

East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project

THE EFFECT OF PUBLIC SECTOR ACTIVITY
ON ABORIGINES IN THE EAST KIMBERLEY

PART II
ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES IN THE KIMBERLEY

Audrey Bolger*

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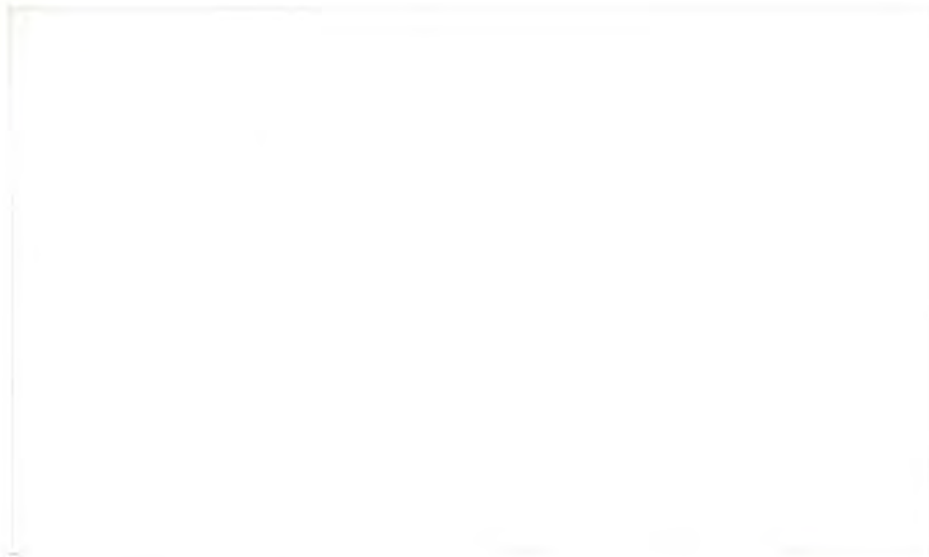
A Joint Project Of The:

Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies
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The aims of the project are as follows:

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

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

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role and impact of public sector activity on Aboriginal communities in the East Kimberley. It reviews the work of Commonwealth and State Government agencies, and non-government organisations which deliver services to Aborigines such as churches and Aboriginal organisations.

Part I, which is being published as a separate working paper, presents an overview of public sector activity in the region. Part II presents detailed case studies of public sector activity in six Aboriginal communities - two large isolated communities, two outstations, and two town communities.

The data collected covered:

1. the purposes for which funding is provided and its effects;
2. the services provided by each organisation;
3. the extent to which Aboriginal people are involved in public sector activities affecting them, and the scope for alternative and improved approaches;
4. the existence and effectiveness of community development projects and the role of direct funding in community development.

The paper concludes that no government agencies are undertaking community development in East Kimberley communities: that is, no one is taking an overall view of the development of any community.

While agencies may cooperate to some extent, for the most part they work independently and consult with Aboriginal communities on this basis. For effective community development to take place there needs to be a coordinated approach by all agencies, both government and non-government. Social disintegration is increasing in Aboriginal communities in the region, and a major contributing factor is present public sector activity and funding methods.

Bolger suggests that it will be necessary for agencies to rethink their strategies to enable communities to develop in a positive and holistic way.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAC	Aboriginal Advisory Council
AACC	Aboriginal Affairs Coordinating Committee
AAPA	(WA) Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority
ADC	Aboriginal Development Commission
ADM	Argyle Diamond Mines
AEC	Aboriginal Enterprise Company
AEDP	Aboriginal Employment Development Policy
AETB	Aboriginal Employment and Training Branch
AFO	Aboriginal Field Officer
AHB	Aboriginal Housing Board
AHW	Aboriginal Health Worker
AIM	Australian Inland Mission (Uniting Church)
ALFC	Aboriginal Land Fund Commission
ALO	Aboriginal Liaison Officer
ALS	Aboriginal Legal Service
ALT	Aboriginal Lands Trust
ADG	Assembly of God
ARA	Aboriginal Resource Assistants
ARDS	Australian Resource and Development Service (Uniting Church)
ASIG	Argyle Social Impact Group
ATA	Aboriginal Teacher Aides
CA	Community Adviser
CALM	(WA Department of) Conservation and Land Management
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects
CEC	Catholic Education Commission
CEEDS	Community Employment and Enterprise Development Scheme
(C)CEP	(Commonwealth) Community Employment Program
CES	Commonwealth Employment Service
CHP	Community Homemaker Programme
CM&S	Community Management and Services
ComEd	(Commonwealth Department of) Education
DAA	(Commonwealth) Department of Aboriginal Affairs
DCS	(WA) Department of Community Services
DCW	(WA) Department of Community Welfare (now DCS)
DEIR	(Commonwealth) Department of Employment and Industrial Relations
DNW	(WA) Department of Native Welfare (now DCS)
DO	District Officers
DOHC	(Commonwealth) Department of Housing and Construction
DSS	(Commonwealth) Department of Social Security
EEA	Enterprise Employment Assistance
EKAMS	East Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service
GIA	Grants-in-Aid
GN	Good Neighbour
KAMSC	Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service Council
KLC	Kimberley Land Council
NEAACC	North-East Area Aboriginal Consultative Committee
NESA	National Employment Strategy for Aboriginals
PO	Project Officer
RAHLO	Regional Aboriginal Health Liaison Officer
RFDS	Royal Flying Doctor Service
SEC	(WA) State Energy Commission
SHC	(WA) State Housing Commission (now Homeswest)
SVO	Senior Vocational Officer
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TAP	Training for Aboriginals

INTRODUCTION

In the first part of this report an overview was provided of the resources and services supplied by both government and non-government agencies to Aboriginal communities in the East Kimberley. This part deals with the effects these resources and services have on communities and with the perceptions of people in the communities of the activities of the agencies.

Obviously not all communities are, or have been, treated identically by all agencies. Nor are all communities affected in the same way by the input of similar resources or the provision of similar services. In order to try to make some comparisons of the resources and services provided and of the effects on the development of communities in different situations, six communities were chosen for intensive study. Three types of communities were identified in the area: town communities, remote communities, and outstations. Two from each type were selected from different parts of the East Kimberley.

The emphasis is on communities rather than on individual Aboriginal people. For this reason those Aboriginal people living in the towns of Kununurra, Wyndham and Halls Creek as individuals and not as part of a recognised group are not dealt with. This is because they tend to use the same services and resources as are available to all those people living in the towns. It is true that, as Aborigines, they are still entitled to some special benefits in such areas as housing and education or training grants, and some do take advantage of these. However, they are received as individual entitlements rather than as resources intended to benefit a group of people in a community.

The accounts of the communities are historical and cover events which have shaped the lives of the people over the last twenty or thirty years. Earlier events also contributed to their present situation, but it is in the last twenty years or so that important changes have occurred in the public sector which have had a major impact on the lives of Aboriginal people in East Kimberley. The 1967 referendum ushered in an era when both Commonwealth and State governments, through their statutory agencies, began directing a host of new policies and programs towards the advancement of Aboriginal people.

For Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley the interaction with government changed dramatically. Instead of the all-encompassing paternalistic direction of the Department of Native Welfare (backed up by the more overt control of the police) an increasing number of government agencies, both Commonwealth and State, began to appear in the area, all having some brief to deal with Aboriginal people. A bewildering array of new resources and services was being presented and Aboriginal people were not only encouraged to make choices from what was offered, but they were told they could make requests for resources to suit their particular circumstances.

The reality proved to be not quite so rosy. What seemed to be reasonable requests to Aboriginal people were turned down as unreasonable by government agencies. The choices of resources and services were often limited and when accepted were accompanied by strict controls which required communities to set up alien structures to administer the resources. These interfered with traditional procedures. Communities did

benefit but the price paid for so-called advancement often seemed too high. Nor did all people in the area benefit equally from the new policies. Some, through no fault of their own, were unable to comply with the conditions for receiving grants; others were simply unaware of what was available. Communities were manipulated by government agencies but in turn learned how to handle the bureaucratic system to some extent.

Nor were government agencies the only ones communities had to deal with. The changes in government policies also led to changes in the approaches of non-government organisations, such as churches. In addition, the push for Aboriginal advancement gradually led to the setting up of Aboriginal controlled organisations which either brought new resources into the area or took over the provision of resources and services which were previously the responsibility of government.

How communities in varying situations and with differing backgrounds have been affected by the activities of these agencies is the subject of the following case studies. The concern is partly practical: what resources or services have they received, what have they not acquired? But the process is equally important: how have agencies acted in relation to communities, and how are their activities perceived by the people concerned? Practical gains and satisfactory processes may go together but they may not. Material achievements which seem positive may involve processes which produce negative perceptions of agencies in Aboriginal communities. The reverse is also true: agency activities may be viewed positively even though no material gains have been made. The picture is not a simple one.

TOWN COMMUNITIES

Yardgee

Yardgee community is located in a new Homeswest housing complex in the town of Halls Creek. The population consists of about 150, mainly Kija, people although a few Jaru people also live there. The 22 houses, which are standard Homeswest town houses, were built on the old No.1 Reserve and were completed in 1983.

Yardgee people have long experience of dependence on government activities. Most of the older people lived at Moola Bulla station until it was sold in 1955. Moola Bulla was a government owned cattle station, bought to serve as an Aboriginal 'feeding station' in 1910, in an attempt to appease local station owners who complained about the effects of marauding Aborigines on their cattle stocks. Since Moola Bulla was in Kija country many people from this language group and the adjacent Jaru group became permanent residents of Moola Bulla, whereas those from more distant areas who were brought to Moola Bulla in later years tended to reside there only temporarily.

Men were trained as station workers and women as domestic workers. In time a school and dormitory were established where children were initiated early into some of the social skills considered necessary to enable them to fit into their place in Australian society, and also gained a rudimentary knowledge of the three Rs. Since Moola Bulla was government owned, all the staff were government employees and the people's lives were totally controlled by government. But in 1955, for reasons which are

still obscure, the government sold the station to a Queensland pastoralist who refused to take responsibility for the Aboriginal residents. They were removed to the United Aboriginal Mission at Fitzroy Crossing.

However, Fitzroy Crossing was alien country for Kija and Jaru people and it was not long before many of them moved back to Halls Creek. A few were allowed to return to work at Moola Bulla but the majority simply camped on the town common on the fringes of Halls Creek. In the late 1950s the government was forced to accept that they were there to stay and two reserves to accommodate them were set up by the Department of Native Welfare (DNW).

No.1 Reserve, which had separate dwellings, was intended to cater for families, while No.2 Reserve had communal dwellings and was intended for pensioners. However, the Jaru people took over No.2 Reserve and the Kija people No.1 Reserve, with pensioners occupying a communal building which originally housed children before the other houses were completed. Over the years communal ablution blocks were built, with showers heated by solar power and flushing toilets, but the houses remained small and sub-standard and were always overcrowded. However, they were cheap, the rent being only \$1 a week, with power and water supplied by the government. Many Yardgee people now remember this as a distinct advantage.

During the 1960s most people living on No.1 Reserve were as dependent on the government, now represented by the DNW, as they had been at Moola Bulla. A few people worked seasonally on nearby stations or had labouring jobs in town, but most depended on welfare. In 1960 they became eligible for pensions and benefits from the Commonwealth Department of Social Security. Since DSS had no office in Halls Creek and DNW administered the payments this made little difference to reserve people, apart from the fact that they began to receive cash payments rather than handouts. They still depended for their existence on government resources and services, and as far as they were concerned government was DNW, 'The Welfare', as it was known. DNW administered the reserves, paid their pensions and benefits, oversaw the care of their children and generally controlled their lives.

By the end of the 1960s, however, things were beginning to change, with the transfer of responsibility for Aboriginal affairs to the Commonwealth. That the reserve people were becoming aware of a possible new deal for Aboriginal people is shown by correspondence, on a DCW file, between the leader of the Kija people and the newly formed Office of Aboriginal Affairs concerning a request from the Kija people on the Halls Creek No.1 Reserve for funding to purchase either Mt Amherst or Moola Bulla station. The attempt was unsuccessful since neither property was for sale and at the time no other suitable property could be found. This was the first of a series of setbacks which undermined the faith of Yardgee people in the new government policies and actions.

During the 1970s other changes occurred. Officers of the newly formed DCW began employing community development strategies in their work with Reserve people, encouraging them to take a more active part in the running of the reserve and helping them to set up and operate programs which would lead to greater independence in running their lives. It was at this time, for instance, that the Community Homemaker Program was introduced through

which school lunches and meals for pensioners were organised on the reserves and women from the reserves sold secondhand-clothes and organised sewing classes and other activities in a Homemaker House in town.

However, the field officers' attempts to encourage people to be independent were undermined by DCW policies. At one point No.1 Reserve people wrote to the Director of DCW requesting the transfer of the reserve to the residents so that they could develop it. The reply made it clear how dependent they really were. It stated that it was not the department's policy to transfer reserves to Aboriginal residents; if they were no longer required by DCW they would revert to the Crown. There was no suggestion that Aboriginal people would be consulted at any time.

The negative experiences of government continued. In the mid-1970s Yardgee people again were bitterly disappointed by the failure of their attempts to obtain land in the Halls Creek area where they could run a few cattle and perhaps have a chance of independence in the future. Early in 1977 the Jaru people from No.2 Reserve, with Shire approval, had successfully established themselves at Red Hill, a couple of kilometres from the town. Encouraged by their success the Kija people, with the help of a DCW officer, then set up camp at Police Hole, also a few kilometres out of town.

At first everything went well. The Shire, believing the land to be part of the common, approved the move. DAA agreed to consider funding the drilling of a bore for a permanent water supply and the Education Department arranged for a school bus to take the children to and from school. The Moola Bulla manager, however, insisted that Police Hole was part of Moola Bulla station and when a rough survey was done by Department of Lands and Surveys this proved to be the case. Protracted negotiations then took place in an attempt to have the Police Hole land excised from Moola Bulla Station while DCW officers continued to support the people, helping them to negotiate assistance from DAA, ALT, and ALS. But, in the face of extreme hostility from the Northern Cattle Company, the owner of Moola Bulla, and threats of legal action, the WA State Government refused to act. It became clear to the Kija people that they would not get title to the land and that in this case government agencies would be unwilling to give them funds or services. In August 1977 the Kija people reluctantly returned to No.1 Reserve.

Other areas of land were suggested, including Elvire Station, which was owned by Ernie Bridge and was for sale. Again the Kija people were assisted by DCW, ALT and DAA in their negotiations for funding from the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission (ALFC). However, an undisclosed ban by the WA State Government on the transfer of any more pastoral leases to Aboriginal people prevented ALFC purchasing the property and Ernie Bridge eventually withdrew the station from the market.

Once more the hopes of No.1 Reserve people for a better deal from government were frustrated and older people still remember this with bitterness. The leader who led the negotiations has since died but his wife says that he lost faith in government action after the failure of the Police Hole venture and that his heart was never in the subsequent negotiations (Pers.com. Mona Smith, 1987).

The Kija people continued to live at No.1 Reserve without hope of any changes to their lives until about 1980 when discussions regarding their

rehousing were commenced, which culminated in razing the buildings on the reserve and replacing them with standard Homeswest dwellings. Pensioners were rehoused first in 1982 and relocated about a kilometre from the reserve in an area called Lumboo Creek. Families occupied the new houses built on the reserve, nine of which were completed by the end of 1982 and the remaining 13 in 1983.

There are conflicting stories about the negotiations and subsequent building of the new houses. Yardgee people say that they were approached by government officers from Port Hedland (some say from Perth) who came and asked them if they would like new houses. At first they did not realise some of these people were from 'Statehouse' (Homeswest, or State Housing Commission, as it then was). They assumed they were from Welfare since DCW administered the reserve and that was where most government officers with whom they had dealings came from. Not unnaturally, they agreed they would like new houses and were shown pictures of houses and asked questions about the number of rooms they would need.

Even when they discovered these were State Houses some still believed they would be living on a Reserve run by DCW. Others thought the houses would be built by 'Statehouse' who would later - perhaps in five years - hand land and houses over to them. Presumably this was because they knew of other Aboriginal communities in East Kimberley where village housing had been provided by Homeswest. All are adamant that they did not know that Homeswest would take over the Reserve land from DCW, redefine it as normal Homeswest land, and build standard rental properties on it which would be subject to the same tenancy conditions as for all other Homeswest properties in Halls Creek. They were thus shocked to find this out just before the houses were completed, and to learn that they would have to pay normal Homeswest rents and also pay for power and water.

Now, government officers and others who were in Halls Creek and were involved with Yardgee people in the negotiations concerning the new housing on No.1 Reserve do not altogether support their version of events. They agree that the process of consultation by SHC was appalling; people were simply presented with a fait accompli concerning the plans for their rehousing and there were few opportunities to change anything. However, they believe that it was made clear to the people that they would be getting State houses, that they would have to pay normal rent and pay for power and water, and that the reserve would no longer be a DCW reserve. Also, attempts were made to point out to them the advantages and disadvantages of accepting State houses.

There are obviously conflicting views here and it is interesting to note this as an example of the problems of communication which beset most negotiations between Aborigines and non-Aborigines. In this case it seems clear that Yardgee people were told what would happen, appeared to listen and acquiesce but did not really 'hear'. Having suffered severe disappointment in their attempts to establish themselves on land of their own, they now saw this as a chance to get some improvements to their living conditions on No.1 Reserve if that was where they were going to have to stay. It is also understandable that they did not really want to hear about the disadvantages of State houses since they were not being offered anything else.

Many Yardgee people feel that this is just one more example of the unreliability of government promises. Nevertheless, most people are

reasonably happy with their houses although some resent the extra expenses involved, and nostalgically recall that they paid only \$1 a week to live on the Reserve. Others believe there are advantages both in the comfort of the houses and in the individualist style of living which has more and more become the norm for Yardgee people since moving into the new housing complex.

In the initial excitement of the move into the new houses in 1983 the people launched into a period of intense activity. A community council was formed and SHC awarded them the contract for landscaping the area, providing funding for fencing materials and trees. The community gave itself a new name, Yardgee, and with the help of DCW and Ngoonjuwah, became incorporated. Although they had no land tenure it was still envisaged that they would want to be able to attract resources and services from government agencies and to set up programs for the benefit of the community. To this end DEIR provided funding for one of the community members to be trained as a bookkeeper through Ngoonjuwah Aboriginal Resource Agency.

At the same time DCW agreed to pay two community members to act as Homemakers and help people with any problems arising from their move to conventional housing. Also a Community Homemaker Program was funded so that the people could organise some programs of their own, such as providing lunches for school children or arranging youth activities in the community. The SHC cooperated in this venture by allocating one of the houses for use as a community centre.

However, problems soon developed. Although constituted as a community Yardgee people had difficulty in acting as one. Support for the Community Homemaker Program was minimal and many people refused to pay the 'chuck-in' suggested by the Council to help fund community activities.

Numerous attempts, consistently backed by DCW officers, were made to revive programs or to start new activities, but these always foundered because not enough people supported them or were prepared to do the work.

Initially SHC had supported the Council's efforts, but a new officer appointed in 1984 was less helpful. One of the consistent problems at Yardgee has been that of dealing with drunks. In an attempt to deal with the problem the Council made a rule keeping alcohol out of the community and put up a notice to that effect. However, the new SHC officer quickly made it clear to everyone at Yardgee that the notice had no validity, since the land and houses were the property of SHC and individual tenants were entitled to do what they liked in their houses provided they did not break the law or cause undue annoyance to neighbours. It is true that not all residents were in favour of this rule but the insensitive handling of the situation by the SHC officer seriously undermined the efforts of the Council to make the Yardgee people take action as a community.

Today few government agencies deal with Yardgee as a community and there is little sign of unified action on Yardgee's part or of cooperation between agencies. DSS is the only Commonwealth agency with which they now come into contact. People receive their individual pensions and benefits through the mail. Since DCS now refuses to act as an agent for DSS and help people with problems, they have to wait for the fortnightly visit of the DSS officer, whom they are expected to see in an office at DSS (as are all other Halls Creek people with Social Security problems).

Activity by other Commonwealth agencies is conspicuously absent so far as Yardgee Community is concerned. Yardgee people say that a DAA officer did visit them once to ask about their needs but he never returned and they heard no more from DAA. A DAA officer insists that visits are made but that Yardgee is a 'fully independent community' (sic) and has few funding needs. A file in the Kununurra DAA office gives a measure of DAA's knowledge of Yardgee. The whole of the file relates to Yardgee's incorporation, beginning with a disclaimer on the part of the Kununurra office of any knowledge of the incorporation application but raising no objections with the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations. After Yardgee was incorporated there followed three years of correspondence with Yardgee, Ngoonjuwah and ALS in response to requests from Canberra for information regarding the appointment of a Public Officer and a Council and the submission of annual financial statements. It seems doubtful if any real attempts were made to find out anything about the Yardgee community for in September 1986, a letter was written to the Registrar stating that Yardgee's assets included a house used as a Homemaker's Unit. It was left to Ngoonjuwah to point out that, in fact, Yardgee had no such asset since the house was owned by Homeswest.

There is more contact with State government agencies but again it is generally at an individual level. Community Health sisters visit Yardgee almost every day to check on young children and old people. Teachers visit parents to discuss truancy. The kindergarten teacher picks up pre-school children in her vehicle and takes them into the kindergarten and returns them. The police come mainly to issue individual warrants though they do respond to calls regarding disturbances caused by drunks.

Only DCS and Homeswest still deal with Yardgee as a community in some respect. Most of DCS's contact is now with individuals relating to juvenile delinquency or child abuse, but the Community Homemaker Program is still funded and an officer continues to support those who try to make it operate. Although the Homeswest officer considers the Yardgee people the same as other Homeswest tenants and deals with them accordingly, she does acknowledge the community to the extent of consulting them about the acceptability of new tenants when the original residents move away.

On the whole Yardgee people appear to be reasonably happy with the resources and services they receive from government agencies. There are minor complaints and some are unhappy that there are not more resources for the community as a whole. Others, however, think the attempts to get community programs going only cause arguments and, as one woman said, it is better to be left alone to do things with one's own family.

In the case of non-government agencies, Yardgee people have little contact with Aboriginal organisations, other than ALS, which deals with their individual legal problems. Although there is still a Yardgee representative on the Ngoonjuwah Council he does not attend meetings and Yardgee people say they now have no contact with Ngoonjuwah or with KLC.

At least some of the break-down in community activities and the cutting of ties with Aboriginal organisations can be traced to the intense contact on the part of most Yardgee people with another non-government organisation, the Assembly of God (AOG). Most Yardgee people now belong to this church and this has had far reaching consequences. The AOG doctrine is a simple one, based on the Bible, which provides the answer to everything to those

who are skilled in its interpretation. Thus, alcohol, smoking and gambling are forbidden, according to the Book, and the emphasis is on individual responsibility for salvation. Taking part in Aboriginal Law and ceremonies is also forbidden for in the Bible can be found evidence that these are the work of the devil. The AOG church membership in Halls Creek is almost totally Aboriginal, most people coming from Yardgee and nearby fringe camps.

Many Yardgee people have embraced the AOG religion wholeheartedly. They attend long church services three times a week and have attempted to give up drinking, smoking and gambling, although there are some lapses. In practical terms, the doctrine of individual responsibility translates into looking after one's own DSS cheque or wages and not either expecting to visit relatives and receive food, or providing for visitors. Although activities such as those run through the Community Homemaker Program are approved by the Pastor, trying to get special funds from government agencies is not, partly because this undermines independence and partly because provision of special resources and services for Aboriginal people is frowned on by AOG as being separatist and causing divisions in Australian society. Many Yardgee people appear to have accepted this teaching and say they do not want funding from DAA because to be eligible for it they would have to agree to 'chuck-in' to make a community contribution. They prefer to keep their money under individual control.

However, there appear to be many contradictions in AOG teaching. Despite the emphasis on independence and the disapproval of separatism, the church owns buses and trucks which are used to take members-only on outings and shopping expeditions and to cart wood and water for people living in fringe camps. A bus and truck are kept at Yardgee and driven by church members, but there is no question of them belonging to anyone but the church. Yardgee people are thus totally dependent on AOG for many essential services previously provided by government agencies. However, this is defined by the Pastor as dependence on God (rather than the church) and independence from government.

There are many rumours in Halls Creek about the activities of AOG. People are said to have to put large sums of money into the church collections and the Pastor is said to stop people going to town meetings or taking part in many activities in town. I found no evidence for the large church collections at the AOG service I attended and Yardgee people deny that the Pastor stops them doing anything. The Pastor also denies the rumours although he admits that as the representative (and an extremely charismatic one at that) of AOG in Halls Creek his word may have considerable influence over church members. However, he argues that AOG has been so enthusiastically embraced by Aboriginal people from the old reserves and fringe camps because it has provided both spiritual sustenance and resources and services which neither the other churches nor the government agencies were providing satisfactorily.

Certainly Yardgee people have been disappointed by government promises and they now say they get few resources and services from government agencies. As individuals this is not so but it is true that, as a community, they receive few resources. Commonwealth agencies in particular tend to ignore them. But it is the day-to-day personal services provided by AOG which make the most impression: the visits by the Pastor and his wife who talk to them, take them shopping, take kids on picnics in school holidays, organise longer expeditions to church meetings

in Kununurra and Derby, or take wood and water to their relatives and friends in the nearby fringe camps. Also an AOG worker runs literacy and Bible classes in the community centre each morning.

However, not all Yardgee people are AOG members. This has caused discord in the community as the services provided by the Pastor and his workers are only available to church members. On the one hand the non-members hold aloof from the AOG majority, but they also resent the fact that it is AOG people who seem to control the use of the community centre and they feel excluded from activities there.

AOG arrived in Halls Creek at about the same time as the Yardgee people moved into houses, so it is difficult to be sure how much the disunity of the community is due to the more individual lifestyle produced by the separate, fenced off houses and how much to the individualistic teaching of AOG. Their failure to persuade the government to give them land and their belief that they were misled over the building of the new houses had made Yardgee people apathetic. As a community they were obviously powerless to influence the government in any way and simply accepted their dependent status. The new housing complex, coupled with the advent of AOG into their lives, brought the possibility of a different way of life which has proved satisfying to many of them even though it has simply meant changing from dependence on government to dependence on AOG. It is doubtful if Yardgee people realise this; after all they have never known real independence either as individuals or as a community.

Some government officers in Halls Creek are hostile to AOG and resent the church's activities at Yardgee, but it is the failure of government policies and actions to meet the needs of Yardgee people that has led to the present situation. Nor has there been any attempt on the part of the agencies either to cooperate with AOG or to try to help Yardgee people by means of co-ordinated developmental activities.

Mirima

The Mirima Community is located on an area of land about 2 kms from Kununurra town centre at the foot of Kelly's Knob. Until the end of 1986 this was officially known as Kununurra Reserve and was owned and administered by DCS. About 150 people make up the community, most of them Mirriwung speakers, although there are some from other language groups. The reserve is connected to the town water and power supplies and there are 13 houses, three ablution blocks and a community centre, all of which were built many years ago by DNW and are in poor condition. Since the population can increase considerably during the wet season when people are forced to move into town from nearby outstations, the living conditions are often seriously overcrowded with several families sharing each house.

The area around Kununurra is traditional country for the Mirriwung language group. Before moving to Kununurra Reserve many Mirima people were employed at Ivanhoe and other stations in the vicinity. Most were forced to move off the stations after the extension of the Pastoral Industry Award to Aboriginal people in the area in 1968. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that in the first year of the award DSS refused to pay unemployment benefits to people who remained on the

stations during the temporary lay-off during the wet season. This meant that even those who were still employed were forced to move to the towns for part of the year (DNW, 1970:7).

The first six transitional type houses and two ablution blocks on the Kununurra Reserve were completed by DNW in 1966 (DNW, 1966:8). Kununurra was then a new town, the Ord River Irrigation Project having only recently commenced. However, a few cotton farmers had already started operations and some Aboriginal people from the area were employed by the farmers and camped in Kununurra. The influx of people from the cattle stations from 1968 made it necessary to extend the reserve and a further seven houses, a community centre and another ablution block were soon added.

The Mirriwung people now called the reserve Mirima Village and by 1971 had set up the first Mirima Council. Older people recall these early years in Kununurra as traumatic ones. Not only were they forced off the stations, where many had spent all their lives, but also much of their traditional country was lost to them for ever when Lake Argyle was flooded. At first people were employed weeding in the cotton fields but this does not seem to have lasted for long. For most of the twenty years in Kununurra they have mainly depended on government provided welfare payments for survival.

DNW was located in Wyndham, but when it was disbanded in 1972 an office of the newly formed Department of Community Welfare (DCW) was opened in Kununurra. DCW took over administration of the reserve and generally looked after the needs of Mirima people. Other State government agencies also provided services for Mirima people, such as Community Health and the Education Department, but these were seen as peripheral by Mirima people; as far as they were concerned Welfare represented the government (State and Commonwealth) for most of the 1970s and problems relating to other agency activities were channelled through DCW.

In the early 1970s no Commonwealth departments had offices in Kununurra. There was a DAA area office in Wyndham but it was not until 1980 that this was moved to Kununurra. Individual DAA officers took some interest in Mirima but because the reserve was controlled by DCW there was no funding involvement. Other Commonwealth departments, such as DSS and DEIR opened offices only towards the end of the decade; until then Mirima people received their Social Security pensions and benefits through DCW.

Although depressed by their enforced move from the stations and the flooding of their land, Mirima people still hoped for a better future. During the early 1970s they were given encouragement and assistance both by representatives of the Catholic Church and DCW officers. People recall that a priest, assisted by other people in town, encouraged them to hold meetings and plan for the future rather than to simply accept their forced residence on the reserve and dependence on government handouts. A submission to the Senate Standing Committee on the Social Environment was prepared on their behalf putting forward Mirima Council's ideas. These included acquiring land in order to run cattle or set up other economic ventures and, where necessary, training people to operate these; building new single family houses on the reserve and upgrading facilities; and starting a hostel for children from the surrounding area who attended school in Kununurra. With the priest's help a small piece of land was acquired close to Mirima, named Moongung Darwung, and the hostel was set

up, initially supervised by one of the sisters from the convent. Unfortunately, the other ideas which might have led to some economic independence were ignored.

At this time the approach of DCW officers in Kununurra was one of community development. The officer in charge argued strongly that the aim should be to make Mirima self-managing and he and other officers worked with the Mirima Council, encouraging them to take more control of the reserve. For instance, a caretaker's wage was paid direct to the Council and the community controlled the allocation of this wage, paying small amounts to community members to perform jobs around the reserve. Also the community centre was used for Homemaker activities (cooking, sewing, etc.) and adult education classes and a store were planned. The officer envisaged community members eventually taking control of all these activities. Mirima people recall this officer with affection, saying Welfare helped them a lot in those days.

Unfortunately, one of the problems with government departments is the lack of coherence between policies and activities in the field. While they should complement each other, they often do not. Sometimes good policies are frustrated by poor field services; at other times the reverse is true.

Before he left Kununurra some years later this DCW officer voiced his frustration at the lack of support he and his staff received both from his own department and from other government departments. It had been DCW policy for some time to close all reserves and relocate people in standard housing; the extension of reserves such as that at Kununurra had been seen as a necessary, but retrograde, step brought about by the influx of people from nearby stations. The policy may have been admirable (although it is significant that Aboriginal people were not consulted about it) but unfortunately there were no plans in the foreseeable future for rehousing Mirima people. As far as they were concerned the DCW policy simply meant that the department was reluctant to spend money on the reserve and their living conditions deteriorated steadily. The officer in Kununurra saw the department as culpable in not accepting responsibility for the well-being of the people, providing deplorable facilities and having no plans to do anything to alleviate conditions.

His frustration also extended to other government departments. He argued that all agencies 'should form a committee espousing community development principles. This should enable a more unified and sensitive approach'. However, he received little consistent support from the other agencies, although individual officers did co-operate in the work with Mirima people at times.

Alterations to public sector activity began to occur in Kununurra in the 1980s. These have brought major changes for Mirima people, although not yet the improvements to their physical living conditions for which they have waited so long. As mentioned earlier, a number of Commonwealth departments have opened offices in Kununurra recently; this has greatly increased the options for services and resources available to Aboriginal people in the area. However, the presence of these agencies had little impact on Mirima since it was a reserve and was seen as being under the total jurisdiction of DCS. The people themselves also took this view, turning to DCS for assistance in all matters. The only other government officers with whom they had contact were the Community Health sisters who visited the reserve regularly, and the police, with whom the drinkers at

least were in regular contact. It was, then, the changes in DCS activities and the growth of the Waringarri Resource Agency which had most impact on their lives.

Although Mirima remained a DCS Reserve until the end of 1986 and the department was responsible for its administration, there has been a gradual move away from the community development approach adopted in the 1970s resulting in withdrawal from involvement in the day-to-day affairs of Mirima Community. Mirima people are aware of this. One man, recalling the help received from the DCW officer referred to previously, remarked: 'Welfare finish now - got no helping people here now'.

However, the void left by the withdrawal of DCS has been largely filled by Waringarri Resource Agency. Waringarri began in the late 1970s as a drop-in centre for town Aborigines. Gradually its activities changed to providing support to outstation groups in the area so that today it acts as a general resource agency for both outstations and reserve people. Services include bookkeeping, helping outstations with the transport of food supplies, and generally acting as a mediator and negotiator for Aboriginal individuals and groups dealing with government agencies.

From about the end of 1982 Waringarri began to work with Mirima people. Initially, attempts to bring about improvements were unsuccessful. An application to DAA for funds for a market garden project was turned down on the grounds that there were limited funds for employment projects and Mirima was in competition with others which 'rated a higher priority'. No explanation was given as to why the Mirima application was apparently rated as low priority in DAA's estimation. There was also a move to try to get SHC to build Village Housing on the reserve but negotiations were slow due to the fact that the land was not owned by Mirima Community.

It was not until 1985 that it became clear that events were really going to take a turn for the better for Mirima people. First, the Argyle Social Impact Group (ASIG) was set up whereby Argyle Diamond Mine and the WA government agreed to pay a total of \$1m per year for five years to Aboriginal communities affected by the mine. Mirima is one of 14 communities making up the Kununurra Project Committee which shares in the \$200,000 per annum allocated to the area. Divided amongst 14 communities this does not work out at much each, but it was probably the first time Mirima had had any direct funding. As the grants are limited to capital items, and fixed items require land tenure, requests for funding are somewhat restricted. Nevertheless the first two years of ASIG funding have enabled Mirima to acquire a much needed vehicle and a tractor.

Of greater significance for Mirima was the announcement of the Commonwealth-State land agreement which provided for the handing over of certain areas of land, including DCS reserves, to Aboriginal people under 99 year leases - not the freehold title they had hoped for and still believe is their right, but an improvement for a community such as Mirima which had given up hope of its needs ever being recognised. Following this the setting up of the joint West Australian Aboriginal Land and Communities Improvement Program (WAALCIP) in 1986 promised provision of services and facilities on those leases. Since then things have moved quickly. Although no work could start until Mirima obtained the lease for the land, negotiations began for funding to have a town plan drawn up and all services upgraded in preparation for building new houses. Discussions also began with ADC for funding for the houses.

In July 1986 the community was given interim funding by AAPA to run the reserve in anticipation of the transfer of the land from DCS and the withdrawal of DCS from administration of Mirima Village. In order for the community to be able to receive funding in its own right, an application for incorporation under the Commonwealth Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act was lodged in September, and in November the community became incorporated as Mirima Council.

In December 1986 a 99 year lease for their land was officially presented to Mirima Council by Ernie Bridge. At the same time Mr Bridge announced a \$300,000 grant from the 1986/87 WAALCIP funds to draw up a town plan and upgrade services on the old reserve land in readiness for building new houses. The overall responsibility for co-ordination of these developments was to rest with ADC and Waringarri in consultation with AAPA.

It was clear that up to 40 houses would be needed to adequately house all Mirima people, so an extension of land was rushed through so that the town plan and services could be done for the total area at once. It now seems that the first 12 houses will be built during the 1987/88 financial year using a combination of ADC and WAALCIP funding, with the rest following within the next two years. After twenty years of waiting Mirima people may at last have adequate houses and facilities.

However, their problems are not yet over; for the next couple of years at least they will still be coping with the results of past DCS penny-pinching. In order to set up Aboriginal reserves as cheaply as possible, survey costs were cut to a minimum and the land was not subdivided into individual blocks. This has meant that services such as water and power are provided via a single meter rather than to individual houses by separate meters. In cost terms this means that in the case of the water supply, the standard allowance is for one house only, all the rest being charged at the excess rate.

For Mirima people the original cost saving measure results in their annual water bill being about \$15,000. While DCS paid the bills this was never noticed, presumably because it merely involved a paper transfer from one State government department to another. But now it is different; Mirima Community is responsible for paying water and power charges and if the costs are divided between the houses the results are prohibitive. Fortunately, it seems that a compromise will be worked out for the interim, with the community and AAPA sharing costs until the land is reserviced. This is merely one example which draws attention to the misspending of money intended to benefit Aboriginal people by government departments.

Another problem to be dealt with is keeping the old houses habitable for the two or three years before the new ones are completed. The houses are in a bad state of repair, having been allowed to deteriorate for several years, apparently on the assumption that new ones would be provided by someone sometime. Now no government agency wants to put money into their up-keep and, as one woman remarked at a Mirima meeting when they were being discussed: 'Those houses very old - they were put up with the dam - maybe they fall down this year!' Here the ASIG funding may be useful for now that Mirima has land tenure fixed capital items can be funded. The chance of using this year's money to repair the old houses was being explored.

However, there is a problem. In the first two years of funding Mirima not only received a four wheel drive vehicle and a tractor but also agreed to act as sponsor for Waringarri, which is not included in the Project Committee. They received another vehicle on the resource agency's behalf. The total amount received by Mirima was, therefore, more than its share of the funds. The community will now have to negotiate with other members of the Kununurra Project Committee to be allowed to take more funds in the third year of ASIG funding for repairs to their houses. Other communities who had less money in previous years may feel they have first call, and if so Mirima's houses may indeed fall down.

Mirima people have obviously had many things to discuss recently and community meetings, which had been sporadic for some time, began to be held regularly in 1986. Recognising that life is becoming more complicated than it was when everything was controlled by DCS, and that important and complex decisions have to be made, the community has appointed a young man as chairman. The 'boss' is still an older, traditionally-oriented man; part of the chairman's job is to make sure that he and other elders in the community understand and agree with what is decided. This is obviously an important position. A grant was obtained from DEIR for the community chairman to be trained at Waringarri as a Project Officer to administer the new village. There he is learning the skills required for such administration, including acquiring knowledge of the government agencies with which Mirima has now to deal.

Most Mirima people still have little knowledge of the government agencies with which they are now involved. Only a handful of people attend community meetings, mostly women and older men and even their understanding is sketchy. For instance, they confuse ADC and DAA and most know nothing about other agencies such as ComEd. As far as they are concerned the promised improvements are simply coming from 'the government', or, perhaps, 'Ernie Bridge mob'. However, they are quickly becoming aware that funding does not come without restrictions. They have learnt that money given for a specific purpose can be spent only that way, and must be accounted for. For example, one older woman remarked that you cannot spend money for houses on vehicles. They are also wary of the controls which may be imposed and some are particularly suspicious of DAA. One man remarked that, although they do not yet get any DAA funding, they are already being warned that funding can be cut off if they do not conform to DAA guidelines. He went on to say:

We don't want that sort of thing to happen to us. I'm sure they're not supposed to operate like that. They're supposed to help us manage ourselves - not this mob in Kununurra - they just cut funding and threaten people.

As he and others are beginning to realise, they may be going to get great material improvements to their lives, but their choices are still limited and the decisions they are allowed to make will still be circumscribed by what the various government departments offer.

However, the majority of Mirima people do not share these perceptions. Most are uninterested in government activities apart from wanting new houses and are content to let the few leaders, backed by Waringarri, take the initiative. They collect their pensions and benefits from Waringarri, where any 'chuck-in' for community facilities, such as water and power, is taken out. It is through Waringarri that they learn of any events which

are important to them, and it is to Waringarri they go if they have problems. Waringarri has now become what Welfare was in the past, the 'one-stop' problem solving agency.

Mirima people do still have contact with DCS, but now the contact is mainly concerned with juvenile delinquency or child abuse. Similarly, there is ongoing contact with the police, mainly concerning drinking and traffic offences. Probably the only other government agency with which most Mirima people have contact now is Community Health. But many of Community Health's functions have now been taken over by EKAMS and both agencies now visit Mirima. Some Mirima people are on the EKAMS management committee and understand the changes, but most people are confused as to the different roles and simply refer to all health officers as 'sisters' or by name. EKAMS now runs the daily clinic at Mirima so it is likely that health services will become linked with that name in the future.

As far as other non-government agencies are concerned, the link with the Catholic church also remains strong. Many Mirima people are Catholic and church services are held at Mirima. Also one of the sisters visits Mirima regularly to help old people with shopping, and also runs a centre in town where second hand clothes are sold and other activities take place which some Mirima people attend. Most of the children attend St Joseph's School, which is run by the Catholic Education Commission, and people are encouraged to help with language and culture instruction at the school. However, only a few older people seem to show any interest in this; many parents take little interest in their children's education and seldom go to the school. The result is that children often do not attend school, particularly when they reach secondary levels. This is recognised as a problem by older people who would like to see young people trained to do jobs such as nursing, bookkeeping and kindergarten teaching for the community.

Individuals from Mirima use the services of ALS when necessary, and the community also keeps in touch with other Aboriginal organisations, such as KLC, the Kimberley Language Resource Centre in Halls Creek, and the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre in Broome. Where possible people from Mirima attend meetings of these organisations but, again, it is only a few who are interested. Since it tends to be the same people who are interested in all community matters, and in the end their time and resources are limited, Mirima is not always represented at these meetings.

In comparing the experiences of Yardgee and Mirima of the public sector many similarities but also some differences can be identified. Both communities have had histories of dislocation and forced removal to reserves and consequent long periods of dependence on government, mainly DCS. Both have suffered disappointments in dealings with government agencies in their efforts to get land and in the long delays before improvements were made to their living conditions.

Five years ago it seemed that Yardgee had gained when SHC houses were provided but, in retrospect, it now seems that Yardgee people have lost out in the long run. Mirima people have waited longer for their houses but because of a lucky change in government policy they have also acquired land and should be able to look forward to long-term funding for the upkeep of their community. How this will happen is not yet clear since DAA argues that Waringarri is funded to service communities in Kununurra area and AAPA is providing only interim funding. It seems likely that

there is going to be some argument over the responsibilities of Commonwealth and State in the future and it is to be hoped that Mirima does not end up being at the losing end of this argument.

Even without this problem Mirima people still have to confront other issues which Yardgee have already faced in a slightly different form. Apart from feeling cheated of their land, Yardgee people also felt they were misled when they had to pay rent for their new houses to SHC and also pay water and power charges. Mirima people will not have to pay rent to an outside body but they will still be responsible for the maintenance of their houses. This will involve the Council collecting a sum of money similar to a Homeswest rent, in addition to receiving individual bills for water and power when the land is subdivided. How they will react to this remains to be seen since their dependence on DCS for these facilities has been as great as that of Yardgee.

Mirima people, in gaining land, also have now the responsibility for administering that land. Although this gives them an independence denied to Yardgee people, it also means that they have new responsibilities as a community. Mirima's advantage is that they still do form a community; traditional ceremonies are still held at Mirima and they keep contact with other Aboriginal communities and organisations throughout the Kimberley. This is in contrast to Yardgee, where the fragile community that existed when they lived on the reserve has now almost completely collapsed with the move to the Homeswest housing complex, coupled with the influence of the Assembly of God and its prohibition of Aboriginal Law. However, Mirima is also a fragile community. As has been indicated only a small proportion of the community is active in community affairs. It remains to be seen whether they will be able to promote enough interest amongst other members to successfully develop their new village.

One issue concerning the huge input of government resources is significant in this respect. So far all of the funding has been for material resources - sewerage, water, power, houses and servicing of these. To date there is no input for social supports to help the community develop. Even the employment of the community Chairman as trainee Project Officer is time limited and no other Mirima people are being prepared to take part in the development of their community. There seems to be a singular lack of interest in the social aspect of development on the part of both Commonwealth and State governments and certainly none of their agencies are so far coming forward with any plans for Mirima's total development, either individually or co-operatively. If anything, there seems to be a feeling that this is Waringarri's problem but Waringarri's resources are already stretched to the limit.

REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Mulan

Mulan is one of the most isolated Aboriginal communities in WA, being situated about 260 km south of Halls Creek close to Lake Gregory on the edge of the Great Sandy Desert. Its nearest neighbours are the Aboriginal communities at Balgo, 40 km east, and at Billiluna, 60 km north. Access is by gravel road which is often in poor condition particularly at the southern end. There is also an airstrip, but this is only operable in the dry season; the nearest all-weather airstrip is at Balgo. Mail comes in

once a week by air, and social security cheques come in on the same plane together with a bank cash float to enable people to cash their cheques. The only other means of communication is by radio; as yet there is no telephone although Telecom plans to extend its service to the area by 1988.

At the end of 1986 about 180 people were resident at Mulan, most of whom were Walmajarri and Kukaja speakers from the surrounding country. The community is a cohesive one, with the population divided into three residential camps. It is also traditionally oriented and the upkeep of Aboriginal Law and attendance at ceremonies is an extremely important part of the lifestyle of community members.

At the present time Mulan village consists of 20 houses, varying from rudimentary shelters, built several years ago, to modern houses with all facilities, completed recently. A further six houses are planned for 1987. The community also has a good water supply consisting of a bore and tank operated by an electric pump, and a power house generating sufficient electricity for the community. Other services in the community include a clinic, a store with a small office, and a primary school, all air conditioned, and a mechanical workshop.

Development, in terms of buildings and facilities, has been extremely rapid at Mulan. When people settled there in 1975 the only buildings were two or three dilapidated iron sheds left from the brief period when the site was the 'homestead' for Lake Gregory station. The water supply was unreliable and there were no other facilities. The first substantial building was the school, opened by the Catholic Education Commission in 1976, but it was not until 1981 that any accommodation was built. This consisted of four corrugated iron shelters which are now being replaced by modern houses. All the main buildings and facilities have appeared in the last four years, which has meant a considerable input of government resources and accompanying activity which, as one would expect, has had a great impact on the community.

Mulan Community is joint owner with Mindibungu Community of the Tjurabalan Pastoral Company, which operates Billiluna and Lake Gregory pastoral stations. A full-time manager/pastoral adviser is employed by the company and is located at Billiluna. In addition two station managers from Mulan and Mindibungu communities are employed and men from the two communities work as stockmen on a seasonal basis. Tjurabalan Pastoral Company is self-supporting and receives no government subsidy, but does not generate sufficient income to provide employment for all members of the two communities. The operations of the company are overseen by ADC, which offers advice and assistance as necessary.

The two communities, Mulan and Mindibungu, operate separately from the pastoral company and from each other, and receive Grant-in-Aid money from DAA under the CM&S budget, out of which are paid the salaries of community employees and the costs of maintaining essential services. For 1986/7 Mulan's grant amounted to \$124,000. There are few white support staff at Mulan. A Project Officer, who generally oversees the running of the community, is employed out of CM&S funds and his wife operates the store and is paid a part-time wage from store profits. The only other resident white people are the two Sisters of Mercy who teach in the school. The clinic is run by Community Health but there is no resident officer; nurses from Balgo visit Mulan each week and there are regular visits from doctors

visits from doctors from the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) and from Community Health.

Community members are paid out of the CM & S budget to maintain water and power supplies and generally look after the community facilities. An Assistant Project Officer is employed full-time and two others are employed part-time. A trainee cashier works part-time in the store and is paid from a DEIR training grant. Community Health employs one woman part-time as an Aboriginal Health Worker and there is also a Camp Nurse. Two women work at the school as Teacher Aides. There are no other paid positions; most members of the community receive Social Security pensions and benefits.

Compared to the people at Yardgee and Mirima, the Mulan people's experience of non-Aborigines is comparatively recent. Many older people were born in the desert and have been in contact with white Australians only for the past forty years or so. Their early contact was with the pastoral stations on the edge of the desert, where some began to work, and with the Catholic mission at Balgo Hills. The only representatives of government with whom they came into contact until quite recently were the police, who were often called in by pastoralists to deal with cattle stealing, and officers of the Department of Native Welfare who did regular checks of the native camps at the pastoral stations. These seem to have had little effect on people's lives.

For instance, in 1970 a DNW officer, making what appears to have been an annual inspection, listed 23 Aboriginal people, (men, women and children) living at Lake Gregory station, which had recently been formed by splitting Billiluna station in half. Nine men were paid as stockmen, and one woman as camp cook; the rest were said to be dependents of the men who received a weekly wage of \$32.00 plus 'free board' and supported their own families. Children were supposed to attend the Education Department school at Balgo, though none were there at the time of the inspection, and health was looked after by means of an RFDS kit and evacuation by RFDS plane from Billiluna or Balgo where necessary.

The DNW officer drew attention to the unsatisfactory accommodation and sanitary arrangements, which consisted of tent flies, one pit toilet and a tap, and the manager promised to provide huts in the future. However, a subsequent inspection two years later found most of the same people living there in similar conditions, although several children were now away at school at Balgo. Lake Gregory had reverted to being an outstation run from Billiluna and there was no manager there. For this reason, the DNW officer reported that the people would probably be 'brought back' to Billiluna. The new government policies, with their ideas of self-determination for Aboriginal people, were obviously slow in reaching isolated areas of Western Australia.

However, either the people were not as malleable as the DNW officer thought, or they were already aware of changes taking place, for in 1975 a group of Walmajarri and Kukaja people who were then living at Balgo returned to Lake Gregory and set up their own outstation there. By that time none of them were working for Billiluna station; they simply camped around the abandoned homestead area at Lake Gregory, making use of the existing water supply. It was from this time that government policies and

the accompanying activities of government departments began to have an impact on the lives of the people who settled at Lake Gregory and became known as Mulan community.

Two years later Billiluna and Lake Gregory stations were on the market and were acquired for the Aboriginal people living there by the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission (ALFC). The acquisition of the Lake Gregory lease was extremely important to Mulan people. Although it has not made them totally independent economically, and they are still dependent on government resources for the development of their community, it has given them a land base, which includes at least some of their traditional country, over which they have reasonably secure tenure (although they do not regard it as perfect).

Because neither community was incorporated, a consultant for ALFC, who came from Adelaide, assisted them to form the Tjurabalan Pastoral Company to manage the two stations. The emphasis was on developing the pastoral operations although the consultant did also help with such things as setting up stores and with problems which arose in the communities. The affairs of the pastoral company and of the two communities were managed together by an Adelaide based company which provided a general managing and accounting service. This management structure continued even after the two communities became incorporated and began to receive some CM&S funding from DAA.

Initially, there was little contact with government agencies, other than with ALFC, mainly through the consultant. However, the Catholic church took an interest in Mulan and provided the first facility at the outstation, a school, which opened in 1976. Also, officers from DCW in Halls Creek did assist with matters such as trying to persuade the Broome DSS office to ensure that the pensions and benefits which, in the early days, were the sole source of income for the communities, were paid regularly. They also helped with the purchase of mattresses and of tents and flies, which were the only form of shelter for several years. In fact, by 1980 living conditions at Mulan were still little different to those described by the DNW officer in 1970.

In 1979 a tragedy occurred when the ALFC consultant, together with the leader of Mindibungu community, were killed in an air crash. This led to a period of uncertainty. The affairs of the Tjurabalin Pastoral Company and of the two communities were still being managed from Adelaide but, without the consultant at hand, people were unsure what was happening. Problems were compounded by a particularly bad wet season in 1981/2, resulting in reduced cattle sales and causing the store to run up a huge deficit. Matters were partially resolved in 1983 when accounting was transferred to a local agent and the pastoral company operations were separated from those of the communities. Nevertheless, problems still continued which were not resolved until 1985 when Mulan and Mindibungu community affairs were finally separated.

However, the 1979 tragedy also resulted in more government departments becoming involved at Mulan in trying to sort out the problems that arose, and the lack of facilities began to be addressed. In 1981 the first four basic shelters and two ablution blocks were erected with a grant from DAA. The community was not impressed with this experience of DAA assistance. The contract was given to DOHC and community members were involved in the construction as part of a training program. The shelters

took twelve months to complete, which the community felt was unreasonable, arguing that the skills they acquired could have been learnt more quickly in another way. Also, the ablution blocks, the building of which DOHC had sub-contracted, were still not operating properly due to lack of plumbing and an adequate water supply.

DOHC continued to be involved in the construction of their houses when ADC took over, with similar problems. However, by 1985 ADC's policy had changed to one where the main aim was to provide houses quickly and cheaply, only attempting to combine the construction with training schemes where this was seen as cost effective. Given the alternative of a private contractor who offered to build houses quickly but without employing community members, Mulan people jumped at the offer. They were well satisfied with the result and were still marvelling several months later at the speed with which the houses had been built - eight houses being completed in eight weeks.

It is ironic to note that in 1982 the community was taken to task for transferring a few hundred dollars in their CM&S budget from one category to another. The community replied that they had not realised the categories were exclusive, and that in that any case DAA should also take DOHC to task and find out how the grant for their houses and ablution blocks had been spent, pointing out that it seemed unjust to query a few hundred dollars when DOHC's handling of a grant of several thousand dollars was not accounted for. DAA's response was that DOHC usually carried out their work quickly and efficiently and that it was the private contractors that caused the delays!

The level of activity by government agencies at Mulan accelerated from the time the first houses were built. A stream of government agency representatives began to appear as plans were made to construct a power house, upgrade the water supply, and put in a clinic building as well as a store and office building. Not only did this involve construction work in which Aboriginal people were involved, but skills to maintain and run the finished facilities were needed, which the people did not have.

The first problem that was identified was that relating to mechanical skills, the community having acquired motor vehicles which were poorly maintained due to lack of skills in the community. The need for someone to carry out the necessary maintenance and train Aboriginal people in mechanical skills led to DAA including the salary of a Project Officer (PO) in the 1981/2 estimates. It was envisaged that the position would be shared between Mulan and Mindibungu, with the person living in a caravan at Mulan. However, twelve months later the position had not been filled. A DAA report noted that the salary offered and the poor living conditions made it difficult to attract anyone, let alone a person with good qualifications.

In the meantime, the 1982 wet season led to the store running up a huge deficit. When a PO was eventually appointed in October 1982, the job had been expanded to include not only mechanical work, for which he was trained, but looking after the two stores, for which he was not. Also, although he was required to work in two communities 60 km apart, no vehicle was provided and the communities ended up promising to pay him an allowance which was not included in the DAA budget. It is hardly surprising to find that he resigned in June 1983 due to overwork, poor conditions and uncertainty about his financial situation.

The problems facing both Mulan and Mindibungu and the steps necessary to deal with projected developments were clearly outlined in an unpublished report by an ADC officer in April 1983. First, it was noted that the emphasis on pastoral development at the two communities to date had been at the expense of any community development. Once the pastoral activities were separated from the community activities this became noticeable, as there were demands for social security cheques to be cashed, loans to be arranged, travel to be organised and stores to be managed. The result was that heavy demands were made both on the PO and the Pastoral Adviser, neither of whom had time to do the jobs for which they were hired. It was pointed out that:

With the advent of housing, 24 hour power, the localising of community bookkeeping and the desire for a better quality and supply of foodstuffs, additional non-Aboriginal involvement seems inevitable.

However, it was stressed that it was necessary, and that Aboriginal people agreed that training should be a major component of the job of a non-Aboriginal employee. It was argued that training was necessary not only in technical areas but in areas such as bookkeeping and store and station management. Finally, it was emphasised that for such complete development to take place at Mulan and Mindibungu it would be necessary to have co-ordinated action on the part of government agencies.

Unfortunately, the first attempt at co-ordinated action was not a resounding success. One of the most pressing problems had been identified as a result of the 1982 wet; this was the need for the communities to have stores with sufficient capacity to tide them over several weeks if roads were cut, so that expensive air drops of food would not be necessary. Obviously establishing these stores would be a complicated operation so ADC, DAA and DEIR agreed to work together. It was considered that store buildings would be needed in each community. In an effort to get as much as possible out of the venture it was also planned to include a small office in each store building from which general community business, as well as store business, could be conducted. The project also envisaged employment of a person to run the stores and to train Aboriginal people in both store management and bookkeeping, and a house for the store/bookkeeper was included. It was considered that four people should be trained in each community, two in store management and two in bookkeeping.

In the first half of 1983 it was agreed that ADC would provide funding for the building materials and a loan to each community for the initial stock. DAA was to provide funding for wages for those employed in the building, while DEIR would fund the trainer and trainees. Funding for the materials was approved by ADC by the beginning of July 1983; it was then that the problems of co-operation surfaced. Difficulties were experienced both in co-ordinating the release of funding and in the general organisation of the project to such an extent that the store at Mulan was not completed until October 1984. Reading the files of the three organisations it is difficult to apportion blame for the delay since each blames the others! Suffice it to say that it seems to have been mainly due to bureaucratic incompetence and lack of co-operation that Mulan people were left without adequate supplies for another wet season.

An attempt was made to salvage something from the fiasco by appointing the store/bookkeeper-cum-trainer early in 1984. However, the success of this part of the project was also limited due mainly to unrealistic demands being made. The bookkeeper, like the PO, was expected to work half-time in each community and again there were problems, both with transport and other matters. In this case he was located at Mindibungu and, because the store building had not been completed, when he came to Mulan he had to camp outside and work in the caravan which was used as both office and living quarters by the PO. When this was not available, as it often was not, then there was no alternative to working outside. There were also some difficulties in defining his job in relation to the PO who, until then, had been responsible for store operations at Mulan, in addition to his mechanical work at both Mulan and Mindibungu, and had been forced to deal with other book work since there was no-one else to do it.

Both the PO and the bookkeeper, with the communities' support, wrote letters to DAA, ADC and DEIR pointing out the impossibility of either of them working efficiently in this situation. They suggested that, in the circumstances, it would be more reasonable for each community to employ one of them as a PO.

Two linked issues arise from this sorry story; one concerns the employment of white staff and the other the training of Aboriginal people in community oriented skills. Both had been raised in the 1983 report by the ADC officer. At this time he predicted that the complexity of developments at Mulan would necessitate the involvement of more non-Aboriginal people. In fact that has not happened. There is still only a Project Officer at Mulan and his job is as broad as ever. He is supposed to do the bookkeeping, supervise the assistant PO, assist the community to maintain vehicles, oversee housing projects and water maintenance, maintain the garage, assist the Community Council, liaise with government departments and (in his spare time?) help with Social Security forms and the training of community members. The only real change has been that since 1985 the joint PO and store/bookkeeper positions have been changed to separate PO positions located in each community. Also the PO's wife is now employed part-time to run the store.

However, as was predicted in the 1983 report, the administration of Mulan is now much more complicated than it was four years ago, and it is unreasonable to expect one person to have the range of skills needed. As one would expect, what tends to happen is that the PO copes with the immediate tasks as best he can, since he usually is not trained for most of them, and the more difficult ones, such as training or any attempt at community development, are simply not attempted. The original idea of having people with different skills working in both communities seemed a good one. The problem was that there was already more work than could be done half time in each community and the travelling and poor working conditions made the task impossible.

Although some DAA officers have recognised the difficulties under which the POs have worked, there has been a remarkable lack of sympathy on the part of DAA as a whole. For instance, when a DAA officer visited Mulan and Mindibungu in 1982 and reported on the difficulties being experienced by the first PO, the Area Officer's only response was that he still couldn't understand why proper books of account were not being maintained!

With this lack of support, coupled with poor pay, bad living conditions and a heavy workload, it is not surprising that to date only one PO at Mulan has stayed for more than a year.

The story of the resignation of that PO towards the end of 1986 is another in the saga of government agency non-co-operation. When ADC was formed in 1981 one of its functions was the provision of housing. However, ADC argued that its function was to provide housing for Aborigines, not for non-Aborigines, and that DAA should still provide houses for community employees. DAA disagreed. At Mulan the result was that their PO had to live in a substandard caravan despite the community's plea to both ADC and DAA to do something. The problem appeared to be solved in mid 1985 by the Minister directing ADC to take on the responsibility for all housing in Aboriginal communities but at that point there was no money left in the East Kimberley housing budget. In despair the PO left. It now appears that the next PO will have two houses since DAA then agreed to fill the gap with a transportable house and at almost the same time ADC decided to allow the community to allocate one of its own houses to be built in 1987 to the PO!

The issue of training was also addressed in the ADC 1983 report and it was clear that it was envisaged that this would go hand in hand with total community development. This has certainly not happened. As noted the one attempt at co-ordinated development was a dismal failure and no other has been tried. Training does take place but it is generally ad hoc and lacks any overall development plan. The Teacher Aides receive two weeks training each year at the Catholic Education Commission centre in Broome as well as training on the job. The Aboriginal Health Worker receives similar training with Community Health, although that on the job is minimal as there is no resident nurse at Mulan and Community Health at Balgo is generally so under-staffed that education for either workers or communities has to be abandoned. DEIR has funded several other individuals to undertake training of various kinds. For instance a couple of community members have done a store training course with Arnhemland Progress Association in the Northern Territory, while others have been to bookkeeping and mechanics courses at Pundulmurra and two men have attended SEC courses in power house maintenance. Also, DEIR has recently organised a major training program in bore and windmill management for the Tjurabalin Pastoral Company.

However, none of this is co-ordinated nor is there any follow-up of training in the community. Both DEIR and DAA tend to blame the white staff for this, saying they will not co-operate. However, as pointed out they are already overworked, nor is it reasonable to expect the PO and his wife, who are the only white staff at Mulan, to be able to provide training in the variety of skills needed in the community, any more than it is reasonable that they should perform them all themselves.

One of the problems is that government departments are locked into a system whereby they provide only one service or resource and have no overall view of a community's development. Thus, ADC provides housing and support for enterprises, Community Health provides health care, SEC installs power plants and maintains them, and so on. At Mulan, as physical developments have taken place more and more agency representatives have turned up offering to provide services and resources and, most importantly, asking people to make decisions about them.

However, no-one co-ordinates the activities and few make any attempt to see that people are socially prepared for the consequences of the physical developments. The only exceptions to this at Mulan have been the ill-fated co-ordinated store/office development and the attempts by DCS at community development through the Community Homemaker program. Since the latter program is poorly supported and is not complemented by other programs operated by either DCS or other agencies, it has had little impact. DAA is supposed to have an overall view of the community's development and to have a co-ordinating role, but there is little sign of this at Mulan.

Mulan is a comparatively small community and its cohesiveness makes it reasonably manageable still despite the major developments of the last three or four years. I would not like to give the impression that Mulan people are not capable of self-management. They are an extremely independent group of people, held together by strong traditional ties, and with very definite ideas about how they want to live. Their problems are related to the lack of skills necessary to take advantage of many modern facilities and to a lack of understanding on the part of many community members of the issues involved. The Chairman, and other community leaders, are mainly older people who are illiterate and, although they have successfully led the community to where it is now, have a very limited understanding of the issues which face the community today.

One such immediate issue is the introduction of CDEP which is to take place in 1987. The scheme has been pushed by DAA, with very little real consultation or explanation, as an opportunity for the community to undertake projects in their community by using unemployment benefits to pay people who work on the projects. This is obviously an attractive proposition; Mulan people have long wanted a community building, for instance, and this may be a chance to construct one. Also, they have been promised a backhoe and tip truck as the capital component for the establishment of CDEP. Last year DEIR organised Work Information Tours for groups of both men and women to other communities where CDEP was operating and, apparently, they were impressed by what they saw and greed that CDEP should be introduced.

Yet when they were questioned, it was clear that few Mulan people had any idea of how CDEP would work. As far as the older people were concerned they were enthusiastic because it would make young people work; what the young people thought was unclear - apparently they had not been consulted. Only a few people, mainly literate and in the middle age ranges, who had some understanding of what was involved declared themselves uneasy about several aspects of The scheme, but neither DAA nor other members of the community wanted to hear these concerns.

One thing is certain: it will add considerably to the administrative work in the community. No new support staff are to be introduced although DAA has budgetted for the PO's wife to receive a half-time salary to do the paper work, in addition to her half-time job supervising the store. Presumably the PO will be expected to undertake supervisory work along with his other duties. DAA is supposed to provide regular support for communities on CDEP but it is doubtful if this will happen in the East Kimberley, particularly in isolated communities like Mulan.

Apart from the lack of understanding of many issues there is also the problem of lack of skills, already mentioned. At Mulan only people under

the age of about 35 are literate at all, and very few have the level of literacy needed for community administration. This was obvious when the community was again left without a PO for two months at the end of 1986. During this time the community functioned reasonably smoothly as those with some training managed the day-to-day affairs of the community well. However, it was clear that this was merely a holding operation for much correspondence was simply not being dealt with nor were such things as non-urgent repairs and maintenance to houses. And although the store ran smoothly and weekly orders were maintained and accounts kept, no bulk order to tide the community over the wet season was made. No government department accepts any responsibility for assisting the community with administration in such a situation. DAA would seem to have the clearest mandate since it controls the CM&S budget under which both the PO and community services are funded. But DAA offered no assistance, arguing that the community managed very well without white staff.

Despite their part-ownership of the Tjurabalin Pastoral Company, Mulan people are clearly very dependent on the public sector for services and resources, but the amount of contact with agencies varies considerably. The Catholic church is probably the agency with which the community and the school have most direct contact since there is a Catholic Education Commission school in the community, with two Sisters of Mercy as resident teachers, and a priest comes over from Balgo each week to conduct a church service. Although religious education is taught in the school, traditional culture and language is encouraged and parents come into the school regularly to assist the two Teacher Aides with this. The sisters appear to have a good relationship with the community and women, particularly, are much involved in the school. The sisters run classes in such activities as guitar, sewing and screen printing. In the past these were organised through TAFE but one of the sisters commented that this involved too much paper work and it was easier to simply respond to people's requests. The sisters also encourage the Teacher Aides to further their own education. Last year one attended a two day conference in Kununurra organised by NEAACC and both attended a language workshop held at Turkey Creek.

Mulan people may be isolated, but that does not mean they are cut off from the outside world. For instance, they send representatives to meetings of the N.E. Area Aboriginal Consultative Committee. Also, they are in touch with Aboriginal organisations in the area such as KLC. Representatives attend KLC meetings and are given support in land matters; last year most of the community attended the KLC meeting held in Balgo. Several people also attended a meeting organised by the Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre at Frog Hollow in November 1986 and women, particularly, were disappointed that they were unable to attend the annual meeting of the Kimberley Language Resource Centre at Mary River in December.

Of the government agencies, Community Health is the one with which they have most direct contact. Although there is no resident nurse, weekly visits are made to Mulan. Most of the contact is at the individual level although the nurses do show educational films at times. The nurses are generally liked and some women call in to see them when they visit Balgo.

Contact with other government agencies is by way of correspondence and rather infrequent visits relating to a variety of issues. Generally speaking the agencies which provide a single service are easier for people to deal with. For instance, SEC and WA consult people about

improvements to their power and water supply and maintain those services. Similarly, DSS provides pensions and benefits which turn up regularly on the weekly mail plane, and an Aboriginal Liaison Officer visits every couple of months to sort out any problems. People understand what these agencies are doing and there are few complaints about their activities. DCS, on the other hand, is now thought to offer little help, compared to the early years at Mulan. An officer does come occasionally to help with the Community Homemaker Program but the visits are so infrequent that people feel there is no real support. DCS officers also come sometimes to talk about supervising juvenile offenders but DCS is no longer seen as the general purpose helping agency it was in the past. In fact, it is agencies with a more complex mandate, such as DAA or DCS which people have most difficulty in understanding. This is shown by the fact that many people are unclear about which agency does what. At least some of this confusion appears to be because officers who were employed by one department in the past, have changed their jobs and now turn up as representatives of different agencies.

Many of the complaints and misunderstandings about the activities of agencies seem to arise due to poor communication. In the case of correspondence and written documents it is easy to see how this happens. The amount of correspondence with which Mulan community is required to deal increases each year. In the last three months of 1985, for instance, correspondence was received from AAPA, Kimberley Language Resource Centre, DSS, the Water Authority of W.A., Australian Electoral Commission, State Emergency Service, Health Department of W.A., Telecom, Department of Aviation, KLC, DCS and the State Electoral Department, in addition to numerous newsletters, documents, Ministerial releases, etc. from agencies such as DAA and ADC. Subjects covered varied from fairly simple, such as a letter from the State Electoral Department concerning postal votes in the forthcoming election, to complex issues concerning future developments about which the community was required to make important decisions.

Some agencies display an abysmal lack of appreciation of the conditions at Mulan. One of the best examples must surely be an invitation sent from ADC in Canberra to attend a barbecue in Broome. The letter arrived on the day the barbecue was to be held with the instruction that the community should confirm acceptance of the invitation by telephoning a Canberra number!

However, it is the language of letters and documents which causes most problems. It is interesting to note that letters from government agencies seem to vary in simplicity of language in direct proportion to their distance from Mulan. Letters from Canberra or Perth tend to be more difficult to understand than those from Kununurra. All government agencies seem to have more difficulty in expressing themselves in simple language than non-government agencies, whether Aboriginal or not. If letters are often hard to understand, the documents of such agencies as ADC, DEIR or DAA which contain their funding rules and regulations are incomprehensible. This can cause problems as the following example shows.

Recently a DEIR officer in Kununurra arranged a special training program in bore and windmill management for the people involved in the pastoral properties at Balgo, Billiluna and Lake Gregory. The program was an expensive one, involving contracting a trainer for 45 weeks to instruct four men from each community, and had to be sanctioned by the Director in Perth. The communities were required to sign an agreement and the officer

took this document along in person. At Billiluna the officer, obviously expecting no problems, presented the agreement to the Pastoral Manager (who happens to be Aboriginal), asking him to sign it and to bring in the Mindibungu manager to countersign it. The Pastoral Manager looked carefully at the document, which turned out to contain 13 pages of legal jargon, said he did not understand it and refused to sign. The officer was obviously disconcerted and tried to persuade the manager to sign on the basis that he already knew all about the program. The manager, refused, saying he was not going to commit himself and the community to something he did not understand and that he wanted to consult the lawyer of an Aboriginal organisation first. The officer tried again: the contract had to be signed that day; the manager knew what was in it so he must sign. The manager refused to budge. Fortunately, this particular officer was sensitive enough to realise that the manager was not being unreasonable and spent the next two hours going through the document in detail until he was satisfied and signed.

The example raises important issues. How often are Aborigines prepared to stand up to a government officer in that way and how often are the officers prepared to spend that amount of time explaining? Why was it not possible to produce a simple, easily understood document or, at least, to insert simple, explanatory paragraphs? In short, how often do Aborigines, in places like Mulan, enter into agreements with government agencies which they do not understand?

Although Mulan people are happy with many of the resources and services from both government and non-government agencies there are also complaints. Some of these are justified, some not. With good reason, Mulan people feel they have been let down over land rights. There are also numerous complaints about vehicles, mainly that agencies such as DAA will not give them more. Community Health also came in for criticism because they would not provide a vehicle for the AHW. However, it turned out that neither the AHW or her husband had a driving licence so they could not drive a Community Health vehicle. These concerns are understandable, given the isolation of Mulan, but the problems will only be solved by more people in the community obtaining driving licences and the community being prepared to take more responsibility for vehicles, both for their maintenance and in preventing people driving them when drunk. Women are particularly concerned about this issue and have been asking for some time for help in learning to drive so that they can have vehicles of their own for which they will be totally responsible. It was hoped that the Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre might be able to help but so far this has not happened.

However, the main complaints about government agencies concern the lack of proper consultation. Mulan people feel that they are ignored because they are so isolated. It is certainly true that most agencies make fewer visits to Mulan than to communities close to Halls Creek, Wyndham or Kununurra, though some of those communities, who feel themselves inundated by visits from government officers, would probably see this as an advantage. Even agencies such as DAA, which are supposed to have a lot of contact seem to visit only three or four times a year while agencies such as Com.Ed visit so infrequently that people do not recognise the name of either the organisation or the field officer. Mulan people feel that they not only get left out, but that even when officers do come they are always in a hurry to leave again so that they can get back home or at least stay the night at Balgo where accommodation is available. Government people, they say, never camp at Mulan.

Their view is that government officers rush in, talk to them briefly, tell them something, or ask for a decision, then go away. Often, they hear nothing more about the issue discussed. 'They write it all down', commented one woman, 'but they must throw that paper away'. Possibly, what really happens is that the results are so slow that Mulan people feel that nothing happens, particularly after they have been rushed into making a quick decision. It is not that they expect to get everything they ask for; but they prefer to be told clearly when something is not possible. One woman described an ADC officer as a 'nice person' because he never promised too much. It is also the way a refusal is made that is important; again ADC was seen as being sympathetic while DAA was regarded as unsympathetic.

The way in which a visit is conducted is as important as what eventuates. Most government officers send notice of their visits by radio telegram, since this is the only quick method of communication with Mulan. Some, sensibly, add after the date, 'reply if not convenient'. Others assume that the date will be convenient and simply turn up and expect people to be waiting, which annoys Mulan people immensely, unless it is for a regular visit. One DEIR officer is inclined to turn up without warning, which people object to, particularly as he also then only talks to one or two people.

How consultation takes place is also important; Mulan people prefer it to be at a community meeting. Of course, this may not always be possible, but people who do not approach them through a community meeting at some point are targets for disapproval. For instance, a CALM team came in for a good deal of criticism last year for going through the community several times on the way to Lake Gregory for a bird count, and only ever speaking to the PO and Assistant PO in the store. Mulan people made sure that I had a community view of government activities at such a meeting even though they knew I was also talking to people individually.

Women also feel strongly that they are ignored by government officers. This is a difficult problem because, although women are on the Council and do speak out at community meetings, they are less likely to do so in the presence of a male government officer. Although men may take notice of their views in the community they seldom represent them to outsiders. Perhaps this is a case where the community meeting protocol should be set aside and women approached either individually or in small groups. Ideally, of course, this should be done by a woman but since there are few female field officers, this may not be possible. At the moment most male officers who make individual approaches tend to speak only to men. However, not all officers ignore women, for a DEIR officer has made a point of making sure there are WIT tours for women as well as for men.

As with correspondence, problems often arise because of poor communication. Officers use language which is not understood or, even if the words seem to be understood, the meaning is not. For instance, at the end of 1986 Community Health at Balgo were left without any roadworthy vehicles due to one being wrecked by Balgo youths and another being involved in an accident. A message was relayed to Mulan explaining that it would be impossible to visit until a vehicle was available, and that might not be for some weeks. At the same time it was explained that the sister in charge would also be going on holiday for three weeks over the

Christmas period so it might be some time before regular visits could resume. Somehow the only bit of the message that got across was the part about the sister's holiday and Mulan people were convinced that was why there were no Community Health visits at that time.

It is not only faulty communication between agencies and the community which causes problems, but also communication between agencies. Agency staff are often quite ignorant of the work of other agencies and make judgmental statements about each other which are not only unfair but damaging to any hope of co-operation. For instance, one of the teachers at Mulan was very critical of Community Health's activities and said they did not visit regularly, citing the example that at that time there had been no visit for a couple of weeks. Yet she had no knowledge of the problems they were having with vehicles even though both teachers regularly went over to Balgo. In another instance, a DCS officer blamed the PO at Mulan for the split between Mulan and Mindibungu in 1984, even though that particular PO was not employed at the time, and went on to say that he had caused trouble at Mulan by getting involved in other community activities when he was only employed to manage the store. No doubt the PO would have been delighted if that was all his job involved. These sorts of misunderstandings constantly arise because agency staff do not co-ordinate their activities even to the extent of talking to resident officers when visiting communities. While this remains the case there seems little hope of the sort of cooperation which is needed to develop their community.

Warmun

Warmun is a much larger community than Mulan, comprising about 300 people, although some of these have links with six outstations which have been established from Warmun and may not be resident at all times. Warmun is a remote community by most standards but compared to Mulan it is scarcely isolated. The community is located at Turkey Creek, on the main Kununurra-Halls Creek road about 220 km from Kununurra and Wyndham and some 160 km from Halls Creek. The road is bitumen, but is sometimes cut for a few days at a time during the wet season by the Ord River to the south and the Dunham River to the north. There is a roadhouse (now owned by Warmun Community) about 1 km up the road and long distance buses pass the entrance to the community daily.

The village at Turkey Creek is situated on the 700 ha Luman Aboriginal Reserve over which Warmun Community holds a 99 year lease. Facilities at the community include a store with petrol bowser, a school, a clinic, a garage, an administration building, a community hall and a youth centre. There are also 27 houses occupied by community members as well as houses for non-Aboriginal staff. The community has a telephone service, good power and water supplies, but no sewerage. However, there is no mail service; mail has to be collected weekly from Kununurra as do Social Security cheques and a bank cash float for cashing these in the community. Also, the community is cut in half during the wet season when Turkey Creek, which runs through the village, is in flood.

Until recently Warmun community had no economic base, but in 1986 it was enabled to purchase the nearby roadhouse, Harry's Place. So far this has had little effect on the community either in terms of income or employment but it does offer prospects for a measure of economic independence in the

future. At the moment employment opportunities are limited and the community is heavily dependent on public sector grants both for employment and for the provision and upkeep of community services.

The principal source of funding is DAA, through the CM&S budget, from which Warmun received \$165,000 for 1986/7 for what are called Municipal and Transport Services. Out of this sum are paid the salaries of administration and service staff as well as the costs of administration and maintenance of community facilities. However, resources and services are also provided by a variety of other agencies. These will be discussed in detail shortly.

Employment of community members tends to fluctuate but in November 1986 some 40 people had jobs. The majority of these jobs were in the community, paid for out of funds provided by various public sector agencies. They included employment in the community office and power house, at the clinic, in the school, in the store, on housing construction and on various special projects, such as those initiated under CEP. Also, six people (four men and two women) were employed at Argyle Diamond Mine (ADM) and six men were working on stations. Most jobs are part-time or seasonal and the main source of income in the community is Social Security pensions and benefits.

There are at present ten non-Aboriginal support staff employed at Warmun. These include a full-time Community Adviser (CA) and a part-time Technical Adviser (mechanic), whose salaries are paid out of the CM&S grant from DAA. In addition, there are four teachers and a linguist at the school, a storekeeper, a nurse at the clinic, and a bookkeeper employed by the Balanggarri Resource Agency which is located at Turkey Creek.

Like Mulan, Warmun is a comparatively new community, having been established only since 1975. However, Warmun people have had a longer history of contact with white Australians as most older people have worked on stations most of their lives and almost everyone over about 20 years of age was born on a station. For station people in the vicinity Turkey Creek was a camping place, with good permanent spring water, where people congregated during the lay-off period in the wet season. The area was Crown land and there was a ration depot there as well as a police station and telegraph post. It was only in the years following the introduction of the Pastoral Industry Award in 1968 that more and more people began to settle at Turkey Creek permanently as they were expelled from the stations. From about 1975 officers of both DAA and DCW began to assist the people to establish themselves as a community and to build up some facilities, for by this time the people had been given title to the land as Luman Aboriginal Reserve and the ration depot had closed, as had the police station and telegraph post.

However, it is important to note that, unlike Mulan people, those who settled at Turkey Creek were not a cohesive group. Rather, distinct camps were formed, representing many different language groups (Kija, Mirriwung, Jaru, Malngin, Worla, Walmajarri) with loyalties to different areas of country on which the stations where the people were born and lived were based. It was a historical accident that drew them together and although they shared a common history and culture they did not, and still do not, form a unified community. As the community grew the camps became institutionalised as five distinct groups, giving rise to a considerable

degree of factionalism in the community which, apart from affecting social order, makes it difficult to reach consensus on many important issues. I will return to this issue later.

During the years 1975-80 developments at Turkey Creek were slow. The community received an establishment grant from DAA which enabled them to buy a vehicle and to put up water tanks and a pump and piping. They also acquired some garden implements and established small vegetable gardens. Otherwise both DAA and DCW officers made sure that they were receiving pension and unemployment entitlements from DSS and encouraged the adoption of a 'chuck-in' system to enable them to buy bulk stores and other items needed by the new community. In 1977 the community was incorporated under the WA Associations Incorporations Act as Warmun Community (Turkey Creek) Inc. A small bookkeeping business established in Kununurra to help Aboriginal communities undertook to manage their books and offer advice, and one of the two bookkeepers later became Warmun's first paid Community Adviser. The only other government agency, apart from DAA and DCW, with which they were involved at this time was Community Health. A nurse visited the community twice weekly from Wyndham and community members were employed as Camp Nurses.

The first facility to be set up at Turkey Creek was the primary school which was opened in June 1979. During the 1960s DNV officers went around the stations to see that children were attending school and as there were no schools on the stations in the East Kimberley, children were sent either to the government school at Halls Creek or to the Catholic school at Beagle Bay. The only time they returned home during the year was in the long holiday break at Christmas. Many people still have unhappy memories of their schooldays because of this separation from their families. After they settled at Turkey Creek some children continued to be sent away while other parents camped at Wyndham during term time so that children could attend school there. Neither arrangement was satisfactory and in 1978 the community began to explore the possibility of having a school at Turkey Creek and, as the majority were Catholics, it was natural for a Catholic school to be considered. However, advisers to the community pointed out that other options were available, such as a state school or a community school and encouraged them to discuss each one.

The discussion seems to have brought out the divisions in the community, not all of whom were Catholic, and also reflected badly on the handling of the situation by some officials of the Catholic church in the area. Approaches were made to small groups of people in the community and decisions pushed through, which were not agreed to by all the community, for a Catholic school to be established and for the community to transfer land for the school to the Catholic church. Feelings ran high for a while as the church was accused of trying to manipulate the community but, with the help of ALT and ALS, an amicable agreement was eventually reached. The community asked the Bishop to help them to establish a school under the Catholic Education Commission system, to be run by a community committee on community land and called the Warmun Ngalanganpun School. It was also agreed that it would be a 'two-way school', ie one in which both non-Aboriginal subjects and Aboriginal language and culture would be included.

Any bad feeling generated in setting up the school seems to have long since dissipated and today relations between the community and both the

school and the Catholic church appear to be good. A priest visits the community from Halls Creek each week, staying overnight and conducting services in the community. In an attempt to make the Christian religion more meaningful to Aboriginal people, community members are encouraged to participate fully, conducting part of the service in language and introducing Aboriginal artefacts as part of the religious paraphernalia.

The school has grown from the one classroom brought from Beagle Bay in 1979, to a complex of three classrooms and several other buildings, including teacher accommodation. In mid-1986 the community was informed that the Federal Government had approved a grant of \$358,750 for the final stage of the school under the Aboriginal element of the Capital Grants Program. However, it will still only cater for primary school children; for secondary education most children go on to the Catholic Nulungu College in Broome.

Five non-Aboriginal staff are now employed, two teaching sisters, two lay teachers and a linguist. In addition, the school's policy is to have an Aboriginal Teacher Aide in each of the three classrooms as well as for other community members to come in regularly each morning to give instruction in language and culture. Additional community members are employed as gardeners, cleaners and cooks. However, because the school receives funds for only one Teacher Aide position this wage is spread around all the workers and supplemented by a contribution from parents. This system does not work very well, mainly because most people have a low income. Also, some people have misunderstood the situation, although it has been explained to them, and believe they are unfairly being asked to contribute to teachers' salaries - another instance of the difficulties of cross-cultural communication.

Teacher Aides and language workers are encouraged to improve their skills by attending in-service training sessions run by Catholic Education Commission in Broome. In addition, five hours a week study time has been set aside for them at the school in which the linguist gives instruction for an introductory linguistics course run by the Batchelor College School of Linguistics in the Northern Territory. Also, in November 1986 Turkey Creek was the venue for a language workshop organised by Catholic Education Commission for teachers and Teacher Aides in their schools throughout the Kimberleys.

The school has become a focal point for the community and volunteers are always available to help with school outings or other functions. General support for the school is shown by the fact that the community has been willing to use some of the Good Neighbour money from ADM to build a school kitchen and for landscaping around the school grounds. However, this does not mean that all community members accept everything the school does uncritically. For some time it has been felt that initiative was being taken away from the community and with the opening of the community hall it was decided to move the DCS Community Homemaker Program, through which meals were provided to old people, away from the school kitchen. Some teachers also agreed with this decision, feeling that mistakes had been made by the school in taking control of too many activities in the community.

It was not until the end of 1980 that the first houses were built at Turkey Creek, although funds had been included in the DAA budget for 1979/80. These were one room dwellings with verandahs all round and

separate ablution facilities. They were constructed through DOHC, using community labour. Similar houses were built over the next four years, when ADC took over housing provision from DAA, until by 1986 there were 27 in all. It is not clear how the design of these houses was chosen; possibly they were based on a design drawn up by the Redhill community in Halls Creek, except that the Redhill houses are much larger. Certainly Turkey Creek people have never been enthusiastic about them; one woman described them recently as: 'that sort only one mob go inside, rest have to move swag around outside' - to avoid the rain! For three or four people perhaps they would have been acceptable but since the average number of people per house was ten it is hardly surprising that people complained.

It is often said that traditional Aboriginal communities do not want conventional housing or that it is only young people who want it. However, at Warmun it was one of the older women who dragged a group of ADC officers over the creek to point out the inadequacy of her house which had no kitchen so that she had to cook outside in all weathers, driving away the dogs and the goats as she did so. No-one at Warmun seems to have had any doubts when in 1986 they were offered the chance of conventional houses with all facilities built by the same private contractor as those at Mulan. Eleven of these houses are now being built and in addition there is a program to upgrade the old ones gradually by closing in one side of the verandah to form a second room.

Nevertheless, it must be said that the new houses are likely to cause problems. One of the conditions of acceptance of ADC housing grants has always been an agreement to collect rent to pay for maintenance. ADC has constantly had to remind Warmun people about this even though the rent for the old houses was only \$10 a week plus \$10 for power. However, the new houses will be considerably more expensive as it is considered that they warrant charging the standard Homeswest rent plus power. There is also the problem that conventional houses need accompanying housekeeping skills to use and maintain them in reasonable condition. Few Warmun people have these skills as they have never lived in such houses, nor does there seem to be any plan to help them acquire these skills when the houses are ready for occupation. This was a problem identified by the recent Aboriginal Women's Task Force which recommended that the provision of courses in household management should be an integral part of the provision of housing and should be undertaken by DAA, ADC and DOHC. (Daylight & Johnstone, 1986:12) At Warmun, as at Mulan, there is little sign of coordination of public sector activities to enable social development to go hand in hand with physical developments.

Although a Community Health nurse visited the community weekly from the mid-1970s it was not until 1981 that the clinic was built with living accommodation for staff attached. Since then there has been a resident nurse and doctors from Community Health in Halls Creek and from RFDS also visit weekly. However, the growth in the population over the past three years means that there is really too much work for one person and there is little time for the education work which is supposed to be the principal part of the Community Health function. The nurse's job is a difficult one as she is on call night and day and, perhaps because so little health education has been attempted, some of the calls are trivial. Also, she works alone most of the time. One woman works a few hours a week as an untrained Camp Nurse but there are no Aboriginal Health Workers employed at Warmun. Why this is so is not clear. According to Community Health it

is because the community is so factionalised that they have never been able to agree who should do the job. However, two young people had been chosen to do the BRAMS Health Worker Training Course in Broome in 1987 which would seem to invalidate that argument.

There is no question but that the provision of Good Neighbour (GN) money from ADM has been one of the most important factors at Warmun in the last few years. Although not a government initiative originally, the joint ADM/government agreement and the setting up of ASIG in 1985 brought it partly within the public sector. Also because of the types of items funded, the activities of ASIG/GN and government agencies impinge on each other, and are crucial to an understanding of the present situation at Warmun.

The story of the Argyle Diamond Mine has been fully dealt with by other writers and will not be reiterated here. From the point of view of this report the important event was a letter received by Warmun Community from ADM in July 1981 offering \$100,000 a year (indexed for inflation) under the company's so-called Good Neighbour Policy, to be used on capital works. No formal agreement was offered - this was to be seen simply as a gesture of goodwill on the part of the company - and an attempt to obtain such an agreement was met with thinly veiled threats of withdrawal of the funding (Christensen, 1983:46).

Nevertheless, the offer of GN money was accepted by Warmun as a chance to perhaps acquire the means to set up an economic enterprise which would give them some measure of independence from government funding sources. However, it quickly became clear that GN money would not give this independence and in fact has simply added another agency to the list of those on which Warmun people are dependent. The catch to the granting of funds was that they must be used for capital items and, since no recurrent funding was allowed, the capital items had to be ones which the community could then service itself. So, for example, a request to purchase Bow River station in 1982 was turned down as extensive recurrent funding would be required to run the station while the purchase of Toyotas was acceptable as it was considered it was within the community's capability to pay for their ongoing maintenance.

The situation did not change when ASIG was set up in 1985 for the conditions for grants were the same under ASIG as under GN, with one important exception: communities funded under ASIG were required to pay ten per cent towards the purchase price of vehicles, while those funded under GN were not. Not surprisingly, Warmun, which had originally agreed to transfer to ASIG funding, later reverted to GN funding. In fact, the interplay of contributions from government and indexation of GN money means that Warmun's 15 per cent share of the ADM/government money is made up of approximately 90 per cent from GN and ten per cent from ASIG.

There is no doubt that the input of GN/ASIG has enabled the community to acquire many important assets over the past four years. Major facilities provided in the community include a fully equipped workshop, the store building with accommodation for the storekeeper, a kitchen at the school, a youth centre and the community hall. In addition funds have been used for such purposes as landscaping around the office and community hall and in the school grounds, a sun roof and verandah for the office building, a 3 tonne truck and numerous Toyotas. In all cases the funds go direct from ADM/ASIG to the contractors or suppliers; the community has no control

whatsoever over the spending, except to put in a request, so the dependence is complete.

However, there are other problems with GN/ASIG money in that strains are experienced in the upkeep of these facilities since no recurrent funding is available. In the case of vehicles this has already happened - most of those purchased earlier are now out of commission. But it is inevitable that the pinch will be felt with maintenance of other buildings and equipment since most government agencies are unwilling to acknowledge responsibility for resources not supplied by them. For example, the DAA CM&S allocation for repairs and maintenance has not increased at all in the past three years even to take account of inflationary tendencies. It is not only money which is lacking, but also the skills to manage and maintain the assets. As at Mulan, there has been no attempt by agencies to plan for the total development of the community so that people are prepared socially for the consequences of such a rapid increase in capital items.

Although they are glad of the resources, many Warmun people are sceptical of ADM's motives. Many believe, quite rightly, that what they are receiving is as a drop in the ocean compared to the profits made by ADM. They are also annoyed at the secrecy that seems to shroud the allocation of funds. Not only do they not receive actual money, but they receive no accounts which show how the money is spent or what is left over. In other words they are kept in a state of total powerlessness.

Another factor which worries Warmun people is whether by receiving ASIG/GN money they are missing out on other government funding, on the pretext that other communities have greater needs and must 'catch up'. In fact, there is little evidence of this so far. A perusal of the CM&S budgets for Mulan and Warmun shows that they are comparable for the sizes of the communities, with both remaining static, except for salary increases, over recent years and with similar amounts of capital input. However, it is possible that this will change in the future. One of the original conditions made by ADM was that GN/ASIG money should not be used for items which would normally be supplied through government sources. But both stores and community halls are items which are provided from government funds eventually and it may well be that Warmun will now simply lose this funding, rather than it being channelled into catering for other needs.

Although the Bow River venture was rejected by ADM the station was purchased in 1984 with grants from ADC and the WA government and is now socially and administratively an outstation of Turkey Creek. ADC has also assisted the community in setting up other enterprises. As mentioned previously the store building was provided by ADM but ADC provided a loan to equip the store and assisted in setting it up as an independent enterprise under the name of Wungkul Store Inc. However, there were still problems in keeping the store out of debt and in 1983 the Arnhemland Progress Association (ALPA), an organization originally set up under the auspices of the Uniting Church to assist Aboriginal communities with store management and training, was called in. ALPA now provides a management and accounting service, recommends people to the community for employment as managers, and also runs training courses for Aboriginal people which some store employees have attended.

However, the most important enterprise with which ADC has assisted the community is the purchase of the roadhouse, Harry's Place. This was

previously owned privately. There had been extremely bad relations between Warmun and previous owners for many years, mainly due to the attempt to obtain a liquor licence for the roadhouse, which was opposed by the community on the grounds that it would vastly increase their social problems.

When the roadhouse was on the market in 1986 this was seen as an ideal opportunity for Warmun to gain an economic asset. However, there were problems as the hostility of the owner was such that it was known he would refuse to sell it to the community. Negotiations had to be conducted in absolute secrecy and it was a triumph for all concerned when the purchase was successfully completed. *The Sydney-Morning Herald* (12.11.1986) described it as a 'coup' and certainly that was how Warmun people felt. Because Warmun Community had no capital, the purchase was financed with loans from ADC, the WA Aboriginal Enterprise Company (AEC) and the fuel distributor to the roadhouse. The plan is for the loans to be paid back out of profits but the community has already asked for \$100,000 of the GN/ASIG money for 1987 to be used for this purpose. It will be interesting to see whether the roadhouse constitutes an acceptable capital expenditure in GN terms. The roadhouse is run by a committee comprising representatives from ADC, AEC and Warmun as well as the fuel distributor. It will be several years before Warmun has control but the roadhouse represents the first hope the community has ever had for a measure of economic independence in the future.

A problem created by the rapid growth at Turkey Creek in the last five years has been the strain on water and power supplies. This has necessitated constant upgrading since the first generator was installed by SEC in 1982. The prospect of 11 new houses this year plus the additions to the school and the purchase of the roadhouse raised the problem yet again, and the installation of a larger generator and replacement of the existing drainage system with proper sewerage were recommended by SEC and WA. Fortunately funds for the sewerage are to come from WAALCIP as DAA had already indicated that only the generator could be funded from its budget. Day-to-day maintenance of these facilities is carried out in the community and a wage for a power house operator is now provided by DAA. However, the skills of community members are limited and major breakdowns have to wait for maintenance crews to arrive from WA and SEC. In the case of SEC the crew has to travel from Broome which means that delays can occur. However, both WA and SEC now carry out more frequent regular maintenance checks than used to be the case, so the number of breakdowns has decreased in the last couple of years.

Apart from the major input of amenities mentioned so far a number of other public sector agencies also provide resources and services to Warmun Community. For instance, most Warmun people are dependent on DSS pensions and benefits as their main source of income. Pension cheques are collected with the mail each week in Kununurra by the Balangarri bookkeeper, together with a cash float from the bank which enables people to cash their cheques in the community office. The DSS Aboriginal Liaison Officer also visits Warmun for one day every four weeks to check on problems and liaises with community staff in order to ensure that people are receiving their entitlements.

DCS has much less contact with Warmun now than in the early days when DAA and DCW officers were almost totally responsible for the community. A Community Homemaker Program (CHP) does operate in the community, through

which midday meals are provided for pensioners, with a subsidy from DCS. However, no other activities have been started under CHP. In the past in other communities CHP was simply one part of a series of community development strategies undertaken by DCS. At Warmun CHP only began in 1983 and was simply seen as a means to fund a Meals on Wheels program in conjunction with school meals, which were already being provided by the school. A measure of the lack of input by DCS was the belief, on the part of women involved in the program, that TAFE programs, also run by teachers in the school, were part of CHP. The confusion was understandable since the women had never been given any responsibility for the program - which is supposed to be the main point of CHP - simply taking orders from the teachers and cooking the meals. However, as noted earlier the community became dissatisfied with this arrangement and CHP has recently been moved from the school to the community hall. It remains to be seen whether it will now develop into a worthwhile community development program. There is very little chance of this unless DCS is prepared to give it more support; this seems unlikely given the department's present disinterest in such strategies in the East Kimberley.

Training and education programs are also provided at Warmun through ComEd, TAFE and DEIR. However, both ComEd and TAFE deal mainly with people through the school and there is little contact with the community. As noted, people were quite unaware of how TAFE courses were organised. It is DEIR which has organised most training and employment programs in the community. For instance, a few people have attended vocational courses at Pundulmurra and SEC courses in power-house maintenance in Broome. Under TAP others have been sponsored within the community to train as bookkeepers, stockmen or shop assistants. The most ambitious program to date was a program which ran from July 1985 to June 1986 to set up a woodturning workshop and train young people in the necessary skills to start a small woodturning business. Unfortunately, there seems to have been little monitoring or follow up of the program and no business has eventuated. As at Mulan, the arrangements tend to have been ad hoc and little attempt has been made to coordinate training to fit into any planned community development.

A couple of CEP projects have also been funded at Warmun. One, a rubbish collection program involving three young people, ran for three months at the end of 1985. A landscaping program in the community, employing a supervisor and three labourers, ran for six months in 1986 and a similar program was still running at the roadhouse in February 1987. However, the special Aboriginal CEP programs have now been discontinued as a result of the recommendations of the Miller report and, although Warmun can still apply for funding under the normal CEP guidelines, this will be more difficult to obtain.

Warmun, like Mulan, is to go on to CDEP in May 1987 and, as at Mulan, consultation has been minimal. The issue was first raised by DAA in September 1986 and the initial consultative meeting when CDEP was explained to the community was held in November. A WIT tour to Kalumburu, where CDEP was already running, was arranged by DEIR but only men went on this visit and no other was arranged for women. Like Mulan the older people have welcomed the scheme as a means of making young people work, but again there is little understanding of what is involved. In February 1987, even well informed people still believed that the workers would receive wages and unemployment benefits. However, Warmun will receive more support than Mulan. DAA is to fund an administrative position within

the Balanggarri Resource Agency to deal with CDEP and a computer is being provided. Also a tip truck and 4 wheel drive vehicle are being funded by DAA and the community is to receive a backhoe from WAALCIP funds.

In addition to its dealings with government agencies and the Catholic church, Warmun is also involved with Aboriginal agencies. The most important of these is Balanggarri Resource Agency which provides a bookkeeping service to Warmun as well as services to the outstations. Until the end of 1986 Balanggarri was based in Kununurra, with an office at Turkey Creek, which was opened in 1983. However, the Kununurra operations have now been handed over to Waringarri and Balanggarri works only at Turkey Creek. In the future it is intended to employ an adviser, using funds transferred from Kununurra, as well as a bookkeeper. There will also be the addition of the DAA funded administrator so that Balanggarri's operations will be extended considerably. The idea of employing an adviser was first raised in 1985 but at that time DAA wanted to transfer the CA position from Warmun to Balanggarri and this was almost done. Warmun realised in time what was happening and opposed the transfer, but the experience was added to a long list of complaints about DAA's operations.

Warmun has always had strong links with KLC, which supported the community during its long battle with ADM. Warmun community members serve on the KLC executive and many people attend general meetings. There are also links with the Aboriginal Law & Culture Centre in Broome and most Warmun people attended the meeting held at Frog Hollow recently. Similarly, they are in contact with the Kimberley Language Resource Centre. People also know they can contact ALS if they have legal problems and the ALS Field Officer from Halls Creek often calls in at the community on his way to Kununurra. However, one man at Warmun argued that ALS should do more to help Aboriginal people understand the law by producing videos explaining about driving licences, insurance, compensation, etc.

It is obvious that developments at Warmun in recent years have resulted in a proliferation of public sector agencies with which the community now has to deal. Each new program or facility seems to involve dealing with another agency which in turn means more decisions have to be made and more administrative work carried out. In 1979 practically everything at Warmun came under DAA's auspices - housing, training, employment, repairs, maintenance, administration. In 1987 only some of the last three items are dealt with by DAA. This is not necessarily seen as a disadvantage for there has been much dissatisfaction with DAA over the years. Many of the problems at Warmun have arisen over similar issues as at Mulan so it is worth detailing some of them.

First, there has been the same tendency for DAA to blame and criticise non-Aboriginal community employees. A bookkeeper who dared to complain about his working conditions when taken to task for not having the accounts up to date in 1984 was treated with the same lack of sympathy as the PO at Mulan. Similarly, when a joint PO position for Warmun, Woolah and Guda Guda was funded in 1983 and failed to work, the Warmun CA was blamed for the failure. It often seems that DAA expect miracles from overburdened community staff when their own excuse for failing to visit communities to discuss important issues is always that they themselves are short staffed. It is also interesting that officers from other agencies which cover the same East Kimberley area and have fewer staff than DAA seem to manage more community visits than DAA.

It seems that DAA feel threatened by community staff, probably because it is through them that the communities question its activities. When the shortage of funding for insurance and audit fees was queried by Warmun community in 1982 the situation was handled so badly that the community actually sought the advice of ALS. The CA was blamed. There were certainly faults on both sides but it says little for DAA's diplomacy that what started out as a comparatively small issue was allowed to develop out of all proportion to its importance.

Like Mulan, Warmun has also been taken to task for transferring funds from one category to another, in defiance of funding guidelines. In this case the item was a typewriter costing some \$200 and it turned out that the mistake was DAA's anyway. Incidents like this simply confirm the view that DAA is an antagonist, inflexible and obstructive, with its main aim seeming to be to prove the community in the wrong.

As at Mulan, it seems to be mainly how DAA handle situations rather than what they do which causes problems. Other agencies also have to turn down applications for funds and have funding guidelines which have to be complied with, yet their handling of the issues seldom seems to raise people's hackles as DAA manages to do. It is difficult to pinpoint why this is so, whether the problems are related to personnel or to policies. Probably it is a mixture of the two although some people with experience in other areas argue that DAA can be more flexible and helpful than appears to be the case with the Kununurra area office.

Like Mulan, Warmun is also inundated with correspondence from a variety of sources, mainly government. Since the letters are often circulars sent to all Aboriginal communities the same language problems arise. However, at Warmun non-Aboriginal staff are employed purely to do administrative work and are better qualified to interpret these documents, although the sheer quantity of letters and documents to be dealt with can be a problem. The CA recently documented over 100 agencies and organisations with which he had to communicate over a three month period. There is also the problem of whether everything should be referred to the community, if self-management is the ultimate aim.

At Warmun the problem is exacerbated by the fact that there are almost as many visitors as there are letters. Unlike Mulan people, who felt neglected by agency officers, Warmun is swamped by visitors. In a two week period in February 1987 (a quiet wet season time) the community received 14 visitors, mainly government officers. This involved holding community meetings on seven days, either to discuss issues with the officers or to talk about issues raised either before or after their visits. The general feeling seems to be that Aboriginal people have nothing else to do with their lives other than to be available to attend meetings as required. Warmun has tried, unsuccessfully, to limit visits to the day of their normal community meeting. The lack of success is partly because often the visitors cannot all be fitted into one meeting. However, it is also due to the insensitivity of people who believe that the community should be available whenever they choose to call. It is not surprising that a perusal of Warmun community meeting minutes shows a number of resolutions calling for fewer meetings!

As at Mulan, people appreciate the resources and services with which they are provided, and they understand the activities of agencies such as DSS,

SEC or Community Health. However, the activities of other agencies confuse them and they often get mixed up as to which does what or which agencies particular officers represent. One man, who did have a good understanding, explained the problem and his solution:

We don't know who from - ADC or DAA. They ought to have photos with names so we know who they are. Sometimes you ask one of them something and he says no, you should have asked that other fellow who just left!

Warmun people have received many resources in recent years so that any complaints they may have centre either on the quality, for example the dissatisfaction with the design of the first houses, or the way agencies operate, such as their perceived problems with DAA. Some people also believe that when obstruction and tardiness is a problem there is more chance of achieving results if local offices are by-passed and requests channelled direct to Perth or Canberra; experiences both at Warmun and in other communities shows that there is much truth in this.

In fact, many Warmun people show little interest in government activities, and their knowledge of them is scant. Like Mulan people, they believe that the whole community should be approached when important decisions have to be made. One of the problems however, is that unlike Mulan, Warmun is not a cohesive community. Nor is it a manageable size, in terms of any ideas of self-management on the part of the people in the community. In fact, its size and divisions make it more realistic to treat it as a small town rather than as a community. The very rapid input of facilities in recent years, coupled with the increase of population taking advantage of those facilities, means that today Warmun has many of the characteristics of a small town, though it still lacks many facilities taken for granted by small towns in other parts of Australia, such as a mail service and rubbish collection.

If self-management is the ultimate goal, then one needs to ask how this goal is to be achieved by Warmun people. In terms of skills it is quite clear that very few people have skills which are sufficient for many of the jobs needed around the community today. Although Warmun people were in contact with non-Aboriginals long before Mulan people, they began receiving education only in the sixties and until quite recently the education has been too poor to equip them for contemporary life. As far as administrative work is concerned, it is doubtful if there is anyone in the community who has the literary ability to deal with anything but low grade office jobs. Even with technical jobs, the level of training is so poor, again mainly due to the low level of literacy, that most can only work under supervision and are forced to call in outside technicians when things go wrong. This is the case with power house maintenance.

The problem has been exacerbated by the speed with which facilities have been introduced in the community and by the fact that there has been so little recognition by government departments of the tasks generated by their introduction. Education and training has taken a background seat compared with the haste to upgrade the material standard of living and nothing has been done in terms of a coordinated approach in which physical improvements are planned in conjunction with the acquisition of the necessary skills to both use and maintain them.

Of course, it may be argued that self-management does not mean that Warmun people need to have all the skills to actually do all the jobs in the community themselves. After all people in small local government areas often have to import skilled people to provide services for them. Self-management may refer to the community making the decisions about the direction in which they wish to develop. But again at Warmun this no longer seems possible, not because there are no people capable of making the decisions, but because the sort of community development in which people are encouraged to plan their future and helped to understand what has to be done to achieve their goals has not been undertaken. The result is that people are finding it difficult to cope with the results of developments so far. Abuse of alcohol is rife and there are many signs of social disorder which will undoubtedly get worse unless some action is taken.

The size of the community and the factions within it make it difficult to reach the consensus decisions preferred. Also, the range and complexity of programs and resources about which they are asked to make decisions is now so great that few people understand the implications of their choices. A good CA may attempt to explain the options open to the community in regard to a particular issue but because so many decisions have to be made there is no time to consider the ramifications of any one decision for the total development of the community. The community simply responds in an ad hoc way to each issue as it arises. The situation is not helped by the fact that each agency approaches the community separately, making no attempt to show how their own and other resources and services fit together.

The lack of understanding by Warmun people of what is involved in running their community nowadays was shown when a new CA was recently appointed. After several candidates were interviewed and their qualifications were explained to the community by the acting CA, a person without the skills necessary for the job was almost appointed simply because two people in the community happened to like him and managed to persuade a community meeting that this was a good reason to give him the job. Fortunately, further negotiations took place after the meeting so that the other community members were convinced that a mistake had been made and a more suitable person was chosen.

There are many similarities between Mulan and Warmun in terms of the impact of public sector activities. Both have been subjected to extremely rapid development in terms of the input of physical amenities to their communities. In both cases this has been done without any coordination in terms of preparing the community to deal with these developments by helping them to acquire congruent social, technical and administrative skills. And certainly no-one has attempted any total community development.

Mulan has so far been cushioned from the worst effects of this poor planning because of its isolation and the fact that developments there have been less extensive than at Warmun. Also the smaller sizes and greater cohesion of the community makes it easier to manage and for the community to make realistic decisions. At Warmun the input of GN/ASIG funding has greatly accelerated development and the increase in population coupled with the divisions in the community have compounded the problems so that the possibility of any meaningful self-management seems remote. However, the input of WAALCIP money, which so far is also being directed

at improving services and facilities, without any concurrent input into training and social development, may well mean that other East Kimberley communities will soon face the same problems as Warmun.

OUTSTATIONS

Wurreranginy

The Wurreranginy Community is an outstation of Turkey Creek and comprises between 12 and 15 people living at Frog Hollow. The people are Kija speakers, mostly pensioners with a few children for whom they care. Frog Hollow is situated in a small valley on the edge of Violet Valley Aboriginal Reserve about a kilometre off the main Kununurra-Halls Creek road some 30 km south of Turkey Creek. There are few facilities at Frog Hollow. Five one-room shelters house the people and water is drawn from a spring in the nearby creek using a solar-powered pump. There are no ablution facilities and no power; the only toilets are two which were constructed over trenches a short distance from the houses for a recent culture meeting held at Frog Hollow. A notice on the access road says NO GROG and this is strictly enforced since it was partly to escape the effects of grog that the outstation was established.

The original residents of Frog Hollow moved there in 1981 from Guda Guda, near Wyndham, where they had gone to live after being expelled from cattle stations in the early 70s. The move was precipitated by the death of the present chairman's wife but people were also influenced by a desire to return to their traditional country. A further reason for going to Frog Hollow was to get away from the drink and other social problems at Guda Guda and to begin to educate the children - some of whom were being fostered after desertion by their parents - in traditional ways.

Initially they were helped to make the move by DCW officers in Wyndham and by advisers from Guda Guda and Warmun. They were also encouraged to apply for government support by two politicians who visited the area early in 1981. However, there was some confusion over the title to the land where they wished to set up camp since it was on a boundary between Violet Valley Aboriginal Reserve and Mabel Downs station and some of it seemed to be part of a Public Utility Reserve. Until this was sorted out by the Department of Lands and Surveys almost a year later it was difficult to get any funds to establish the camp.

In the first year, after purchasing a vehicle, people moved between Guda Guda and Turkey Creek, where they had relatives who wanted to join them at Frog Hollow. Then during 1982 some of them began to spend more time at Frog Hollow and in 1983 \$10,500 was re-allocated from the DAA grant to Guda Guda to help establish the new community. Part of this grant was intended to purchase a radio, but the major portion, \$8000, was to provide a well and pump.

However, the Frog Hollow people felt that spending \$8000 on water at that time was unwarranted as they had other more pressing needs. They argued strongly that the spring water was adequate for their present situation, provided the area was fenced to keep cattle out; since that could be done for \$1,000 they could use the remaining \$7,000 to purchase a 4WD vehicle. This was seen as essential if they were to be able to camp permanently at Frog Hollow as it would enable them to transport children

to school at Turkey Creek and sick people to hospital if necessary; also it would be used to collect stores and firewood, cart away rubbish, and take children on hunting trips or to ceremonies. Their arguments must have been convincing for DAA allowed this reallocation.

ADC was also approached to provide funding for houses and for cattle for a killer herd. ADC was unable to give any hope of providing proper houses in the near future from the East Kimberley budget; however, a small grant was provided which enabled the five one-room shelters to be constructed and the access road into Frog Hollow upgraded. While the cattle project was considered a good idea, the ADC officer had to say that it was difficult to get funds for such projects from the limited ADC budget and that they had already tried on behalf of other communities and been unsuccessful.

There was obviously little assistance available from the major funding agencies so the grants which became available through ASIG from 1985 have been important for Frog Hollow people. Wurreranginy is one of six Turkey Creek outstations to share 26 per cent of ASIG funds, which amounts to about \$40,000 per year for the five-year period of ASIG's operations. So far they have acquired a new Toyota, fencing materials and garden implements. Funds were also allocated for a bore, tank and pump but installation was held up by the 1987 wet season. When that is in place reticulation to a garden area is planned and they are also hoping to get a generator in the near future. In addition, Wurreranginy is hoping to join with the adjacent Baulu-Wah outstation at Violet Valley to purchase a \$50,000 share in the Turkey Creek roadhouse. This, they see as the first step in making their small community independent of government handouts.

A DEIR officer has also taken an interest in Wurreranginy. Last year a 16 week CEP project was set up to fence a garden area and plant fruit trees and a solar pump was installed to pump water from the spring until the bore was installed. People also visited Kununurra to look at gardens there and an officer from the Department of Agriculture visited Frog Hollow to advise them about the reticulation.

The only other government agency with which Wurreranginy community has regular direct contact is DSS, since Social Security pensions and benefits are the only source of income, apart from the small amounts earned irregularly from such projects as CEP. Cheques are collected from the Balanggarri office at Turkey Creek but the DSS Aboriginal Liaison Officer from Kununurra also visits Frog Hollow every other month to check for problems.

Although there are few formal contacts with government agencies a number of government officers keep up informal contacts, dropping in at Frog Hollow as they travel between Kununurra and Halls Creek. This is a small community and the people are known personally to officers who have been in the area for a few years. Also Frog Hollow is close to the main road and it is a pleasant place to break one's journey for a short time.

Most formal community business with government agencies takes place at Turkey Creek. The community became incorporated in 1986 as Wurreranginy Aboriginal Corporation but its affairs are still managed by the Balanggarri Resource Agency. Wurreranginy has representatives on the

Balanggarri Council and people attend Balanggarri meetings as well as meetings with the other outstations regarding such things as the distribution of ASIG funds.

Turkey Creek itself is an important service centre for Wurreranginy people; this enables them to live comfortably at Frog Hollow with very few facilities. Most Wurreranginy people travel to Turkey Creek each weekday and spend the day conducting business of various kinds before returning to Frog Hollow in the late afternoon. The children attend the Warmun school and the older people are also heavily involved in school activities and are said to be the mainstay of the language and culture program. People also visit the clinic, collect pensions, make telephone calls and buy stores as well as talking with relatives and making use of their ablution facilities. However, they have no desire to stay there; at the end of the day they are anxious to escape what they describe as 'the hassles of drinking at Warmun' and return to 'sit down quiet' at Frog Hollow. They look forward to the time when better facilities will mean that they are less dependent on Turkey Creek.

Wurreranginy people also have strong links with other Aboriginal agencies as well as Balanggarri. They have long had a close relationship with KLC over land matters and now also have links with other Aboriginal organisations in the region. In fact, Frog Hollow seems to be becoming quite a centre for regional meetings: at the end of 1986 a two day meeting was organised there by the Kimberley Law and Culture Centre and an executive meeting of Kimberley Language Resource Centre was also held there.

In November 1986 Wurreranginy people finally obtained title to their land when a 99 year lease was handed over to them by Ernie Bridge at a special ceremony. Although the people are happy to have the lease they do not regard this as being equal to the land rights they believed they were going to get when the Seaman Inquiry took place. Frog Hollow people gave evidence at that Inquiry and a copy of the tape of the final Report is kept in the community, and played frequently, as a reminder of what should have happened. As they say, a 99 year lease is all right for the old people, but what will happen to the children and grandchildren?

From hard experience Wurreranginy people have learned to take advantage of any occasion which allows them to draw attention to their needs. The lease ceremony was such an occasion and the chairman sensibly took the opportunity to hand to the DAA Regional Director a letter asking for urgent attention to be given to providing an ablution block at Frog Hollow, so that effective use could be made of the bore and tank at last being provided with ASIG money. Significantly, this request was granted almost immediately although Wurreranginy had been unsuccessfully channelling a request for both a water supply and ablution block through DAA Kununurra office for four years. The area office was simply instructed to put in a request for funding under WAALCIP.

Although Wurreranginy people are anxious to make themselves independent of government handouts they do feel very strongly that government has an obligation to help them get established. The chairman argues that it is because of government actions that they are at Frog Hollow - first because it was the government that brought in the Pastoral Award which led to them being evicted from the stations and, secondly, because politicians and government officers encouraged them in their move from Guda Guda to Frog

Hollow. They are not interested in grand buildings and facilities; all they want is simple things which will enable them to live permanently at Frog Hollow and, most importantly, to set up small projects so that they can be independent. It was with this in mind that they asked ADC to help them establish a killer herd. Similarly, the request to DAA for a good water supply was to enable them to start a horticultural project, not simply so that they could have ablution facilities.

The things which really annoy them about government agencies are their slowness in responding to requests and the lack of control over the spending of the grants received. Frog Hollow mob are independent people and have always taken the view that they know how to spend money to suit their own needs, as when they bought a 4WD vehicle and fenced in the spring in 1982 rather than put all the DAA money into a water supply. They are convinced that they could often get the facilities they want quicker and more cheaply than the government agencies can provide them. However, some of these problems arise because of the need for agencies to protect themselves against possible censure. For example, Wurreringany people say they could have put in a water system which would have provided all they wanted for half the price of that being installed at present, but a government officer argued that this would not have been 100 per cent safe water and if anything had gone wrong there would have been a public scandal.

The ASIG system of providing capital items without the community having any say in how they are supplied, or seeing any evidence for how the money is spent, comes in for severe criticism. The fact that they must also pay ten per cent towards the cost of a vehicle (and ASIG demands cash from them before supplying the vehicle) when Warmun people get theirs for nothing is an additional source of annoyance. As the Chairman says: 'We all blackfella, relations. Why the difference?'

These funding restrictions, which seem to keep them in a permanent state of dependence, irk Wurreringany people. What they want is money in a bank account so that they can decide how to use it. They argue that if they were given block grants and allowed to spend the money as they saw fit, they would get considerably more for the money and it would be their responsibility if things went wrong. They believe the current situation is a case of their capability to manage being doubted: 'Government don't trust us - they think we all donkey!'. However, they admit there may be reasons for this and feel that they are being penalised for the irresponsible actions of other people: 'Maybe they think we take for grog - some do. That's the one maybe trouble for us.'

Gulgagulaneng

Although the Gulgagulaneng Community is generally referred to as a Kununurra outstation it is so close to the town that it is sometimes regarded as a town camp by funding agencies. The community occupies an area of land at Emu Creek which is 8 km from Kununurra on the main road to Katherine and within the Kununurra town boundary. The small settlement is about 200 m from the main road and is reached by a good gravel road. It consists of between 15 and 20 people living in four transportable houses each with its own ablution block, consisting of a pit toilet, shower and laundry trough. There is also a shed which is intended to be used for a store in the future, but at the moment a private contractor brings

groceries out twice a week from Kununurra. Good water is provided by a bore and windmill but on windless days has to be carted from Kununurra. There is no power supply and no telephone.

Gulgagulganeng community consists of a group of people from several different language groups - Jaru, Malignin, Kurinji, Kukaja, Walmajarri and Mirriwung - who came together after their expulsion from cattle stations as far away as Nicholson, some 300 km to the south. They form a cohesive community more because of their common history of dislocation and the small size of the group, than because of traditional affiliations. The group first camped at Lily Creek at the edge of the lake in Kununurra but in 1983 they were again evicted, this time to make way for a new housing development for ADM workers.

The community was then offered relocation in SHC houses in Kununurra but refused on the grounds that they were not town people and also because they wanted to be further away from town to avoid alcohol problems. A suggestion that they should set up camp near the Mirriwung Centre in Kununurra was rejected for similar reasons but also because they had no traditional affiliations with the area. Despite the disadvantages of being several kilometres out of town they chose Emu Creek and, after negotiations with the traditional owners, squatted there. Initially, DCW helped them to establish by supplying four tents and by carting drums of water for them since they had no vehicle of their own. However, towards the end of the year Waringarri Resource Agency took over responsibility for servicing Kununurra outstations and looked after the carting of stores, water and rubbish as well as giving assistance with such things as liaison with government funding agencies and setting up a 'chuck-in' system to purchase a vehicle.

Although submissions were put in early to DAA and ADC for a water supply and housing, the agencies were reluctant to provide funding until the situation regarding tenure of the land had been settled. In December 1983 Waringarri put in a submission to ALT on Gulgagulganeng Community's behalf for an area of land at Emu Creek to be given reserve status. However, the land was within the Kununurra town boundary and the shire council put up strong opposition to the application arguing that Aborigines already had enough land in Kununurra. For a year the application was held up as ALT tried to persuade the shire to change its mind but eventually at the beginning of 1985 the WA Cabinet made a decision to override the shire and Emu Creek was classified as a reserve to be held for the community by ALT.

During 1985 four temporary transportable shelters were provided by ADC on the understanding that the community would still be considered for permanent housing in the future. The same year DAA provided capital funding under the CM&S budget for the water supply, five ablution blocks, an access road and fencing. Waringarri contractors installed the tank and windmill with DEIR providing funding for two young men from Emu Creek to work on the project. Similarly, the following year DAA provided funding for a landscaping project on which two people from the community were employed for eight weeks.

Apart from funding from the main functional agencies Emu Creek people are also eligible for ASIG funding as one of the communities making up the Kununurra Project Committee. The amount of money available is small, only \$200,000 a year for fourteen communities, but it has enabled Gulgagulganeng community to acquire a Toyota and trailer so far, and they

are hoping to receive a tractor and some materials to build a playground during the current year. There is also a suggestion that ASIG should be approached to provide materials to enable a community member to start a leatherwork project which TAFE is looking into the possibility of organising.

So far attempts to link the community to a power supply have been unsuccessful. The problem has been that the most efficient source of power, the Kununurra town supply, is also the most expensive to connect. In mid-1986 DAA agreed to fund Emu Creek's share of a project to connect power to several properties in the area but this fell through when some of the other contributors pulled out. However, it now looks as if some WAALCIP money will be available and with additional contributions from DAA and ADC it appears that Emu Creek may be connected to the Kununurra line this year. The immediate result will be that an electric water pump will be installed so that the water supply will be permanent rather than controlled by the wind.

Like other communities discussed Emu Creek is very dependent on government funding but because it is close to town most negotiations take place in Kununurra through Waringarri. Agency staff do visit Emu Creek at times but the people have very little idea which agency provides what, although they are familiar with the names of ADC, DAA and DEIR. It is to Waringarri that Gulgagulganeng looks for help with most things and although the community was incorporated towards the end of 1986 Waringarri continues to manage their affairs. Apart from helping them to negotiate with government agencies, Waringarri was responsible for constructing the transportable houses and for putting in the tank and windmill, and has also assisted with the landscaping. In addition, Social Security pensions and benefits, on which all the community are dependent for income, are collected from the Waringarri office and people go to Waringarri when they have problems of almost any kind.

Contact with other public sector agencies takes place because Emu Creek is treated as a town camp. The Kununurra area school bus picks children up to take them to and from school, even though most attend the Catholic primary school. Parents seem to have little idea about their children's education, apart from saying the children like school, and none seem to attend school functions.

The community is well serviced by the various health agencies. Both EKAMS and Community Health go out frequently and nurses from Extended Care at the Kununurra hospital visit to check on old people. No health education seems to be attempted and because they are visited so often people take little responsibility for their own health, simply waiting for a nurse to arrive and, if necessary, take them to the EKAMS clinic or the hospital in town.

Officers from DCS are also regular visitors at Emu Creek. People say they come to talk about kids who get into trouble, not assist with other problems as they did in the past, since Waringarri has now taken over the old welfare role.

The views of Gulgagulganeng people about government seem to be similar to those of Wurreranginy community, in that they believe most of their problems were caused by government actions and, therefore, they have a right to assistance. The action which seems to have created the best

impression was getting Emu Creek land designated as a reserve in the face of shire opposition. The chairman was even taken to Perth by a Waringarri staff member to discuss this, visiting various politicians, and shortly afterwards heard that the government had agreed to them having the land.

They are less impressed by the way the government agencies operate, complaining of slowness in acting. They argue that agencies such as DAA and ADC are supposed to help them but after asking them what they want and writing it down, nothing seems to happen. However, there are communication problems which even having Waringarri as mediator has not overcome. For instance, all Emu Creek people were convinced that ADC was going to provide them with permanent houses early in 1987, yet ADC had merely promised to consider an application for inclusion in the 1987/8 forward estimates.

Like Wurreranginy, the principal source of dissatisfaction is the lack of control over the spending of grants. This is particularly so with ASIG funding. The chairman complained bitterly that they never saw that money and was sceptical that it was being spent wisely, arguing that the trailer they had received was not worth the \$4000 it was said to have cost. This led to some suspicion when he was required to hand over his ten per cent share of the cost of the Toyota before receiving it, and he spent an anxious time worrying about his money until he was told he could pick up the vehicle. There is no question of ASIG grants being misspent but when people are treated like 'donkeys' by funders, as the Frog Hollow chairman so graphically described it, then it must be expected that the recipients will be mistrustful in return.

The cost of the upkeep of the capital items provided through ASIG was also seen as a problem by Emu Creek people. They argued that the initial ten per cent contribution to vehicles and the maintenance costs incurred were a real source of hardship for people surviving on pensions. However, they were confused about which agency should have responsibility for these costs, suggesting that it should be DAA, possibly because they were aware that in communities where vehicles are provided by DAA, an allowance for recurrent expenses is included in the CM&S budget. There are obvious similarities in Wurreranginy and Gulgagulganeng communities, both historically and in their present dependence on the public sector both for personal incomes and for development of their outstations. However, Emu Creek people seem to be resigned to continuing this dependence, putting in submissions for funding assistance and accepting what is offered. Frog Hollow people, on the other hand, take a much more independent attitude, questioning how money is spent and wanting the option of making do with simpler facilities so that they can use grants more effectively and in ways which will eventually give them some measure of independence.

Perhaps it is because they are nearer a town that Gulgagulganeng people seem to want town facilities and are prepared to put up with greater dependence to get them. But it may be also that Gulgagulganeng people do not have the same vision of independence as do Wurreranginy people. Their move to Emu Creek was simply in response to yet another disruption to their lives and, although they now have title to the land, their past experiences must surely make them doubt their own power to influence future events. Frog Hollow, on the other hand, is traditional country for people with close kin ties who initiated their own move, both for emotional reasons and to gain some control over their lives. They continue to believe this is a possibility.

CONCLUSION

In the past much has been written about the effects of the pastoral industry or mining activities on Aboriginal people but very little about the effects of public sector activities. Yet Aborigines in the East Kimberley are almost totally dependent on public sector agencies for services and resources in their communities and it is obvious that the activities of these agencies must have great impact, both in terms of what is provided and how that provision is carried out. As Rowley (1970b:10) feared, in the East Kimberley new developments have passed by Aborigines leaving them, if anything, even more dependent on welfare services.

The Argyle Diamond Mine, for example, has done little for Aborigines in the region in terms of opportunities for employment and training. Nor has the setting up of ASIG given them any realistic stake in the mine. In fact, although the small amount of funding available through ASIG may provide some welcome facilities for communities, it is arguable that it has simply added to the long list of agencies to which people are linked in a relationship of dependence and powerlessness. Despite the talk of self-determination and self-management there is little sign of autonomy in any of the communities studied, particularly in regard to their relationships with the public sector.

It must be emphasised that a major constraint to autonomy is the lack of economic independence. Only two of the communities studied, Mulan and Warmun, were involved in any enterprise which could contribute to the communities in an economic sense. But even so, it is highly unlikely that either the pastoral station or the roadhouse can ever be developed to the stage where they will be capable of making the communities totally independent of government. Other enterprises, such as community stores, can only be regarded as services since they are themselves dependent on resources in the community, mostly social security benefits, for their economic viability.

The Miller report has pointed to the need to set up enterprises in Aboriginal communities in the north in order to provide an economic base and as a source of employment. It is possible that the new CEEDS program, which provides for both seeding and employment grants to acquire or establish business enterprises, may be able to contribute something here. However, funding is available for only about 20 projects and so far ideas being put forward in government agencies show a depressing similarity to those which were popular in the early 1970s, most of which foundered. The hard truth is that it is extremely difficult to establish economically viable businesses in remote areas such as the East Kimberley; many enterprises started by experienced non-Aborigines have failed. So the prospects for economic independence for Aborigines are not very bright and it is likely that most will remain dependent on resources provided by the public sector for some time to come.

This does not mean that the picture is totally negative. From the case studies it is obvious that there have been many improvements in living standards for Aboriginal people in East Kimberley, particularly during the last five years. However, it is somewhat disconcerting to find that these material improvements have not gone hand in hand with social developments. If anything, there are signs that the autonomy of communities is decreasing and that social disorganisation is increasing.

Writing about a Western desert community in the mid-1970s, Tonkinson (1978: 98) noted that the promises of self-determination were not being fulfilled. Indeed, the constraints placed on the community by regulations pertaining to government grants led him to comment that:

In some respects the Aborigines have less autonomy now than they had in mission times - and God knows, that was little enough.

Tonkinson also predicted that Aborigines would become cynical and disillusioned about government if the gap between the time of promises being made and goods being delivered was not decreased. At that time Tonkinson was referring to DAA, which was then responsible for almost all funding to Aboriginal communities. Since then the number of agencies with which Aborigines have to deal has increased dramatically and, if anything, the problems have been compounded. The gap between promises and delivery still applies in individual agencies but overall the number of resources and services has increased and this has brought additional problems.

Thirty years ago Rowley (1970: 11) laid great stress on the need for Aborigines to form companies, believing that this would lead to the development of autonomy. He envisaged these organisations providing a forum where Aboriginal leadership would be given legitimacy and where ideas could be worked out in private. And as corporate bodies he expected the decisions arrived at would be accepted and respected by outside bodies.

Most Aboriginal communities in the East Kimberley are now incorporated - all six of those studied were - yet there is little sign that this has led to autonomy. Most government agencies and, I suspect, most Aborigines regard the setting up of a corporate body as simply a process which has to be gone through in order to be able to receive government funding. Indeed, DAA is explicit in this assumption. When a community applies for incorporation the local area office is required to inform the Registrar in Canberra whether this is acceptable. In what seems to be a fairly standard letter of reply to a series of questions it is stated that the motivation for incorporation is probably to become eligible to receive government funds. Also, while it is usually stated that the community may not understand what incorporation means or the responsibilities incurred, this is regarded as acceptable so long as the community's affairs are in the hands of either a resource agency or a community adviser. There seems to be no attempt to discuss this with the community. Any ideas that forming a corporate body might have important implications for a community in terms of self-determination have long since been lost.

So what has gone wrong? Why have all the hopes for self-determination been negated so that in the East Kimberley it is now apparent that communities may be moving further away from self-management than they were a few years ago, rather than closer to it? Some of the causes can be found in the operations of public sector agencies in the communities investigated. While the communities were in different situations and at different stages of development many of their experiences with the public sector were similar. Not all experiences were bad; apart from improvements to their standard of living the communities had received positive support from government officers. However, there were also negative aspects of public sector activity which were commented upon and it was clear that there were additional problems which were not necessarily perceived by the people concerned.

It was obvious that effective communication was a problem, although few government officers would admit to having difficulty in communicating with Aboriginal people. The legalistic and unnecessarily complicated language used in many documents and letters has already been commented upon. The assumption seems to be that there will always be someone (ie a non-Aboriginal person) on hand in a community to read and interpret correspondence. In the East Kimberley this is generally true and it is usually necessary since most older people in communities are illiterate. However, young people are not illiterate and perhaps if a few begin to question documents, as the pastoral adviser for Mulan and Mindibungu did when he was asked to sign the DEIR training agreement, then agencies will be forced to simplify their language. People should be afforded the courtesy of having material which is addressed to them written in language which is comprehensible to them. The fact that it often is not shows a good deal of arrogance or, at the very least, insensitivity on the part of the writers.

Another issue concerning written communications relates to the lack of knowledge of the communities being addressed. It should not be too hard to find out whether communities have telephones or mail services yet Mulan community constantly received letters asking for replies by telephone or demanding information or decisions by dates on which they had not even received the request.

Language can also cause problems at the spoken level but so can cultural differences. Even if the words seem to be understood the cultural barriers are such that further interpretation may still be necessary. The question then is who should do it? Ideally, this should be a community member who also has a good understanding of non-Aboriginal institutions. But this is usually a younger person who may not have sufficient standing in the community for her/his interpretation to be accepted by the elders. This was so at Mulan, where those who were uneasy about the introduction of CDEP could not persuade the older people to listen to their arguments. In other cases, people may have reasons for not wanting to 'hear' what is being said, such as in the case of the Yardgee people's misunderstanding of what was involved in getting new houses. None of these problems are easy ones, and require time and patience to ensure that real communication is taking place. While it is accepted that all agencies have large areas to cover and are short of time, it must be said that some agencies and individual officers manage their workloads so as to allow time for important matters such as this much better than others.

The lack of communication between agencies has already been mentioned and is important because it causes problems for Aboriginal communities. At the least it creates confusion but in many cases it also leads to duplication and waste of resources. Agencies seldom arrange visits to communities together, even when they are about related issues. Indeed agencies often simply do not know that others are dealing with matters which relate to their own activities. Aboriginal people may see connections quite clearly and try to bring them up, but then, as the Warmun informant said, they are often told they should have asked the person who just left.

This leads on to the thorny question of consultation which is supposed to be the cornerstone for the development of Aboriginal communities in the direction of their own choosing. But in all the East Kimberley communities studied the process of consultation was unsatisfactory. Town

communities complained that government officers seldom visited their communities and it was true that they often seemed to see less of them than did more remote communities. However, whereas Warmun people were unhappy about the large number of visitors, Mulan people considered they were neglected. One problem seems to be that visits are erratic and badly planned; there may be none for several months, then two or three in quick succession which, it sometimes seems, could have been reduced to one with better planning. In the dry season visits are often planned to take along visiting senior officers from Perth or Canberra. These visits often seem to be unnecessary or about trivial matters and are often seen as more in the nature of a jaunt, to take advantage of the pleasant conditions in the East Kimberley at that time of the year, than as serious consultation. However, Aboriginal communities can take advantage of them to confront senior officers with requests, as when the Frog Hollow people asked the DAA Regional Director for their ablution block.

How consultation takes place is also important. People in the larger communities were insistent that government officers should come to community meetings so that everyone would receive information and hear decisions. There were good reasons for this; women, for instance, said government people never talked to them so their only chance of being certain what was happening was by being at the meetings. However, it should be clear that a meeting is not always the best forum for reaching decisions, since many people will be inhibited from airing opinions in such a setting. At present it is doubtful if anyone knows what communities really want because the process of consultation is so poor. Community meetings are usually dominated by old people who may, for instance, care less about good houses than about other things, though this is not necessarily so. Young people are often not at meetings because they are working (while old people at the meetings discuss the lazy young people!) and it is difficult to know if their opinions are being sought or transmitted.

Real consultation requires a much longer process, involving discussion with small groups and individuals, as well as meetings, and allowing time for feedback and internal debate to enable the community to arrive at an informed decision. The reality is that officers tend to rush through communities, keeping the visits as brief as possible as they attempt to fit in as much 'consultation' as they can in one trip away from their home base.

But this also raises the question of what government agencies mean when they talk about consultation. One writer (von Sturmer, 1982: 89) argued cynically that in his experience consultation by agencies was essentially a process by which decisions made outside the region were brought to Aboriginal communities for ratification. Unfortunately, there is a good deal of truth in this definition of consultation as it applies in East Kimberley, as the recent consultation with communities about commencing CDEP shows. Not only were the communities identified, but the dates for commencing CDEP were also fixed in advance, long before the communities had been approached. When questioned about this a DAA officer shrugged, and remarked that the dates were fixed for IF the communities decided to accept CDEP! Of course, communities are not always compliant but the number of issues they have to deal with makes it difficult to spend enough time on each one to consider all the options, particularly when every issue is raised by a single agency on a separate occasion.

Another point is that although communities may seem to be offered a choice, this is limited by the function of the particular agency. So rather than being encouraged to discuss what they need in order to develop their community, they will most likely be asked if they want new houses - or not, or whether their water/power supply should be upgraded - or not. Since this is not really a choice at all it is hardly surprising that people simply accept what is offered, and refuse to 'hear' of any disadvantages this may incur.

It may be argued that communities are at least consulted about the sort of facilities they want; for instance, the size, shape, design of their houses. But how real is this consultation? Travelling around the Kimberleys one is struck by the similarities in each Aboriginal community. In the course of time each acquires its houses, store, clinic, power house, bore and tank, community hall. Not only that, but by careful observation one can almost date when items were put in. It soon becomes apparent that what happens in each community is dictated more by the fashion of the time in any particular government department than by any genuine choice being made by Aboriginal people. Houses, again, are one of the best indicators. One sees the progression from the tin shelters considered adequate in the late 70s and early 80s, through the DOHC constructions of three years ago to the modern houses built by a private contractor which are 'in' today.

Of course, it may be that Aborigines see what is happening in other communities and simply copy, and certainly that does happen. But it is not the whole story. Warmun people, for instance, were certainly influenced in their recent choice of houses, not by seeing similar ones in other communities, but by being told that the contractors for those particular houses were already at Ringers Soak and would be able to move to Turkey Creek next if they made their choice quickly.

However, it is not only in physical amenities that agency fashions prevail; the same trend can be seen in services and programs. In DCS the community development approach which was common a few years ago has now been replaced by concentration on juvenile delinquency and child protection on an individual basis. Similarly, following the Miller report NESAs have been replaced by AEDPs which for East Kimberley communities seems to mean that DEIR will now only fund training and employment programs which are linked to 'enterprises' but in order to cope with other work in the communities they have been offered the 'choice' of going on to CDEP.

The problem is that Aborigines are unable to make genuine choices because the alternatives are not known. It is significant, for instance, that virtually no alternative technology has been tried in East Kimberley communities although it could well be more appropriate for the area. This is partly because most field officers are simply ignorant about such matters since their training is so limited. However, it is also because they are bound by the policies and funding guidelines of their agencies and by the fear of public censure should anything go wrong.

One of the issues all the communities felt strongly about was the way grants were tied to spending on particular items, and the censure of even minor breaches of funding guidelines. This restriction applies across agencies and within agencies. Money for houses cannot be transferred to purchasing a vehicle because ADC provides houses and DAA provides vehicles. But neither can it be transferred from houses to a business

enterprise, even though both are ADC functions. The restriction applies even if money is not spent for some reason. In fact, it is very difficult for communities to make any savings because tenders have to be accepted before a grant is made and must be strictly adhered to.

Now, it is obvious that there have to be safeguards because public money is being spent and agencies themselves are extremely vulnerable to criticism for misspending money or for providing unsuitable facilities if these result in health problems or accidents in communities. Fears of this happening go a long way to explaining the seeming intransigence of some field officers dealing with Aboriginal communities. Indeed, agencies like ADC and DAA, which have been subject to criticism in the past, have now tightened their control to such an extent that communities have even less room to manoeuvre than they did previously - and that was very little.

There does seem to be a case for trying a system of block grants which would allow communities some flexibility in allocating money to areas they consider important. This could at the same time encourage them to seek out alternatives for particular items which might not only save money but be more suitable for their needs. If this were done maybe there would be some movement in the direction of discovering what Aborigines want rather than merely what agencies are willing to provide. However, to be successful it would need to go hand in hand with genuine consultation and also with some education.

In all the communities studied the number of agencies with which they were required to deal was a source of confusion and frustration. Most people had little understanding of the functions and boundaries of the many government agencies, nor were they particularly interested in them. Aborigines are no different from the rest of the population in this. But because they depend so completely on the public sector for their existence, people in Aboriginal communities have to take an interest and, indeed, they are expected to because this is seen to be self-management. Hence, the endless, boring meetings at Warmun which most adults, reluctantly, attend. The communities studied were different sizes and at differing stages of development so not all were affected in the same way. Warmun was the largest and most developed and had had the greatest input of funds both through government sources and GN. For this reason it can perhaps be used as a pointer to the future for other communities, particularly since the input of WAALCIP money will inevitably lead to greatly accelerated development.

The problem is that every new program, resource, service, or grant requires more maintenance and administrative work in the community, and there are seldom any more funds provided for this. The C M&S budget has been virtually static now for several years; salary increases have been allowed but no new staff and no additional allowances for maintenance or servicing. The result is that the office staff, mainly the CA, are swamped with administrative work - correspondence, telephone calls to and from government agencies, meetings, etc. Because the agencies all operate separately it is difficult to get any clear picture of the overall development of the community and there is no time to try and integrate the various programs because each agency is demanding a decision.

A consequence of this increase in complexity is that Aboriginal communities in East Kimberley are probably moving further away from self-management and Warmun has probably gone past the stage where self-

management in any real sense is a possibility in the foreseeable future. Aborigines are supposed to be controlling the way their communities develop, but in reality they are being swept along by an influx of programs over which they have no control because they have little knowledge of them. CAs are the only ones with this knowledge - and some of them are now out of their depth - and the more complex administration and management becomes, the less chance there is of Aborigines being trained for it. There were no Aborigines in any of the communities studied with the education to cope with administration today, although there are now some who could have managed communities as they were a few years ago.

The same is true of technical skills. More facilities require more people with technical qualifications but training has lagged behind the input of buildings and other structures. Houses are now being built with no community input until people move in. The old DOHC construction-cum-training at least gave people some involvement but unfortunately it was hopelessly inefficient as well as unbelievably slow. People were supposed to be trained in skills such as carpentry and welding, but what skills can be taught by one foreman working with 20 unskilled labourers? Also the whole program was too narrow - only training in technical skills was considered, not skills in day-to-day maintenance and the use of houses. Indeed, this is a major problem with every new facility, for while technical training has been poor, training in general use has been lacking completely. It seems to be assumed that people will instinctively know how to live in modern houses, how to use power and water efficiently, how to shop in normal stores, even if they have never had experience of these amenities before. And when things go wrong, as they inevitably do, and houses and halls are wrecked or horrendous power or water bills are run up, it is towards the victims that the public backlash is directed, rather than those who provide facilities but take no responsibility for preparing people to maintain and use them.

Of course, it can be argued that as far as administrative and technical skills are concerned there is no reason why Aboriginal communities should be expected to have people capable of performing all the tasks necessary for the upkeep of communities. As noted, Warmun is now more in the nature of a small town than a community and in non-Aboriginal small towns all workers are not recruited from within the town. However, if Aborigines are not to return to situations such as prevailed on the old missions and pastoral stations they need to have some people who have sufficient knowledge and skills to be able to take charge in some areas, rather than to continue to be the unskilled workers taking orders and not understanding what is being done. Lack of knowledge means that people remain in a state of total dependence and powerlessness.

In the short run the key to Aboriginal people gaining knowledge and skills is probably to have input from more, and better qualified, non-Aboriginal people in all areas. The ADC report on Mulan in 1983 recognised this necessity but it was never acted upon. The Miller report, on the other hand, stresses the importance of replacing non-Aboriginal staff with Aborigines (p.18). The two views are not necessarily in conflict for if Aboriginal people are to be able to take over from non-Aboriginal staff there is a need for more time to be spent in training. Although some training will necessarily take place outside the community a considerable amount should be undertaken in the community.

The head teacher at Warmun school recognised this and argued strongly for devising a system of accredited teacher training which could be undertaken mainly in the community. It is significant that this school, which has several qualified staff, including a linguist, was the only place where real training of Aboriginal employees was being undertaken. Time was deliberately set aside for them to study and assistance was provided by staff.

The usual system at present is to appoint a minimum number of staff who are expected to undertake several jobs, for which they are not qualified, and also be responsible for training Aboriginal assistants. This is simply counter productive. Not only do POs and CAs not have any time for proper training, they usually do not have the necessary qualifications and they may be incapable of teaching other people even if they have. There is a need to employ people for specific tasks who are well qualified and who have the ability, and will be allowed the time, to undertake training as part of the job. These people need not necessarily all be employed only by one community. A better system would probably be for a person well qualified in a particular area to be responsible for training in certain tasks in several communities. The person could stay in a community for lengthy periods of time to do this but would not be identified only with that community. Such shared positions have not worked well in the past but that was generally because the people were overworked, had poor living conditions and were required to travel long distances too frequently. Also the communities concerned were not included in the planning process. With better working conditions and planning there appears to be no reason why they could not be successful.

This brings me to the question of how community staff are appointed because the present system does not work. In the Kimberleys over the past ten years there have been few successful appointments. Generally what happens is that either DAA or the present CA put out an advertisement and receive the applications. A short list is then prepared, after more or less prior consultation with the community, and the candidates are interviewed in the community. Since there has seldom been much discussion about the qualifications and experience necessary for the job, the applicants may be quite varied and the community becomes confused. Their choice is then open to manipulation by DAA or the CA by the candidates themselves, or by a few people in the community who may have reasons for wanting a particular candidate. In any event the choice of the person may have little to do with his/her suitability for the job.

The reality is that as communities become more complex, the people do not know what qualifications are necessary for their development and administration and they need help so that wrong choices are not made. This may seem to be flying in the face of all ideas of community autonomy but it is not; no realistic autonomy can take place unless there are qualified people who can clearly outline development plans, show the community what options are available and where they will lead, and enable informed decisions to be made. An analogy can be drawn here with a City Council: the residents may elect the councillors but they do not elect the town clerk or the city engineer. They are selected on the basis of their qualifications.

A possible way of doing this would be through a panel composed of community representatives, perhaps the CA and/or a DAA officer, and external people with a knowledge of the qualifications considered

necessary for the job and also an ability to explain to community panel members what was relevant. The panel would be expected to draw up the initial advertisement based on a clear assessment of the qualifications necessary and to refer to this during the interview and selection phases. It goes without saying that those selected should receive salaries commensurate with their qualifications and reasonable living conditions.

Once they are employed they should receive support and assistance both from the community and from government agencies, in the spirit of cooperation in a common venture. At the moment both community employees and resource agency administrators are often used by government agencies to do part of their work and then maligned for the way they operate. Some officers refuse to visit communities until they have arrived at a clear decision about a program, and the total responsibility for explaining it and initiating discussion is left to the CA or administrator. The community employees are often put in an invidious position where officers insist on carrying on all negotiations with them yet refuse to accept letters signed by the CA rather than the community chairman. After all one must keep up the myth of community consultation and self-management!

But we need now to consider what is meant by self-management. It is significant that this term is used more often these days than is self-determination. Self-management seems to refer to a situation where people conform to non-Aboriginal ideas of development and are responsible for running stores, schools, offices and garages which they have 'chosen' for their communities. It does not in any way threaten government agency policy and operation as there are few opportunities for communities to raise uncomfortable questions about their development. However, even this kind of self-management is at present out of reach for most East Kimberley communities since they lack the necessary knowledge and skills.

Self-determination, on the other hand, raises the spectre of communities demanding real choices which could involve questioning what was offered and having a real input into their development. However, for this to happen there must be at least some people in the community who understand what is involved and who can make informed decisions concerning the future direction of their community. When people are faced with radical and alien changes to their lives, such as is happening in East Kimberley communities, they generally need someone who can explain what is available, and help them to understand what is possible, what actions they will have to take, and what would be the implications for their lifestyles of heading in a particular direction. This involves a process of community development whereby the community learns to plan ahead and to take necessary actions to put the plan into operation.

No government agencies are doing community development in East Kimberley communities; there is no-one taking an overall view of the development of any community. Some agencies may cooperate to some extent. For instance, those providing housing, power and water coordinate their activities for particular projects and sometimes DEIR is called in to organise training programs for storekeepers or power house operators. But there is no attempt to draw in agencies concerned with social development. Agencies for the most part work independently and consult with Aboriginal communities on this basis. For effective community development to take place there needs to be a coordinated approach by all agencies, both government and non-government.

The question is, who is to do this? DAA is supposed to have a coordinating role but there is no sign of this in the East Kimberley. Nor would this be particularly desirable as there is a danger that coordination by one agency would lead to greater control. It would certainly lead to empire building and would probably lead to a narrow approach as few agency staff have any training in community development - indeed, most do not even understand what it is. Also, community development is a slow and time-consuming activity and it is hard to show concrete results within a given time frame. This makes it unpopular with government departments which like to have substantial achievements to discuss in their annual reports.

Probably the best approach would be for an independent person, trained in community development, to be employed to work with one or, possibly, with two or three communities, in a similar manner to that suggested for specialist training personnel. It may be argued that the CA is the person who should be doing community development. That may be so but only if he/she is not required to do all the administrative work in a community as well. As has been pointed out, in some communities administration is now a full-time job and will be so in others in the future. It is likely that the qualifications necessary for that position will be the professional ones required for a town clerk rather than the hotch-potch of common-sense skills at present regarded as adequate. Community development requires very different skills to administration and appointments should be made on the basis of recognised planning and development qualifications.

People appointed to do community development should have some sort of support network - as indeed should all community staff. This could come from a team employed in the area or possibly be composed of representatives of resource agencies and perhaps some government agencies. It goes without saying that the cooperation of all government agencies would be necessary for community development to succeed and this would require backing at the highest level in each government agency.

One problem which would need to be dealt with would be that of accountability of community development officers - and of training officers. They would need to be accountable to communities but also to some other body. This might have to be an independent committee as it is essential that coordination of government activities should not exclude Aboriginal communities and lead to more control as seems likely to happen with the NEAAAC coordinating role in WAALCIP, if it ever becomes a reality. The ideal is for coordination to come about through Aboriginal requests to government departments to work out with them a cooperative approach for development plans put forward by the community with the help of the community development officer.

If some such action is not taken in the near future then the future for the East Kimberley looks gloomy. Social disorganisation is already evident in some communities, manifesting itself in problems of chronic alcoholism, child abuse, juvenile delinquency, children not attending school and parents avoiding their responsibilities. Since problems seem to increase as communities receive more amenities it is likely that things will soon become worse. This is because there is to be a massive input of facilities under the WAALCIP program and although the State part of the program is supposed to concentrate on management and support services, these are already lagging well behind the material input, whereas it is arguable that they should have been dealt with first.

It may seem that the public sector, particularly government, has been dealt with harshly in this report. There are many causes for the situation in which Aboriginal people find themselves today, of which the impact of public sector activities is only one. However, East Kimberley communities have been almost totally dependent on the public sector for the past twenty years or so. The plan was for communities to be helped towards self-management; instead the reverse has happened. Since the way agencies operate and the lack of coordination of their activities has certainly contributed to this situation it seems reasonable that they should be asked to rethink their strategies to enable the communities to develop in a positive and holistic way.

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EAST KIMBERLEY WORKING PAPERS 1985-87**

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