on the station is making it very difficult for people to cope with this problem.

Employment

Since its purchase Doon Doon has provided employment for between five and ten men on station work, depending on the amount of activity in the stockcamp. Periodically, as in 1986 when the new stockyards were being built, some more have been employed but that has only occurred for short periods of time. With no school, clinic or store and no funds for basic services such as cleaning the camp, employment for women has been negligible. In the early years following purchase the wages of cattle workers came from DAA funds, but during the 1980s ADC have not allocated funds for this purpose and have expected people to be paid from the takings of the enterprise. As these have been so low workers have inevitably fallen back on unemployment benefit, and have in fact been working for the dole. This provides little incentive for extra effort, and is undoubtedly one reason why people have not been reliable in attendance. The proposal to introduce CDEP for the Woolah community is designed to overcome this problem, as well as removing some of the stigma of the dole and ensuring that people are paid a little more than they would obtain on unemployment benefit.

Woolah was designated as one of the twenty new CDEP communities to be started in 1987 as part of the implementation of the Miller report. When the scheme was discussed in the early part of 1987 Bow River, as a neighbouring pastoral community, expressed an interest in joining in the programme, and subsequently both Glen Hill and Baulu-wah, the Warmun-based group with an interest in running cattle on the old Violet Valley Reserve, said that they also wished to join. With the agreement of Doon Doon all four groups are now participating in CDEP, receiving separate cheques issued from Woolah which receives the total cheque for all four groups. The actual administration of the scheme falls on the

book-keepers at Warmun (Bow River and Baulu-wah) and the ADM liaison officer (Doon Doon and Glen Hill). While it is as yet too early to say whether the introduction of CDEP will stabilise the employment situation at Doon Doon, and provide a better incentive for work, the fact that the community is able to decide what kind of positions it will fund gives it more freedom than before. There have apparently already been discussions about employing one of the women in the shop. In addition the 20 per cent loading on CDEP for administrative costs may enable Doon Doon once more to pay for its own book-keeping.

A problem which is constantly raised when employment is discussed at Doon Doon is the situation of young people. The community perceives that they currently lack enough young people to carry out tasks effectively; and at the same time they lament the fact that their young people are growing up in town and will never gain the skills needed to work on a cattle station. Another factor recognised is that young people today have stayed at school long enough to be able to cope with numeric and literacy tasks, and could therefore learn book-keeping and school work. Ultimately people hope that they will be able to keep such people in Doon Doon so that such tasks do not have to be carried out by non-Aborigines.

Labour supply problems at Doon Doon have from time to time been met by employing outside contractors for tasks such as bore-pulling or bull-catching. While such a strategy may bear instant results in terms of the job itself, it is a risk as far as the enterprise is concerned. Unless the contractors involved are well-known and trusted, as is Ernie Bridge who carried out a very successful contract muster on Doon Doon in 1981, actual contracts can send most of the profits away from the station. Another problem is that contractors sometimes send all beasts to the abattoirs because it saves time. This ignores the fact that young animals and breeding heifers should be kept on the station. If such practices are not strictly controlled, as is hard for many Aboriginal pastoral companies, the future structure of the herd can be badly affected.

Management

Management is undoubtedly the most difficult issue on stations such as

Doon Doon, and one with which government funding bodies have often failed to come to terms. Terms set by DAA for the release of funds for purchase and running of the station in 1976 included the appointment of a manager acceptable both to them and the community, and the appointment of pastoral consultants. They considered that an Aboriginal manager/project officer, with support and advice from outside consultants and a book-keeper to co-ordinate financial matters, would be able to run the enterprise. The Doon Doon people also indicated that they wanted to run the property with as little outside interference as possible. This has remained the pattern at Doon Doon ever since.

The first project officer was a highly experienced Aboriginal stockman who had worked extensively in the Kimberley, and who, during the last stages of negotiation for the purchase of Doon Doon, had emerged as a spokesperson for the Aboriginal community. He brought together a workforce largely composed of those families who had expressed a traditional interest in Doon Doon, and who had formed the core of the station workforce for many years. But his experience of pastoral management was limited and that, combined with the rundown state of the property and the fact that the Aboriginal community had only recently reassembled after a considerable period camping on the periphery of Wyndham and Halls Creek, made his task almost impossible. He remained at Doon Doon for only two years.

In 1979 his successor, another Aboriginal stockman from the Kimberley region, took over, but worked from Kununurra, only visiting Doon Doon as required to supervise station activities. This arrangement accorded with the wishes of the Doon Doon people who said that they would prefer not to have outsiders living at the station. The agricultural consultant and book-keeper also lived in town, and were periodic visitors to Doon Doon. Following disagreements with the book-keeper the project officer left in 1980, and thereafter Doon Doon had no project officer for about three years. During that period the book-keeper took prime responsibility for the day to day affairs of the community, providing not only financial and cheque cashing services, but also organising the station workforce to operate on their unemployment benefit cheques, and running a shop. He became in effect the community advisor, the book-keeper and the project

officer, a combination of roles which was regarded with some suspicion by ADC. In fact in 1981 ADC, concerned that the community appeared unwilling to accept a resident cattle manager, decided to withdraw funding for the project officer. But, as a submission to ADC from the Doon Doon people in 1981 points out, such a decision seemed to undermine the principles of self-management which they were trying to follow by doing as much of the work as they could on their own. They proposed the appointment of a new project officer who was known to them but did not have pastoral experience. ADC refused to accept this proposal and in 1982, appointed both a new book-keeper and project officer, the latter to be based at Doon Doon. This project officer, also an experienced Aboriginal stockworker, remained there until 1985 when he was forced to retire from ill-health. In 1986, with the final withdrawal of all enterprise funding by ADC, responsibility for the supervision of cattle management at Doon Doon finally fell to the liaison officer of ADM, by now the only effective funding agency of the group. At present this situation is unlikely to change unless Doon Doon accepts ADC's recommendation that they enter into a joint management venture with their neighbours at Bow River. This would involve sharing a manager but running the two enterprises independently. Doon Doon have so far resisted the idea, partly because of family disagreements but also because they fear that they would lose their independence, and that their resources, which, because of their access to ASIG/GNP money are superior to those at Bow River, might be dissipated.

This complex story of the management of Doon Doon over the last decade highlights some important problems. The Aboriginal community, like almost all its counterparts elsewhere, has lacked the necessary expertise. But, at the same time, it has wanted to control its own affairs. Neither DAA nor its successor ADC has taken a hard decision on how management should be provided, probably partly because of the underlying realisation that even with good management the enterprise would not be a commercial success. Consequently funding for this component has always been uncertain. At the same time the needs of the community, for book-keeping and for service provision, have had to be met. These have, at times, been covered by extending the cattle management role into that of community advisor. But as far as the funding agencies are concerned their responsibilities do not encompass this combination of community and

enterprise. The resultant confusion has caused enormous problems. In 1986 the final withdrawal of ADC funds for book-keeping forced Doon Doon to accept ADM as their advisors and book-keepers, an unconventional role for a mining company only supposed to be administering money paid in compensation for the exploitation of resources which has disrupted Aboriginal significant sites. It has created a new dependency, which has pushed Doon Doon's aspirations for independence into the background.

Funding

Until the 1980s, when the Doon Doon community began to receive some funds allocated through the Good Neighbour Programme and Argyle Social Impact Group associated with Argyle Diamond Mines, the community and the cattle enterprise has been entirely dependent on funds from government agencies. Until 1980 these came primarily through DAA. DAA enterprise funding for Doon Doon was as follows:-

1976/7	\$82400
1977/8	\$65000
1979/80	\$45000, with an additional \$10000 from WAALT

These funds were allocated for both capital expenditure and ongoing costs, including the payment of project officer and book-keeping fees. Most station workers received only unemployment benefit.

In 1980 ADC assumed responsibility for enterprise funding and over the next six years allocated the following amounts to Doon Doon:-

1980/1	\$61500
1981/2	\$75000
1982/3	\$51000
1983/4	\$61000
1984/5	\$55750
1985/6	\$29000
1986/7	Nil
Total	\$333250 (With DAA, \$535650)

Under the strict definition of enterprise funding these funds of over

\$500000 have gone for the support of a non-viable commercial enterprise, a cattle station which was a failure long before it came into Aboriginal ownership. During the decade in question the station would have earned no more than \$120000. This discrepancy raises serious questions about enterprise funding. However the cash shortfall should not simply be interpreted as money squandered. The enterprise funding allocated to Doon Doon has not solely gone to supporting the commercial part of the operation. It has provided a book-keeper, without whose assistance vital services such as social security would almost certainly have foundered. And the capital improvements which it has covered have included the support of essential services to the community itself. The problem lies in the definition of what such funds are supposed to be used for.

Doon Doon has also received government funds from other sources. DAA has remained responsible for essential services, providing \$31300 for diesel for the generator and vehicle upkeep in 1985/6, and allocating more than \$130000 for the installation of power to the new school and the rest of the community in 1986/7. ADC, through its housing vote, spent almost \$200000 between 1980 and 1984 on the construction of houses, and proposes to spend an additional \$114000 in the near future on shelter. And other agencies, such as DEIR, have been involved through the finance of training schemes such as that which was associated with the building of the new stockyards in 1986.

Doon Doon's other source of cash has been through agreements with Argyle Diamond Mines. In 1981 the community were offered \$40000 as an annual payment, to be used for capital items, with the amount to be indexed to 1981 values. In 1985, under the new agreement involving equal annual allocations of \$500000 from ADM and the WA Government, the Argyle Social Impact Group agreed that Doon Doon would receive \$150000 for each of the next five years, with a component of that still being recognised as GNP money. The future of this agreement beyond 1989 remains uncertain, and from that time onwards Doon Doon's funds from that source may well revert to an amount closer to the original GNP allocations. All funds from these sources are only to be used for capital items, such as the purchase of equipment and vehicles, raw materials for the construction of yards and fences, and the purchase of breeding stock .

They cannot be used to meet the on-going costs of running the community, such as book-keeping fees, paying the rates to the shire council, or the payment of wages. Doon Doon has used this money for buying their Brahman cattle, constructing their school and, in 1987, plan to use it to set up the Speewah outstation as an extension of the cattle operations from the homestead area. These types of use are supported by ADM who see them as investments for the future of the community, both in terms of assistance for young people to come, and also as a means of setting up something which will still be there after the funding source dries up. But there are problems involved with this. The Brahman enterprise, as has been already suggested, assumes that the land, degraded as it is, will continue to be able to support cattle, and also that the community want to continue with this type of interest. The construction of a school does not mean the start of teaching, delayed until DAA provide the resources to install power in the new buildings. And the emphasis on capital investment creates an infrastructure which Doon Doon may have great difficulty in maintaining because it lacks the funds needed for doing so. Such conflicts have been apparent from the beginning.

As early as 1980, when ADC had just assumed responsibility for enterprise funding at Doon Doon, comments were made that their funding policy for Doon Doon might have to be revised because CRA, a partner in Argyle Diamond Mines, were considering extending financial assistance to the community. In other words, mining money would allow the government to bow out, and take its funds elsewhere. In 1985/86 this problem finally came to a head, with the decision to cease enterprise funding to Doon Doon from 1986/7. The reasons behind this decision, when looked at from an external perspective, do not seem unreasonable. The enterprise was not viable; the funds were needed by other Aboriginal communities; and the Doon Doon people appeared to show little commitment to really running the cattle station. But the effects do pose problems. Affairs at Doon Doon are now closely monitored by ADM, who not only administer their funds, but also provide them with all services. The resultant dependency may conceivably cause problems in the future, particularly if there is the possibility of further mining ventures in the area.

Glen Hill

Physical Environment

The Glen Hill pastoral lease, 143 kms sq in extent, adjoins the eastern boundary of Doon Doon, on the edges of the Carr Boyd ranges above Lake Argyle. It is a rugged piece of country, difficult of access and with limited supplies of ground water although some permanent surface supplies exist along the foot of the escarpment. Like much of Doon Doon it is land of limited grazing potential, and being only 143 kms sq in area it could never be a viable lease on its own. In 1970 the owner, a Mr Macdonald, sold his shares to Goddard, the owner of Doon Doon and when the sale of that property was discussed, the small Glen Hill lease was included. At that time nobody lived at Glen Hill although there were stockyards and the remnants of a small house, a corrugated iron structure near the stockyards. Access was by two roads, one from the Great Northern Highway to the north of Doon Doon homestead and the other a rough track leading in from Lissadell station to the east (Fig. 3)

History

Glenhill lease has been described as a 'poddy-dodgers' lease, off which the only possible living was made by taking clean-skins from neighbouring landowners. When bought by the ALFC there was no thought of it being developed separately from Doon Doon although because of the Department of Lands objection to ALFC holding more than one million acres the Glenhill lease came under WAALT rather than Doon Doon pastoral company. If it were not for the development of the Argyle Diamond Mine it is unlikely that Glenhill, and the Mandangala community who live there, would have become a separate entity. In 1979, as Christensen (1983), and Dixon et al (1984) have documented, stockmen on Lissadell station discovered damage to Aboriginal sites caused by the mining activities of CRA (Exploration). Subsequent surveys carried out under the auspices of the WA Museum and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies revealed a number of important sites within CRA exploration areas, and also identified the main traditional owners of these sites. Among these was

John Toby and his brother George Dickson, who had worked for most of their lives on Lissadell and Doon Doon stations, and were then living in Kununurra or Warmun. They expressed an interest in establishing an outstation close to the sites for which they felt responsible. Old Glen Hill station, already an Aboriginal held lease, was the obvious location. In early 1980 CRA's interest in mining on the location of one of these sites, the so-called barramundi site, became public knowledge, and interest in the area stepped up. Despite repeated requests to protect these sites under the Aboriginal Heritage Act, CRA continued its activities, admitting that it had already damaged the main barramundi site. In May, 1980 John Toby lodged a formal complaint against CRA for its violation of the Heritage Act, but later withdrew this in favour of a complaint from the WA Museum. In July, following a meeting at Glen Hill between the mining companies and Aboriginal leaders, six Aborigines, including John Toby, were flown down to Perth where they signed the Glen Hill Agreement with CRA. This agreement which, according to Dixon et al (1984) has never been sighted by anyone other than the signatories and their Company-appointed lawyer, included provisions for the financial support of the Glen Hill community, Mandangala, to allow them to set up their outstation at Glen Hill. Subsequent protests from other East Kimberley Aborigines highlighted the unrepresentativeness of the group which signed the Glen Hill agreement, and showed that benefits from the mining venture would have to be much more widely spread within the region. Financial support was later extended to the Warmun and Doon Doon communities. These financial arrangements are termed the 'Good Neighbour Policy', a policy to ensure that economic benefits will flow to Aboriginal communities in the area. The initial payment to Mandangala of \$100000 for capital works allowed the Glen Hill outstation to start in 1981.

The Community

Population

The Mandangala community today consists of between 25 and 30 people, the families of John Toby and his close relatives. It is a relatively young community, like that at Doon Doon, with nine or ten school age children and a number of young adults who, because of lack of employment or

entertainment at Glen Hill, spend much of their time in Kununurra. Potentially it has the basis of a useful local workforce but in practice this is undermined by the counterattraction of the town, and the ease with which people can travel there. Because of Glen Hill's access to ADM cash the community has a relatively large number of vehicles and is highly mobile. Another reason why young people prefer the town is that most of them were educated there to levels which make them dissatisfied with outstation life, and through that education have developed very strong social ties with town which they do not want to give up.

Social Structure

Glen Hill families are all closely inter-related but also, through having spent many years elsewhere, have other important social linkages. These extend particularly to Kununurra and Warmun, but there are also relatives living in Doon Doon and Wyndham. They belong to Gidga and Miriwung language groups. The older people still speak these languages fluently, but younger people are less proficient. Their knowledge of important sacred sites in the Glen Hill region has been retained, and discussions of these aspects have been much more intense in recent times with the pressures to safeguard those near the mine. As other Aborigines in the region have clearly indicated, interest in these sites extends to individuals in many other groups, and the Glen Hill people are expected to be the primary custodians because they live in the area, and also because they assumed the role of brokers between the Aborigines and the mining companies. While people now accept the destruction of the barramundi site as irredeemable, further occurrences of this type would be extremely upsetting.

Infrastructure and Services

The Glen Hill community has a well developed infrastructure, including six large houses, a store and office, a power plant, water supplies, a garage/workshop, and a school. This infrastructure has been paid for largely with ASIG/GNP money, and the investment in some elements has been considerable. Reliable water supplies, for example, have proved difficult to locate, and about \$350000 has gone into this one item since

1981. The infrastructure also includes facilities and improvements designed to support cattle ventures centred at Glenhill. New fences and yards have been built near the community, and vehicles such as toyotas, a cattle truck and a grader have been purchased.

Glen Hill's decision to build a school, financed with GNP/ASIG money and now operating for two years, reflected community interest in education and the desire to keep the young people at the outstation. Because the buildings were independently provided the Department of Education agreed to allocate a teacher even although the numbers of children did not reach those normally expected to be present. The school has a large central building and well developed grounds with play facilities which are valued by all the Glen Hill children. It covers pre-school and primary stages and now has about twelve pupils aged between two and a half and fourteen, and a non-Aboriginal teacher who, before coming to Glen Hill, had gained experience in working with Aboriginal children while based at Fitzroy Crossing. Her husband acts as school caretaker, and general handyman. In late 1986 the school did not have funds for paying Aboriginal assistant teachers, although one of the Glen Hill women was assisting with language classes. With the introduction of CDEP, problems such as these should be solved as the community can allocate funds to whatever jobs they feel should be carried out. Although the school appears to be functioning well, and must be contributing to the stability of the community, it has not prevented young people leaving Glen Hill for town. Jobs and entertainment for most of them are non-existent. Moreover school attendance is affected by the constant visits to Kununurra. Families going to town either take their children away from school, or go off without them, leaving them in the care of relatives who do not move around so much. This puts added pressures on certain families in the community.

Apart from the school, Glen Hill has few other services. Health services are provided from Kununurra, although with their easy access to transport it is more common for people to travel to town for health reasons than to ask for a visit from nursing staff. Communications have until recently been restricted to two-way radio but in 1987 Glenhill will be linked into the STD phone system. Administration of financial matters, including social security, is carried out by ADM liaison staff, a situation which

developed because the Glen Hill community has never received any government funding for this type of assistance. This has probably been a precedent for the introduction of a similar service at Doon Doon in 1987. At Glen Hill a strict pattern of weekly meetings with ADM staff has been established for a number of years. Every Friday morning the ADM liaison officer brings the Glen Hill mail out from Kununurra, along with stock for the shop and any other particular orders which he has received. For that one time in the week most of the Glen Hill people will be there, usually making an effort to be back in time for the meeting. At the meeting mail is distributed, often read in public and discussed so that, according to the understanding of the liaison officer, everyone knows exactly what is happening. Following the meeting the shop is opened, cheques are cashed and people buy their weekly stores. As at Doon Doon, none of the community is involved in the financial side of managing the shop and it is only opened on Friday mornings when ADM staff are present. Some Glen Hill people express dissatisfaction with this, pointing out that because they have made a determined effort to educate their young people, and many of them have grown up in Kununurra they have sufficient education to deal with these types of jobs. They would also like to have access to shopping more often than once a week. However, because of their reliance on ADM funds, they have not so far been highly vocal about these matters, and continue to accept the status quo.

Employment and Business

Despite assumptions that Glen Hill people would benefit from employment offered at the Argyle Diamond Mines, and hence create an economic base for their community, most families depend heavily on social security for their cash incomes. The problems with working at the mine include the type of work available, the level of education of most of the Glenhill people and the restrictive conditions that apply to work there. Jobs which carry training opportunities demand sufficient education for people to be able to deal with complex machinery, and to be able to move from one task to another. Few Glen Hill people, with their backgrounds firmly based in the pastoral industry, would be able to cope with this. But at the same time people seem to find the casual tasks available, planting trees, cleaning up areas around the town site and other such jobs, unsatisfying

and few have remained in such jobs for long periods of time. In October 1986 only one person was working at the mine, and he did not appear to attend work regularly. Other jobs at Glen Hill have been almost non-existent because of lack of funds to finance wages. In April 1987 Glen Hill joined the CDEP scheme and the employment situation in the community is currently undergoing radical change because it will now be possible for jobs such as working in the school or shop to be funded.

ADM have, from the beginning of their involvement with Glen Hill, recognised the economic deficiencies of the community and have encouraged people to set up a cattle enterprise because they feel that this will bode well for the future once the mine is worked out and GNP finishes. However, as all have recognised, a cattle enterprise on the Glen Hill lease alone has no future. It has been necessary to negotiate with the Doon Doon community for a share of the Doon Doon lease. Such discussions have led to verbal agreements only, with no formal arrangements. This has occurred despite the fact that as far back in 1980, when Glen Hill was first established, people in the Doon Doon community did express a feeling that they should formalise the presence of the outstation, especially since it was to receive financial support from CRA. Probably, since Doon Doon later received similar support, feelings about the need to fix such agreements became less strong.

Glen Hill's cattle venture is based on a herd of Brahman cattle, purchased with ASIG/GNP money and currently herded near the Glen Hill community. In 1983 Glen Hill bought 75 Brahmans, and, with their calves, probably now has a herd of around 150 to 200. The plan is to herd these cattle not only in the newly fenced paddocks near the community but also throughout the area of Doon Doon lying to the east of the Great Northern Highway. This area at present still has some feral shorthorns with the Doon Doon brand but these will be cleared out, mostly as killers or for sale to the meatworks, and takings will be credited to Doon Doon. This part of the Doon Doon lease is not well endowed with fences and yards, and the Glen Hill people have already started building additional facilities for future needs. At the end of 1986 they were working along with Doon Doon people in the construction of a stockyard near Sugarloaf Hill, in the northeastern corner of the lease where there is good permanent water and feed, and

where they can expect stock to congregate. Raw materials for this yard were being obtained from the surrounding woodlands, and the labour was being provided by Doon Doon men working on unemployment benefit, and Glen Hill men working in some cases for wages allocated as a contract from ASIG money. Despite the extension of the cattle enterprise on to this larger area there will still be problems because the country as a whole is so fragmented and access for mustering, particularly in the Carr Boyd Ranges, can be very difficult. The new paddocks near Glen Hill are already showing signs of overgrazing, although some attempts have been made to counter this by sowing areas of improved grasslands.

Glen Hill's general concern over educating their young people, stabilising the community and finding jobs for young people is reflected in an interest in creating training and employment opportunities on site. They have twice arranged for projects funded through DEIR, in one case in stockwork and in the other in horticulture. The latter, which cost about \$23000 in wages and materials, resulted in a minimal return in terms of vegetable sales, but the transference of skills to some of the group may be a longer lasting investment. People have commented that the time lag in making applications for assistance from bodies such as DEIR, and actually seeing projects taking place is so great that the effort may not be worthwhile. Certainly it is an added frustration.

The Glen Hill/ADM relationship is highly complex, and has a marked effect not only on the way in which Glen Hill affairs are run, but also on the interaction between the Glen Hill people and other Aboriginal groups. Under the ASIG/GNP arrangements Glen Hill presently receives \$200000 per year, for only 30 people. Warmun, in contrast, receives \$260000 for more than 300 people. But Glen Hill receives virtually no other direct financial assistance. Contact with the outside world is through Argyle Diamond Mines, who not only relay information on financial transactions involving Glen Hill, but also act as a 'bank' in Kununurra. If people from Glen Hill require a new piece of equipment, all they have to do is to visit the ADM liaison officer, ask for it and, if it is within the terms of the agreement, they can obtain it almost instantly. This is clearly much more straightforward than having to put in requests in writing to a government funding agency, possibly asking for permission to vary expenditure in an

earlier budget, and then waiting some weeks or even months until permission for the purchase is granted. On the other hand it puts enormous power in the hands of the mining company who, as Dixon et al (1984) have suggested, can use their financial monopoly of community affairs to ensure that the Aboriginal community does not oppose them. Dixon et al. also suggest that it has increased the dependency of these Aboriginal communities.

The reaction of other Aboriginal communities to the control which ADM have established over the financial affairs of Glen Hill is one of pity, that the group have lost a large degree of independence, combined with some envy for their relatively affluent financial situation. People feel that the Glen Hill community themselves should be making a strong stand for the control of their own affairs. Some also resent the fact that leaders of Glen Hill who signed the Argyle Agreement as traditional owners of the barramundi site were not the only people with that responsibility. They see them as having sold out on the interests of others. But, as long as Glen Hill has no other source of financial support, and the Glen Hill agreement still holds, it seems unlikely that the current situation will change significantly.

Bow River

Physical Environment

The Bow River pastoral lease, approximately 3200 kms sq in area, lies immediately to the south of Doon Doon, and also shares common boundaries with Lissadell on the east, Violet Valley and Springvale to the south, and Bedford Downs to the west (Fig.3). Like Doon Doon it includes a series of rugged ranges belonging to the Durack Ranges, and is highly fragmented which makes access difficult. It is well watered by the Castlereagh, Wilson and Bow Rivers on its western and northern ends, and there are numerous small creeks elsewhere which provide water supplies for at least part of the year. Soakages and pools provide permanent water supplies on the main river systems.

Bow River is classified as of generally low potential for pastoral development (Fig.2). Areas around the Bow and Wilson rivers have been heavily grazed because stock congregate there because of plentiful water supplies, and much of the remaining land carries only spinifex grass, consumed only during periods when there is little feed elsewhere. This poor land situation can be attributed to the physical environment, with shallow easily eroded soils and a wet/dry monsoon climate which leaches nutrients from the surface. But it can also be attributed to over-stocking and over-grazing. In 1982, when the possible purchase of the property by the ADC was under discussion, the regional director of ADC commented that the station was reputedly 'extensively over-grazed due to over-stocking and that certain parts of the lease are bare of suitable fodder' (ADC, Bow River, 98/85). In 1986 Bow River community, who were concerned about the obvious degradation of the land, successfully applied for a Commonwealth Employment Program to carry out some seeding and fencing in areas adjacent to the Great Northern Highway near the eastern boundary of the station. Ledger, who carried out a study at Bow River in August 1986 states 'There is no doubt that the area has been severely overstocked for a number of years' (Ledgar,1986b). In his comments on the future of the property he stresses the urgent need for a complete assessment of the extent of land degradation, using both aerial photography and ground survey, and the formation of a complete regeneration programme before any plans are made for future expansion of cattle numbers. So far such a programme has not been instituted.

Because of water erosion occurring every wet season Bow River has considerable access problems. Station roads into western parts of the ranges are hard to maintain, and access through other adjoining properties such as Springvale or Violet Valley is equally difficult. As a result current use of the land is much heavier in the region around the homestead, and much of the western area remains largely unfenced, and probably has large numbers of feral donkeys as well as cattle. Altogether, the Aboriginal owners of Bow River took over a lease with considerable physical problems, some natural in origin and some man-made, and a property which was barely viable under any circumstances.

History

Purchase of the Lease

Bow River lease combines a number of smaller leases once run as separate entities, but with insufficient land to be viable as grazing properties under East Kimberley conditions. These included Greenvale station, the homestead of which lay on the upper reaches of the Castlereagh river, about 30 kms west of the present Warmun community, a property with which the main Aboriginal families now associated with Bow River had long and close connections. Greenvale lease had been taken up by the beginning of this century, and the two older men recognised as leaders of Bow River, Joe Thomas and Timmy Timms, both grew up there as children in the 1920s and 1930s. Bow River homestead itself is much more recent, and both the Thomas and Timms families subsequently lived there once Greenvale was abandoned. They remained as the long-standing core of stock-camp workers until the late 1960s when the introduction of Award Wages caused them to leave because there was no employment. Thereafter they gravitated to two camps; Turkey Creek, now the Warmun community; and Guda Guda, the Nine Mile community on the periphery of Wyndham. The name Guda Guda is in fact taken from Bow River country, where it is the name for the rain bird dreaming area, and the Guda Guda camp was essentially a camp of Bow River people in exile, forced to eke out a debilitating existence on a piece of vacant land once used to graze stock on their way to the Wyndham meatworks. The problems of this town camp community, including inadequate shelter, water or power, poor health and malnutrition among the children, alcoholism and general social disruption, were of major importance in the push to purchase Bow River. However the main reasons why Aborigines wished to acquire the station were to regain control over their traditional country, resume responsibility for their 'Ngarrangkani'- their dreaming-, and in so doing to gain a vital land base for people with access only to areas of land so small that they offered nothing apart from sites for houses; and to have a cattle venture which would provide them with employment and some degree of economic

self-sufficiency.

Although Aborigines at Warmun and Guda Guda had apparently discussed living back at Bow River for years, it was not until the property came on the market in 1981 that any moves could be made. It was offered for sale by W.W and D.J. Herwood and L.F. Turnsek. In April 1982 the people made a formal application to ADC, under the name of the Warmun Community because the Bow River group, now called the Juwulinypany Community, was not then incorporated. The first asking price of the station was \$620000 on a walk-in/walk-off basis, but the price was subsequently reduced through a verbal offer to \$400000. The station then carried around 6000 or 7000 cattle but was said to have a carrying capacity of 11493. Although the ADC agreed in principle to buy the station they were apprehensive about the amount of money needed to support the enterprise, both in its initial stages and in the future, and referred to the longstanding problems at neighbouring Doon Doon as precedents for this attitude. Consequently they deferred the decision to 1983/84. Meanwhile Bow River found another purchaser, Messrs. Berendson and Bristow, who paid \$380000 for it in 1983.

In 1984 Bow River came back on the market. The new asking price was \$456750, an increase justified by the vendors because of improvements such as the installation of the microwave telephone, improvements to roadways, and the inclusion of additional plant and vehicles. The station was then thought to carry about 6000 cattle with calves, and an indeterminate number of donkeys. This vendors' statement comments on the possibility for developing the sale of feral donkey skins as a useful second income. ADC, when approached once more over the sale replied that, while still interested and supportive they would be forced to defer consideration to 1984/85 because of lack of funds. The Bow River people, and the Warmun community in general were not prepared to accept losing the station once more and made an alternative suggestion.

In February 1984 the following proposals were made for the purchase of Bow River:

- a) that ADC grant a \$200000 interest free loan to Warmun
- b) that the remainder of the \$450000 asking price be made up from

payments due to Warmun from the Argyle Diamond Mines

c) that the \$200000 ADC loan be repaid by Warmun in 1984/5 from that year's ASIG/GNP money

d) that ADC fund Bow River from its enterprise vote to the extent that it becomes economically viable.

These proposals were made when speculation was still rife about how the ASIG funds of \$1 million per annum would be distributed, and without knowing whether Argyle Diamond Mines would agree to any of the ASIG money being used for the purchase of land. In the event the ASIG money was not made available for the purchase of Bow River, although at one time the Bow River people suggested to all the other East Kimberley communities that they might 'chuck-in' some of their ASIG money to buy the station. The costs were eventually met by the Western Australian government granting the \$250000, and the ADC allocating the \$200000 as a grant, on the understanding that Bow River would receive no enterprise funding for at least its first three years. They estimated that \$200000 was approximately the amount which it needed for support during that period. Since Bow River is, for ASIG purposes, classified only as one of the outstations of Warmun its share of ASIG funds is only part of a total of \$200000, and hence it would never be able to make up the shortfall from this source. As a result it has, from the beginning of its operation, suffered from severe funding problems.

Operation of the Business

Bow River became an Aboriginal cattle station on the 1st of May, 1984. The publicity surrounding its acquisition immediately put it in the limelight and brought pressure to bear on the community. Not only were they expected to perform well in the commercial sense, but there was some antagonism from non-Aborigines in the East Kimberley because of reports that relatives of the former owners of Bow River had also been trying to buy the station. Comments made at this time suggested that the Aborigines did not really want the land, had no traditional interest in it, and that their application really reflected pressures from radical advisers out to promote their own interests. As the Bow River people had shown all along, such comments were unfounded. But they did not inherit a property in prime condition. It had been operating consistently at a profit,

albeit a low profit, but had a number of problems which demanded considerable investment if the financial future was to be assured. A complete muster of cattle in 1981 gave a count of 5900, which, with about ten per cent probably unaccounted for, gave numbers of around 6500 at that time. Turn-offs between 1978 and 1983 were as follows:-

1978	716
1979	75
1980	2165
1981	542
1982	346
1983	300 (approx.)

Taking those figures into account, along with figures of brandings, ADC advisers estimated that there were no more than about 4000 head of cattle on the station in 1984, only half the numbers which they estimated would be needed to make the enterprise viable. They also estimated a donkey count of around 4000, a figure that, as they pointed out, would have to be drastically reduced before cattle numbers were allowed to build up. The Bow River people also inherited a property with acknowledged land degradation problems, one which was deficient in fences and had limited improvements, and which, from their point of view as a community, lacked basic facilities for the number of families which would wish to live there. There was no shelter apart from the homestead and outbuildings, power and water supplies were limited, particularly for several families, and there were no services. In addition they had no guarantee of financial assistance, either for ongoing expenses, or for the payment of wages or for the purchase of capital equipment. It is against this background that the current operation of Bow River as an enterprise has to be considered.

The Community

Population and Social Structure

The Bow River group, at the time of purchase, was said to number 39, over 40 per cent of whom were adults aged between 15 and 44. The masculinity

ratio was 1.5, with a significant number of young single men in residence. This demographic structure reflects the fact that the population count was made in the middle of the mustering season. Population counts in 1985 show a similar pattern, and the structure of the group in October 1986 also conformed to this type. The individual members of the 'Bow River mob' have so far been stable, and belong to the most part to those families involved in the long negotiations for the purchase of the station from 1981. As discussed earlier, these families had left the station when employment ceased after the introduction of Award Wages and in 1981 were living either at Warmun or Guda Guda. In 1981 some of these families established Rugan outstation, at Crocodile Hole on the Wilson River near the southern end of Doon Doon, and were already resident in their traditional country when the possibility of owning Bow River arose. Their existing commitment to living on that land, and building Rugan up into an outstation with sufficient resources to maintain it even through the wet season was a good indication of the firmness of their feelings about going back to Bow River. When Bow River was finally handed over some of the Rugan families moved, but others remained until the outstation was finally abandoned in 1986 following a fatal road accident. Families also moved from Guda Guda, although some decided not to leave the town because they had become accustomed to periurban life, and did not want to do without the facilities available there. Guda Guda still provides a 'town base' for Bow River people in Wyndham.

Although families involved in working at Bow River intend eventually to live there all the time, the lack of facilities on the property, coupled with the proximity to Warmun and the fact that Warmun is now well provided for with houses and services has meant that many still preserve a Warmun base. They live as a group in the 'Top Camp', where most have houses, or are welcome in the houses of friends. All school-age children have to remain in Warmun if they are to attend school, and all other services also are located there rather than at Bow River. However those without school-age children spend a great deal of time living at Bow River, and the population during the mustering season is considerable.

Although eventually the homestead area at Bow River will be the main population centre on the property, there have been suggestions about

setting up outstations in some other parts of the lease. Some of these requests have come from people not at present directly associated with the Bow River group. At the end of 1986 two Halls Creek groups had expressed an interest in obtaining blocks of land, one at the old Greenvale homestead and the other at Foal Creek, on the extreme southern boundary of Bow River. While Bow River people are extremely conscious of the need for people to obtain a land base, particularly if they are living in a town camp situation as at Halls Creek, they have been concerned about other people coming to live on the property without having an interest in it as an enterprise. Both of these locations, although relatively isolated from the main road, are in places which they see as good bases for part of the cattle operations, well-watered countryside and not as heavily over-grazed at present as some other regions. Also, while members of the interested groups do have some connections with Bow River through past residence, people in the Bow River mob itself also have claim to these areas and do not see why they should relinquish these without proper consideration. In 1987 it appears that the development in the Foal Creek area will in fact go ahead, and Bow River proposed using part of its 1987 ASIG money to buy a four-wheel drive vehicle to help in setting up the outstation.

Infrastructure

The infrastructure of Bow River currently includes the old station homestead, with a large concrete block house, communal kitchens, storage rooms, cool rooms and a butchering facility and a microwave telephone link, unconnected in 1986 but reconnected in early 1988; and outhouses and a garage/workshop. Aboriginal families live in part of the homestead, or camp in the garden alongside provided it is not raining. The non-Aboriginal cattle adviser has a caravan. Limited power supplies come from a small generator erected by the adviser, and water is reticulated by plastic pipe from a well near the Bow River to a small tank above the house. Facilities such as these are clearly quite inadequate for the numbers of people who propose to live there. Since 1984 they have made a number of requests for assistance with upgrading facilities.

In 1985 Bow River received \$30150 from ASIG for a power plant and

plumbing at the homestead, and in 1986 they asked for a further \$20000 of these funds to be allocated for those purposes. Additional ASIG money was available from some of the unspent allocations of other Warmun outstations, including Rugan. At the same time they asked ADC to provide funds for the construction of three houses at Bow River. This program was planned for inclusion in ADC's 1987/88 budget. In the meanwhile, Bow River have been advised not to proceed with the electrification program because this should be co-ordinated with the construction of the houses. And that cannot go ahead until Bow River has an acceptable town plan. While these changes of plan are to a large extent sensible, the delays have caused much frustration to the Bow River community, and have made it even harder for them to establish themselves properly at the base from which they wish to operate.

The infrastructure of the station also includes eight wells and bores equipped to pump water, and another seven not so equipped; fencing of home paddocks, but very little fencing elsewhere; and two vehicles, a cattle truck and a small grader. Reports submitted by the ADC and by pastoral consultants employed by them in 1986 indicate that the current plant is sufficient to cope with the work, although money should be allocated to fencing. Nevertheless Bow River has on several occasions borrowed vehicles and equipment from elsewhere, notably from Doon Doon which, with its lack of mustering activity in the last few years, has been viewed by Bow River as a property with underutilised resources. Doon Doon's superior access to ASIG/GNP money certainly makes it seem richer than Bow River, and at present there is inevitably some envy because that cash is obtained without any input through work.

Services

Warmun at present provides all the services for Bow River. Children attend the Warmun school, everyone uses the Warmun clinic and the two stores, the community store and the roadhouse, provide all the purchased food. The Balanggarri resource agency book-keeper based at Warmun also keeps Bow River's accounts and deals with orders for supplies as well as social security. This dependence on Warmun is likely to continue, since Bow River is only half an hour's drive away and hence it is unlikely that many

resources will be made available for more local service development. Under the present management arrangements the community books will also be kept externally because the current adviser is above all a practical and experienced stockworker who has little experience in that side of the business and probably does not want to get involved in it. If management arrangements change then the financial accounting might go to the station itself, and people would certainly like to see as many other services being established there as possible.

The Enterprise

Operation of the Business

When the purchase of the station was completed, the Bow River people, with no guarantee of funding, were immediately confronted with the need to make money in order to pay for ongoing costs, rates and taxes, fuel for vehicles, fencing materials and other necessities as well as wages. In addition they had no manager, and no expert advice. But they were determined to make the enterprise work. May 1984 was the middle of the mustering season, and in order to make some money in the first year they had to start moving very quickly. Within a few days the Bow River people were approached by a contractor offering to muster for them, and, lacking the resources to do this quickly themselves, they accepted his offer. The arrangement proved to have problems. These included the refusal by a neighbouring pastoralist to allow the contractor into the western side of Bow River, an area which was very difficult to reach from the station itself; the fact that the contract did not include any restrictions on the types of cattle removed for sale; and the fact that the contractor took 50 per cent of sales, and shared any cleanskin cattle on a 50/50 basis. Cattle shipped out included weaners and yearlings for which prices were very low and returns to Bow River were poor. 1143 out of 1321 cattle sold from Bow River in 1984 were mustered by the outside contractor, at a net sale of \$42 per head giving \$47516; the remaining 178 cattle, mustered by the Bow River people themselves averaged four times this price, bringing in \$171 per head. This experience made the Bow River group very wary of involving outside contractors in the future, and made them all the more determined to run the business with as little outside interference as

possible. It also, apparently, has had longer term effects on the herd which lost too many young animals, and hence has not been building up as it should. In 1985 the annual turnoff was only 401 beasts, for which Bow River received \$73872.

Apart from the immediate problem of having to make money, other difficulties which arose in the early months of the operation were the undue demand for killers from Bow River by Warmun people, and alcohol being brought on to the station from town. Although Bow River is not as accessible to the main road as Doon Doon, it is still easy to reach on its eastern side and people were able to kill bullocks when they had no means of payment. This caused some tensions between Bow River people and some other members of the Warmun community, and it is still a topic which frequently arises. The alcohol problem also arises from time to time, and Bow River people have tried to prevent people from taking alcohol to the homestead, hoping that these activities will be confined to Warmun.

The operation of Bow River aims primarily to keep it as a working cattle station, at the same time taking into account its problems of land degradation, its low level of investment and funding deficiencies, and the fact that the Aborigines want to do things as independently as possible, without resorting to the type of management situation to which they would have been accustomed in previous times. The lack of funds has forced people to face the issues involved. Following the 1984 season, it was decided to apply to DEIR for funding for a training project which would give a group of younger men stockwork and fencing experience, the organisation of cattle sales, and some knowledge of the workings of stock and station accounts; and at the same time provide resources for wages which could not be paid from the station. This project, funded for \$122665 in that year, provided for a training officer to supervise the work for 45 weeks, and when completed the Bow River people decided that they would like him to remain with them as a project officer. He has been there ever since, being paid partly from the earnings of the station, but also from savings obtained from a number of other sources, including Balanggarri Association, the outstation resource group based in Kununurra and Warmun. He is a highly experienced stockman, who has worked in many parts of the Kimberley, and who has seen the Bow River enterprise as primarily an

Aboriginal responsibility. As such he has been willing to let the directors of the pastoral company make the main decisions about what they want to do, and then assist them, rather than the other way round. Although the Bow River people are currently happy with this arrangement, the ADC appear to feel that a more experienced project officer/manager may be necessary. However that issue only now becomes relevant because Bow River did not receive any ADC enterprise funding until 1986/7.

Bow River have not only succeeded in finding their way around the problem of lack of funding for management; they have also adopted a very positive attitude to the problem of lack of funding for wages. Although their DEIR grant brought in a welcome contribution to this contribution in 1985, for the rest of the time they have had no alternative but to work for unemployment benefit. The station could not afford wages, and had to preserve all its assets to cover ongoing costs. Employees, normally about six stockmen, have worked for the dole without complaint because they see the enterprise as significant to them, and also understand the pressures which could be brought to bear on them if they fail. In 1987 when CDEP was introduced both to Warmun and Doon Doon, Bow River said that they would like to join the scheme, and agreed that it would be suitable for them to combine forces with the other cattle station group, Doon Doon. Subsequently Violet Valley and Glen Hill also opted to join and all four now operate CDEP through cheques initially received in bulk at Doon Doon. Bow River and Violet Valley use the Balanggarri book-keeper as their administrator. The introduction of CDEP should be an improvement because it gives greater flexibility in job allocation, as well as covering administrative costs and also introducing a small loading on top of normal benefits. By combining the four groups the population becomes sufficiently large for these inputs to be worthwhile, a situation that would not exist if the Bow River group were to run a CDEP on their own.

Funding

Bow River has been obliged to scrape funds together from a number of sources, and the uncertainty involved in this has undoubtedly made the whole operation more difficult. The main source of funding in 1985, 1986 and 1987 was ASIG, with funds requested as follows:

1985	Stockyard	\$12000
	Bullcatching plant	\$15000
	Purchase horses	\$3000
	" Bulls	\$6000
	Trucking charges	\$4000
	Power plant	\$23650
	Plumbing	\$6500
1986	Electrification, homestead	\$10000
	Plumbing, Homestead	\$10000
	Toyota hi-lux	\$17000
	Fencing	\$15000
	Stockcamp equipment	\$5000
	Grading of road	\$15000
	Wages for fencing	\$3586
1987	Fencing	\$2000
	Yardbuilding materials	\$10000
	Toyota (Foal Creek)	\$15000
	Grading roads	\$10000
	Bore/casing (Foal Creek)	\$30000
	Fencing	\$15000
	Breeding stock	\$28000

Other contributions in 1986 included \$16200 from the Chinamen's Garden ASIG allocation and \$14000 from the Rugan allocation for the electrification of the homestead; and an additional \$23500 from Rugan for the purchase of 91 cattle (90 cows and one bull) from Kingston Rest. This last item was not intended only for Bow River, but also to act as stock for other groups such as Kawara (Bungle Bungle) which wish to graze some cattle in the Ord River regeneration area. The ASIG money is distributed after assessment of all applications from the six official Warmun outstations, and actual amounts received do not necessarily cover all requests. These final decisions are taken outside the community, by a

board of representatives of which they are not members, and which has three members from Argyle Diamond Mines. This is a bone of contention, and Bow River, like the other recipient groups connected with Warmun have been very loath to allow too much direct influence on their affairs from the ADM people. As a consequence, while ADM liaison people have attended Bow River meetings to discuss funding, the discussions are kept very strictly to the terms in which they have a role in ASIG, and there has been strong resistance to the idea that they might become unofficial community advisers as they are at Doon Doon and Glen Hill. Only three months after the purchase of Bow River ADM people offered unsolicited advice on trucking out cattle and were refused.

Problems with the dependence on ASIG include the fact that it can only be used for capital items, and that it may cease after 1989. Bow River have made it clear to ADC that they expect enterprise support from them, at least to the extent of enabling the station to become more viable. In 1986/7 they received their first ADC enterprise grant of \$41000, and will be requesting a further grant in 1987/88, possibly followed by enterprise loans.

ADC's entry upon the scene has generated lengthy discussion, still unresolved, on how to manage Bow River in the future, and how to provide better advice for all Aboriginal cattle station enterprises in the East Kimberley region. Suggestions have included the introduction of a joint management scheme, similar to one which operates with the Lake Gregory and Billiluna cattle stations south of Halls Creek. In the East Kimberley case the proposal was to involve Bow River, Doon Doon, Baulu-wah (Violet Valley) and Glen Hill, with a joint management committee and a manager who would work for all groups. The actual operation of each group, and particularly the main groups of Bow River and Doon Doon, was to remain separate. Although first discussed in August 1985 this plan has yet to eventuate. An interim committee, with representatives of the management committee of each group was appointed, but has never yet held an official meeting, and certain resistance has developed. One problem has been the fear that the communities would not be able to maintain their independence; another, the fear, on the part of Bow River and Baulu-wah at least, that ADM would be too heavily involved in the scheme. And Bow

River see Doon Doon's pastoral enterprise as such a dismal failure that they are concerned that if they came together all of their own efforts would go for nothing.

ADC have also proposed appointing a cattle advisor to work throughout the region, an idea which also has not yet materialised. The position was apparently advertised in 1987 but the appointee subsequently took another job elsewhere and no further efforts have yet been made along these lines.

Baulu-wah (Violet Valley)

Violet Valley, a former Aboriginal reserve of about 1000 kms. sq., lies immediately to the south of Bow River, separated from the Great Northern Highway by a narrow belt of land belonging to Mabel Downs pastoral lease. The reserve was proclaimed in 1912 as an Aboriginal ration station and later those living there came to provide a labour pool for many of the surrounding cattle stations. In the 1950s a period of harsh treatment and exploitation culminated in the beating of one of the Aboriginal leaders at Violet Valley and as a consequence most families left the reserve. It was subsequently closed, and in 1963 WAALT agreed to lease it to a neighbouring pastoralist, the owner of Texas Downs station, for a period of 19 years. The terms of this lease were that the pastoralist, who paid an extremely low rent of only \$214 per year for the land, would ensure that any improvements - fencing, bores, shelter, roads - would be maintained in good order.

In the 1970s, when Aborigines forced off East Kimberley cattle stations following the introduction of Award Wages began to congregate at Turkey Creek, some of the former Violet Valley families returned to the area from their camps on the periphery of Halls Creek and at Guda Guda outside Wyndham. Interest in Violet Valley grew, both because of the obvious shortage of land for the growing population of the Warmun community at Turkey Creek, and also because of the long-standing attachment of some families to Violet Valley country, where they had been born and had grown up. In 1979 they indicated that they would like to resume control of Violet Valley, and requested an inspection of the old reserve to see if the terms of the lease were being complied with. The WAALT replied that the lease

should be allowed to run its full term, to the end of 1981. On the 1st of January, 1982 the Violet Valley people resumed the lease.

The establishment of an Aboriginal community on Violet Valley, the Baulu-wah community, has not been easy. Violet Valley is, like its neighbours to the north, rugged rangeland country with few improvements. It consists largely of spinifex country, of limited use for stock, and could probably only carry a small herd of cattle, around 1500 beasts. Although the people had stated firmly that they wished to run a small pastoral enterprise, government funding was not forthcoming because there was doubt about their commitment, and also because considerable investment in water supplies and fencing would have been necessary. Moreover Baulu-wah's proposal that they establish a meat selling project to serve the community store at Warmun faced the problem of establishing an abattoir which would meet the stringent health regulations governing the sale of meat in northern retail stores. Such a project would also require investment, as well as assurance that the returns would make it worthwhile. Other problems include the fact that Violet Valley families are now well-established at Warmun, and that young men in particular have been unwilling to leave this settlement for the inaccessible, poorly serviced homestead camp at Violet Valley. A CEP fencing project in 1985 ran into severe difficulty because of labour shortages, as well as the frequent absence of the training officer who was supposed to be co-ordinating the work.

The result so far has been that little has happened in terms of the pastoral development of Violet Valley. However the group have received some ASIG funding as a Warmun outstation, \$14000 in 1985 and \$85250 in 1986. While their 1985 funds were used to buy a vehicle, their 1986 funds were used to establish the outstation and start the cattle project. 1986 allocation was as follows:

Grading of Access Road	\$15000
Purchase of Cattle	\$7500
Purchase of horses	\$2500
Saddles	\$1500

Motor Mower	\$750
Ablution block	\$10000
Solar generator	\$15000
Bore	\$33000

The last item was made possible by the release of funds unspent by the Rugan outstation group. As these allocations suggest, interest in starting up the cattle project has been considerable. However results have so far been mixed. A combined muster with Bow River in 1986 produced only a small number of Violet Valley stock, all of which dispersed before they could be trucked out to the meatworks, and other attempts to collect cattle for sale have had little success. With their lack of resources the Violet Valley group have also discussed entering into a bull-catching contract with an outside contractor, under similar arrangements to those accepted by the Bow River group in 1984, but, as the experiences of others suggest, such a contract may not be very profitable for Violet Valley. Ultimately the development of any pastoral enterprise will have to depend on co-operation with other groups, probably Bow River, and will require a stronger commitment on the part of those involved. The introduction of CDEP, which the Violet Valley group adopted enthusiastically in 1987 as one of the four cattle station groups in the region, may help to stabilise the work situation as people are no longer able to draw unemployment benefit.

Cattle Station Communities or Enterprises: Conflict and Compromise

These East Kimberley Aboriginal cattle stations exhibit classic signs of confusion and conflict about their roles as communities or business enterprises. These arise from imprecise understanding by funding agencies about these roles, and their mutual interaction; and by the Aboriginal groups about what is expected, and indeed by law, required of them. The story is further complicated by the presence of Argyle Diamond Mines, an additional funding agency which has become heavily involved in the administration of community services and discussion of community issues.

The essential conflict arises from the differences in non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal perceptions about how land and resources should be used. East Kimberley Aborigines, like their fellows elsewhere, see the land as providing them with a social and religious base, and the wherewithal to enhance their quality of life. This may or may not involve significant participation in the monetary economy, through exploiting some of its resources for cash. Non-Aborigines, however, place prime emphasis on such resource exploitation, and judge Aboriginal priorities which do not accord with such views as both inappropriate and irresponsible. The three main factors affecting the development and contemporary operation of such cattle stations - land; the community; and the enterprise - all show such conflicts.

Land

Tenure poses a problem for all these East Kimberley groups. Doon Doon, Bow River and Glen Hill all hold their land under pastoral tenure, and, with current uncertainties about changes in the overall structure of the Kimberley pastoral industry, it remains uncertain to what extent they can modify their use of that land within their present covenants. Suggested amendments to the current Western Australian Land Act included some clauses which may enable variations appropriate to their situation. For example, clause 103a, which states that a lease can be forfeited if lessees do not maintain stock numbers at the levels agreed in their covenants, was to be repealed; but alternative acceptable forms of land use still seemed to be assessed exclusively in conventional non-Aboriginal terms, allowing lessees to introduce forms of cropping and pasture improvement designed to aid pastoral development, and to use suitable areas for tourist development. They omitted mention of other forms of land use, such as subsistence. Decisions about changes in land tenure are in any case still hanging in balance; these recommendations have for the present been rejected by pastoralist groups, mainly because they also included a clause requiring pastoralists to agree to land excisions for Aboriginal use before they were granted perpetual tenure. New suggestions are not yet forthcoming.

The question of land resources in this region is particularly problematic.

The whole area under consideration, about 9000 kms. sq. in area, is generally of poor quality for pastoral purposes. Not only is it rough and rugged country, difficult of access away from the strips adjacent to the main highway, but it has been affected by decades of overgrazing and poor husbandry which has left it eroded, invaded with spinifex grass, and offering little commercial potential. Moreover modern pastoral practices have enhanced these problems by concentrating use in the more accessible areas so that the isolated back blocks, where land degradation is less severe, are now the only areas appearing to offer good grazing. Their use would demand a return to older, wider-ranging methods of stock work, methods which are alien in today's pastoral industry. Such forms of husbandry are not only familiar to all the older Aboriginal stockmen, but are especially appropriate when large labour supplies are available. Unfortunately neither Doon Doon nor Bow River currently have such labour supplies in situ, although the current workforce might, if desired, be augmented from communities such as Warmun.

The Community

Although the Aboriginal families which form the core population groups on these stations include people with strong traditional attachment to the land, many have experienced past disruption which has led to their longterm residence in the area being less firmly established than might normally have been the case. The fact that many families have lived, and indeed grown up on other East Kimberley stations, or in the Warmun community, or in town camps in or near Halls Creek, Wyndham and Kununurra, undoubtedly makes their commitment to remaining on Doon Doon, Glen Hill, Bow River or Violet Valley less strong. It enhances their mobility, a characteristic which constantly undermines the establishment of a reliable workforce in the stockcamp, or in community administration and services. Moreover, although this mobility is to some extent due to previous dispersal of Aboriginal groups through pressures exerted by non-Aboriginal pastoralists and government officials, it also expresses the wide-ranging nature of Aboriginal human-land relationships. This has not always been well understood. Thus DAA's interpretation of Doon Doon as exclusively Woolah country has posed difficulties which are still having their effect. That country in fact is recognised as being the responsibility

of more than one group, and responsibilities, as far as individuals are concerned, can be transferred by means other than blood relationships. Thus the definition of Doon Doon as Woolah has probably inhibited the growth of the community, and may have generated feelings of jealousy among other Aboriginal groups in the area. A similar problem seems to have arisen with Glen Hill, where, although the community residents are acknowledged as having strong interests in the area, others feel they should also be involved, and have certainly expressed their feelings over the exclusive role played by Glen Hill people in the negotiations with CRA in 1980. Clearly administrative organisations need to take far greater care in clarifying Aboriginal family relationships and what these mean in terms of responsibility for land and resources.

The population groups on this land have also shown different interests in specific locations within its boundaries. These have led to requests to be allowed to establish outstations, at Rugan, at Foal Creek, at Greenvale and at Speewah. Support for such moves has been variable. While Rugan received sympathetic support from DAA, the other moves have been frustrated until recently, partly because organisations such as ADC perceive that the establishment of such outstations might undermine the overall commercial viability of the enterprise. The land tenure position of outstations, and indeed of the communities located at the Doon Doon and Bow River homesteads, is also a cause for concern. Under present circumstances, if leases are resumed, these communities could lose their land unless it is classified as special purpose lease, excised from the surrounding pastoral leases. Such a classification should cause no problems in the case of outstations away from the homesteads. But for homestead communities it could raise all sorts of difficulties. If these areas do become special purpose leases, as seems likely, it is possible that in future the pastoral lease could come up for sale without any homestead focus. This has obvious financial implications in terms of the property value.

Another factor affecting the populations of these communities is their comparatively small size. Unlike Central Australian Aboriginal cattle stations, these stations have problems in providing a sufficiently large workforce. As a result they have had to bring in people from elsewhere, a

practice which can be socially disruptive even when the incomers are Aborigines. When they are non-Aborigines the problem is even worse, and in the case of contract musterers the possibilities for economic exploitation are clear. Both Doon Doon and Bow River appear to have suffered from such practices.

A final factor affecting these communities is the level of their service provision. While initially all lacked basic service provision for Aborigines - no schools, no health centres, no retail stores etc. - some have subsequently achieved the kinds of facilities which they want. But there are obvious inequalities between them. These arise principally through differential access to funding, both in source and amount. Glen Hill and Doon Doon, with their current levels of ASIG/GNP funding, now have schools and workshops, and because the establishment of such facilities requires support from other government agencies, have successfully been able to apply for power, reticulated water and housing. But Bow River and Violet Valley, which lack such leverage, are still very inadequately serviced, and lack of services clearly makes it much harder for stable populations to live there.

The Enterprise

Neither Doon Doon nor Bow River were highly profitable commercial enterprises when they came into Aboriginal hands. While Doon Doon, under overseas absentee ownership and with a protracted purchase negotiation, was really only a holding operation when the Aborigines took over, Bow River had consistently been making a small profit. In both cases the cattle herd seems to have been deficient, with numbers too small for commercial viability, and with structures which prevented normal build up of numbers. In Doon Doon the preponderance of bulls was marked before purchase, while in Bow River it occurred through a poorly supervised contract muster occurring soon after Aboriginal purchase. Both stations have also had to contend with enormous numbers of feral donkeys, which have increased the degradation of the land, and certainly decreased the carrying capacity. In addition both properties, and the land within the Glen Hill lease and the Violet Valley reserve, had few improvements or improvements were in bad condition. Fences were either non-existent or in

a shocking state of repair, bores and tanks were not maintained and stockyards were needing to be rebuilt.

Problems such as these could only have been overcome through considerable investment. This was not forthcoming. Funds allocated by government agencies to Doon Doon covered little more than maintaining the existing infrastructure, and providing some finance for advice and book-keeping assistance, but were insufficient to improve things to the state when the operation might have achieved some degree of commercial success. And in the case of Bow River the agreement reached on the purchase of the property excluded further government assistance for at least three years, throwing the Aborigines back on their own extremely limited resources and keeping the operation going through use of money from unemployment benefits, from funds from other Aboriginal organisations such as Balanggarri, and from a number of other sources all of which could only be tapped through considerable effort in completing applications for financial assistance.

Employment and management have presented further problems. Lack of funds coupled with the uncertainties of pastoral operations in areas such as the East Kimberley, and the poor commercial prospects of these properties, have forced Aboriginal workers to work for unemployment benefit alone. This not only means that their incomes are well below Award wage, but it removes incentives and certainly increases turnover rates in the labour force. Jobs take longer to complete because people become tired of working for their unemployment benefits, and find it hard to accept that they should do this while their friends receive the same money with no effort. This kind of problem may well have been more severe in Warmun than in the more isolated communities such as Glen Hill or Doon Doon, and Baulu-wah's problems in getting work done certainly stem partly from this difficulty. It says much for the determination of the Bow River group that they have kept things going as well as they have, with their constant contact with the large unemployed group in Warmun. From the very beginning they have tried to demonstrate that their desire to own Bow River was not only a desire to gain control over the land for social purposes, but a wish to show that they could make the station work. This determination probably arose partly from the resistance which they

encountered when they requested assistance to clinch the purchase. They are well aware that they are expected to demonstrate that the enterprise can make money, regardless of how realistic these expectations are on badly degraded and unproductive land. The recent introduction of CDEP will, hopefully, remove some of the difficulties encountered in working a property on unemployment benefits alone.

Management has been another source of difficulty. Not only have government funding agencies failed to provide adequate support for this crucial element, but their understanding of what was required seems to have been very limited. Doon Doon was promoted as not only an Aboriginal-owned but also an Aboriginal-managed cattle station, a role which the group undoubtedly wished to take on. But, with the lack of Aboriginal expertise, this approach could only have succeeded with extremely sensitive and efficient non-Aboriginal support. In effect such support was generally deficient, conflict resulted, and the ensuing chaos was blamed largely on the Doon Doon people. Bow River had no resources for the employment of a non-Aboriginal manager and, realising that although they wished to be as independent as possible some assistance was necessary, they had to find someone through non-conventional channels. The approach taken, eventually successful, was to use an application to DEIR for a stockwork training course, thereby obtaining the services of an experienced non-Aboriginal stockworker to work with them. While this has certainly borne fruit, it has meant uncertainty, both for their adviser who has never known how long his job would last, and for them because they have not known if they were going to be thrown quickly back on their own resources again.

These cattle enterprises have, like others in other parts of northern Australia, been largely dependent on government funding agencies for their continued support. The level of such support, and the uses for which it has been allocated, have, as suggested above, caused restrictions. In addition problems such as lengthy delays between application for assistance and the actual receipt of funds have made it hard for people to carry out their plans at the optimum time. Projects which could only be carried out in the dry season have not been funded until the rains have set in, or projects have gone ahead without finance and money has had to be allocated from

other coffers.

But a major additional complication has been the presence of Argyle Diamond Mines as a funding agency. Not only has this created divisions between the Aboriginal communities on these cattle stations, but because this money can only be used for certain very specific purposes it has made the process of support for the enterprises even more complicated. On Doon Doon, for example, ASIG/GNP money could be used to purchase Brahman cattle, and the raw materials to construct a new stockyard; but it could not be used to pay the workers to build the yard or look after the herd; nor could it be used to pay for a book-keeper/adviser to supervise and run the project. Agencies such as ADC and DEIR had to cover these costs. Similarly, Glen Hill could obtain a school building with ASIG/GNP money, but not a school teacher. Altogether the restriction of ASIG/GNP expenditure to capital items has meant the creation of complex infrastructures at Glen Hill and Doon Doon, but with no assured way of maintaining them in the future let alone the present.

Another problem is that the agencies involved are continually being played off against each other, to the great confusion of the Aboriginal communities concerned. Access to ASIG/GNP funds has been seen by the government agencies as a valid reason for withdrawing support in order to give less fortunate groups elsewhere a bigger share in a very limited cake. While there may well be truth in such an argument, it does not take into account the disruption experienced by these East Kimberley communities, a disruption for which the ASIG money is supposed to provide some compensation. Moreover it has thrown two communities in particular, Doon Doon and Glen Hill, almost entirely under the influence of advisers who work for the mining company. Such people may well be sympathetic to Aboriginal needs, but they certainly also place the interests of their employer at the very top. In addition, the fact that both Glen Hill and Doon Doon get much larger sums of money from ASIG/GNP than do Bow River or Violet Valley is a cause for jealousy. Housing, power and water supplies, vehicles, stockwork equipment, bulldozers and graders all seem to be more readily available at Doon Doon or Glen Hill than elsewhere, and while others do take advantage of these things by borrowing equipment when they can there is probably some resentment. This seems to be the basis for

resistance about setting up a joint management venture to provide an adviser to work with all the projects, and pool resources in other ways. Although others talk somewhat disparagingly, and also with pity, about the lack of independence of those groups who have accepted ADM as their advisers, there is also an awareness of some of the benefits.

Communities or Enterprises - Some Problems and Recommendations

Many of the specific points mentioned above show wide gaps in understanding and aspirations between the Aboriginal communities on the one hand, and non-Aboriginal agencies, whether government or private on the other. Important issues concern the welding of Aboriginal social values and needs with economic activities; the failure of funding groups not only to recognise this but also to recognise where these cattle enterprises fit in the broader context of the Kimberley pastoral industry; and the failure to take into account historical events which go far in explaining the difficulties of today. An understanding of some of the general problems and the formulation of appropriate recommendations must be considered on two levels; that of the Aboriginal community itself; and that of the government, mining company or other external agency.

Community Level Recommendations

These communities are all concerned, either through their own interests or through pressure exerted from outside, with the grazing of cattle on land which has very limited potential for such activity. Recommendations for their future development include the following.

1. That the use of the land be very carefully assessed and monitored so as to prevent further degradation, and allow for the repair of existing damage.
2. That, to allow for (1), it be possible for current pastoral lease covenants to be varied to enable such measures to occur.
3. That the current Aboriginal leaseholders be properly consulted about their aspirations for the community, with full understanding of the options which may be open to them. This could include taking large areas

of their land out of pastoral production altogether. Such consultation should include advice not only from experts intent on promoting pastoralism as the only logical means of land use in this part of the East Kimberley, but also experts on land degradation and people with experience of alternative forms of use for such environments.

4. That every effort is made to provide appropriate financial support for these communities. Such support should be made in the full understanding of their dual and interdependent social and economic components, and of their need to call on non-Aboriginal assistance in management and book-keeping. Financial support should also allow for the maintenance of their existing infrastructure, and forward planning must take account of needs following a probable decline in funds coming through ADM and Western Australian government agreements.

5. That every effort be made to try to bring together the different Aboriginal groups concerned so that their common interests can be clarified. Present conflicts between those with large funding inputs from ADM and those without are not only divisive within the Aboriginal community, but also create a situation favourable to disruption by external agencies.

Recommendations concerning External Agencies

Major problems arising through the operations of external agencies concern land and funding.

Land

The poor state of the land for pastoralism must be recognised before further promotion of cattle activities occurs. Either degradation must be countered by investing in improvements, or the land should be taken out of production altogether. While the latter would in many ways seem to be the best approach, there are great conflicts. Current tenure will not allow such a step; the Aboriginal communities will lose an important method for showing that they can cope with activities seen basically as a non-Aboriginal prerogative; and politically it could be a very unwise step. But surveys and reports which aim solely at increasing herd sizes and profit margins should be discounted. New arrangements for the tenure of

pastoral leases must take Aboriginal needs into account, allowing for some areas to be put out of grazing production, and for smaller and more manageable herd sizes. Provisions under the Land Amendment Act 1987 do not appear to be sufficiently flexible to allow for such changes.

Funding

There is currently no single funding agency able to meet all the needs of places such as Bow River and Doon Doon. All have compartmentalised functions which allow them to cover some aspects and not others, and as a result there will always be conflict between what money is used for what purpose. It should be possible for such groups to obtain block allocations which can, where appropriate, cover a mixture of social and economic needs without having to artificially split resources between the two. The following areas of conflict appear to be particularly marked:

Within the ADC there seems to be conflict between its different roles. When ADC buys land, it also considers enterprise funding, regardless of whether those concerned are actually going to request large sums from this source. It also considers housing needs. Ideally, with one organisation performing these roles, it should be relatively easy to reach a decision. This does not seem to be the case. Instead, the needs from one source may be assessed against the needs from another, and a failure to meet one requirement, such as not having a commercially viable business, prevents land being purchased in the first place. Furthermore, ADC has inherited responsibility for funding communities which were established without commercial viability, and when it responds by cutting off support it causes great disillusionment as well as hardship. Accountability presents yet more problems. Altogether it seems that the current policy and structure of ADC do not easily mesh with the needs of communities such as those considered here.

Conflict also arises between different government funding agencies. ADC, DAA, DEIR and others are all concerned with supporting different components of life and activity on these Aboriginal communities, and their efforts are often poorly co-ordinated. Instead of coming together to see how they can collectively best meet overall social and economic needs they sometimes work independently, and blame the ensuing problems on each other rather than on the initial failure in co-ordination. Ultimately it

is the Aboriginal community which misses out, having to wait months or even years for power supplies, for much needed funds for training programmes and for other resources.

ADM's presence and activities presents an additional problem in the region. The initial terms of the agreement between ADM and the local Aboriginal communities were shortsighted in that they took no account of the future maintenance of the capital improvements introduced. And the limited sums of money involved, which form only a small proportion of the takings from the mine, cannot be used for investment. Even if they could, they would bring in very little. In real terms the East Kimberley Aborigines have derived very little benefit from mining on their land. In fact, in terms of their own independence, they may be worse off than they were ten years ago.

References:

Christensen, W. 1983

'Aborigines and the Argyle Diamond Project:' Submission to the
Aboriginal Land Inquiry
CRES, ANU, Canberra, East Kimberley Working Paper No.3

Dixon,R., Elderton,C. Irvine,S and Kirkby,I. 1984

'A Preliminary indication of some effects of the Argyle
Diamond Mine on the Aboriginal Communities in the region: a
report to the Kimberley Land Council and the National
Aboriginal Conference'.
CRES, ANU, Canberra East Kimberley Working Paper No.8

Department of Premier and Cabinet , 1986

'Final Report on Pastoral Land Tenure"
Pastoral Tenure Study Group, Department of Premier and
Cabinet,WA

Department of Regional Development and the Northwest, 1985

Kimberley Pastoral Industry Inquiry
Department of Regional Development and the Northwest, Perth,
WA

Klepacki, N. 1984

'Doon Doon Station (Formerly Dunham River) Kununurra,
W.A. - Project Analysis and Report'
Department of Agriculture, Derby, W.A.

Ledgar, R. 1986a

The pastoral industry on Aboriginal land: Its impact; Its
legacy; The future?
In Foran, B. and Walker, B. Science and Technology for
Aboriginal Development
Project Report No.3, CSIRO Division of Wildlife and
Rangelands Research, Alice Springs.

Ledgar, R. 1986b

'Bow River Report'
Unpublished document written for members of the Bow River
community

McPherson, S. 1987

'Aborigines and Land Use'
Paper delivered at ANU Public Affairs Conference, Aborigines
and Development in the East Kimberley, Kununurra, May 1987.

Young, E.A. (in press)

'Aborigines and Land in Northern Australian Development'
In Rich, D. (ed.) People, Environment and Development in
Australia, Australian Geographer, Special Issue for
International Geographical Congress, Sydney, 1988

Files:

Warmun Community

Bow River
Violet Valley

ADC, Kununurra

Woolah Community Enterprise, 30/85
Bow River Community, 98/85

ADC/ ALFC Canberra

Woolah Community/Doon Doon Cattle Station,

DAA, Alice Springs

108208
Bow River Community, 107021
DAA 77/166

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
- 1985/3 Aborigines and the Argyle Diamond Project.
Submission to the Aboriginal Land Inquiry.
Dr W. Christensen
East Kimberley Working Paper No.3
ISBN - 86740 202 4
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1985/4 Pastoral Resource Use in the Kimberley : A Critical Overview.
East Kimberley Working Paper No.4
ISBN 0 86740 183 4
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1985/5 Preliminary Report : Ethnobotany in the Bungles.
Dr Deborah Bird Rose
East Kimberley Working Paper No.5
ISBN 0 86740 186 9
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1985/6 A Preliminary Account of the Ethnobotany of the Kije People of Bungle Bungle Outcamp.
N.H. Scarlett
East Kimberley Working Paper No.6
ISBN 0 86740 205 9
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1985/7 An Aboriginal Economic Base: Strategies for Remote Communities.
Extracts from *Report of the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Programs.*
East Kimberley Working Paper No.7
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.
East Kimberley Working Paper No.8
ISBN 0 86740 203 2
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1985/9 Structural Change in Wyndham.
M.C. Dillon
East Kimberley Working Paper No.204 0
ISBN 0 86740 204 0
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1985/10 Inhabited National Parks: Indigenous Peoples in Protected Landscapes.
Stan Stevens
East Kimberley Working Paper No.10
ISBN 0 86740 263
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1986/11 An Assessment of the Social Impact of Argyle Diamond Mines on the East Kimberley Region.
Frank Donovan
East Kimberley Working Paper No.267 11
ISBN 0 86740 267 9
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1986/12 The Health of Kimberley Aborigines: A Personal 15-Year Perspective.
Michael Gracey and Randolph M. Spargo
East Kimberley Working Paper No.12
ISBN 0 86740 268 7
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1987/13 Annotated Bibliography on Tourism and Aborigines. Prepared for 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
East Kimberley Working Paper No.14
ISBN 0 86740 276 8
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1987/15 Guidelines for Research into Social Impacts Deriving from Non-Aboriginal Developments on Aboriginal Land.
Sue Kesteven
East Kimberley Working Paper No.15
ISBN 0 86740 277 6
ISSN 0816-6323

- 1987/16 Conservation Priorities in North-Western Australia.
Richard J-P. Davies
East Kimberley Working Paper No.16
ISBN 0 86740 282 2
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1987/17 Social Impact Assessment Bibliography.
Compiled by Donna Craig
East Kimberley Working Paper No.16
ISBN 0 86740 302 0
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1987/18 The Potential for Reduced Dependency at Aboriginal
Communities in the East Kimberley Region.
J.C. Altman
East Kimberley Working Paper No.18
ISBN 0 86740 301 2
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1987/19 The Economic Impact of Tourism on the Warmun (Turkey
Creek) Community, East Kimberley.
East Kimberley Working Paper No.19
ISBN 0 86740 303 9
ISSN 0816-6323
- 1987/20 The Effect of Public Sector Activity on Aborigines in
the East Kimberley. Part I. Public Sector Agencies in
the East Kimberley.
Audrey Bolger
East Kimberley Working Paper No.20
ISBN 0 86740 308 X
ISSN 0816-6323