

# East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project

ABORIGINAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF NATIONAL PARKS AND ASSOCIATED  
TOURIST ENTERPRISES

N.M. Williams\*

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A Joint Project Of The:

Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies  
Australian National University

Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies

Anthropology Department  
University of Western Australia

Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia



The aims of the project are as follows:

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

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

Address correspondence to:

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

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\* Visiting Fellow, Centre for Resource and Environmental  
Studies, Australian National University, Canberra ACT.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<b>Page No.</b>
ABORIGINAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL PARKS AND ASSOCIATED TOURIST ENTERPRISES	1
I. ACTION RESEARCH : PURNULULU (BUNGLE BUNGLE) NATIONAL PARK	3
II. GUIDE TO FEASIBILITY STUDY	10
1. Data Base	10
a. Physical setting	
b. Aboriginal demography	
c. Economic data	
d. Social data	
e. Administration data	
2. Data Collection	12
3. Social and Political Setting	13
4. Regional Development	13
5. Aboriginal Attitudes and Expectations	14
6. Development and Management of a National Park	14
III GENERAL GUIDELINES IN THE CONDUCT OF A FEASIBILITY STUDY	15
REFERENCES	18
ATTACHMENT 1 EAST KIMBERLEY WORKING PAPERS 1985-89	19

The work of the East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project in relation to Aboriginal involvement in the Purnululu National Park and possible tourist enterprises associated with it has been conducted as action research. Such research differs significantly from most academic studies in objectives and in methods. In the East Kimberley it involved day-to-day collaboration between the researchers and the Aboriginal people with whose problems the project is concerned. This collaboration was designed:

- . To assist those people to understand the concept of a national park in Australian society and the options which exist within that concept.
- . To place at their disposal greater knowledge of Australian and international experience of such national parks, especially insofar as it has borne upon Aborigines and other indigenous peoples.
- . To assist them to identify aspects of their own culture which could be affected by the establishment of a national park, or which could be relevant to its conduct - especially their responsibilities for the care and protection of the land and its resources.
- . To assist them to understand Australian political, legal and administrative procedures which the establishment and administration of a national park would set in train.
- . To assist them to articulate their attitudes, objectives and priorities in relation to the Purnululu National Park, in forms likely to be sympathetically received and understood by non-Aboriginal Australians.
- . To assist them to identify and use the means, political and administrative, to enable them to participate effectively in the enquiries, negotiations, and bargaining leading to decisions about its establishment and conduct as a national park under their effective control.

It is difficult to give a systematic account of how such an action research project has been conducted. Day-to-day action must be opportunistic responding to needs and events originating locally, in Perth, Darwin or Canberra, among Aborigines and their organisations, or officials of governments and their agencies, or private commercial interests. That action had to derive from collaboration between researchers and Aboriginal leaders and groups: collaboration in which researchers saw their role as sources of information and expertise on matters unfamiliar to Aborigines, but accepted the decision-making authority of those with and for whom they were working.

The first part of this paper is therefore 'a natural history' of the Purnululu action research designed to illustrate the diverse, pragmatic character of its operation while emphasising its continuous relevance to the basic purposes of the East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project study as a whole. The research was undertaken at the request of Aboriginal traditional owners of an area which was about to be gazetted as a National Park. The area is in the East Kimberley of Western Australia, and the narrative describes events that took place there and in other places (principally in Perth and Canberra) that affected the course of events in the East Kimberley. The period of time involved is 1985-1988; this is a thin slice of time in terms of the interests of Aboriginal traditional owners, yet it is a period during which signal events occurred, events that determined future courses and established precedents.

The second part of the report is an outline of the steps we judge on the basis of our experience in the East Kimberley as well as comparable research in other areas of Australia to be essential in undertaking a feasibility study of Aboriginal involvement in the management of national parks or protected areas anywhere in Australia and in the conduct of tourist enterprises associated with them.

## I. ACTION RESEARCH: PURNULULU (BUNGLE BUNGLE) NATIONAL PARK

This section provides a summary of the course of events that comprised the context in which the project researchers worked with the Aboriginal traditional owners in their efforts to achieve those objectives.

Despite white pastoralists' appropriation of Aboriginal land in the Purnululu area and more recent mineral exploration, the traditional owners have never relinquished their ties to their lands. When the spectacular 'Bungle Bungle' massif was 'discovered' by the media in 1982/83 and coveted by the tourist industry, the traditional owners intensified their efforts to gain recognition of their proprietary interests in the area. In 1981 they had already applied, without success, to the Ministers for Lands, Agriculture, and Community Welfare for title to an area which became part of the national park in 1987. They gave evidence to the Western Australian Land Inquiry (the Seaman Inquiry) in 1984 which, if heard under the terms of the Northern Territory legislation, would without doubt have resulted in recognition of their claim to traditional ownership.

When the Western Australian government's land rights legislation (Aboriginal Land Bill 1985) failed, the traditional owners of the Purnululu area initiated other processes to secure their traditional rights to occupy and use the area. Thus, when the Western Australian Environment Protection Authority (EPA) appointed a Working Group to investigate the status, vesting and purpose of the area, which they argued should be based on recognition of their title to it, the Working Group submitted a draft report on management of the area to the EPA in October 1984. The Draft Report (1984:vii) acknowledged 'that the people recognized by the Aboriginal community as traditional owners of this area have indicated their preference for freehold title to the area, in conjunction with a negotiated establishment of a jointly managed National Park', but noted that their terms of reference precluded the issue of Aboriginal title and recommended only that the area become a national park under a joint plan of management (1984:vii-viii). The final report of the Working Group was endorsed by the Environment Protection Authority and forwarded to the Minister for the Environment in October 1985 for consideration by the government (1986:iv). The Commonwealth House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation had reported to the Parliament in March 1985 on its inquiry on 'Protection of Bungle Bungle', and its recommendations were virtually the same as those of the Working Party's Draft Report. In June 1985, the then Premier of Western Australia, Brian Burke, announced the government's intention to make the Purnululu area a national park to be jointly managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) and the traditional owners. A Cabinet decision in April 1986 indicated some of the conditions and procedures for developing such a management plan, including involvement of the traditional owners.

Among those who served as consultants and advisers to the traditional owners of the Purnululu area, it is important to include the Warmun Community adviser at Turkey Creek, where the majority of traditional owners lived. In early 1982, Allan Tegg, the Community adviser at the time of the EPA Working Group's study, became a member of the Working Party and thus participated in drafting the report; he kept the matter of the management of the area alive in the media; and he was instrumental in the visit of the Commonwealth House of Representatives Committee to the East Kimberley. He assisted the traditional owners to obtain the help of anthropologists to record their traditional links to the Purnululu area, and a report of that research formed a section of the Warmun Community's submission to the Seaman Inquiry. He also initiated discussions with the Warmun Community that resulted in establishing consultancies in park management (by Foster) and the likely economic impact of various kinds of tourism on the community (by Altman). In 1986 the community asked him to undertake the organization of a meeting of all Aborigines with traditional interests in the Purnululu area at which time they could discuss their aspirations with regard to the area not only among themselves but with representatives of the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management. This meeting, in June 1986, which came to be referred to as 'The Blue Hole Meeting', had a number of significant outcomes, one of which was the determination of all the people with traditional interests in the area to form an incorporated body. Thus, in December 1986, the Purnululu Aboriginal Corporation was formally registered under the Commonwealth Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976.

From the beginning of expanded public interest in the 'Bungle Bungles', prospects of tourism were joined to concern for the overall management of the area; tourism thereby became a material issue for the traditional owners. Pressure from various sectors of the tourism industry resulted in both increased and uncontrolled (from the traditional owners' point of view) access to the area, and increased demands on them to endorse large scale private ventures and to be nominal parties to tourist enterprises proposed by government. Because they had had virtually no experience of tourists or tourism, neither proposal would have resulted in appreciable benefit to them, and on the other hand could have caused considerable detriment.

From June 1986 until March 1987, Ian Kirkby, an anthropologist with considerable experience in the East Kimberley, including that gained during a year of residence at Turkey Creek and employment with the Kimberley Land Council, and who was working with the East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project (EKIAP), served as temporary co-ordinator of the Purnululu Aboriginal Corporation (PAC). Nancy Williams, senior researcher with the EKIAP and resident in the East Kimberley from June 1986 to December 1987, worked in conjunction with Kirkby, Vin Hindmarsh, the then Warmun Community Adviser, and Keith Taylor, the then co-ordinator of the Kimberley Land



Council in the East Kimberley on issues relating to the development of the PAC and its plan to play a role in the joint management of the park and to explore the possibilities of its members' involvement in tourism.

Purnululu (Bungle Bungle) National Park was gazetted in March 1987. At the end of March 1987 Ross Johnston began a park planning consultancy for PAC with the objective of assisting the members to work with officers of the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) in drafting a joint plan of management for the park. Johnston's work on the consultancy continued full time until the end of 1987, and then on an intermittent basis until June 1988. Johnston brought to PAC his experience of working with the traditional owners of Uluru National Park on a joint plan of management with the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, a plan widely acclaimed as a successful model for joint management of an inhabited national park. Richard Bradshaw, a lawyer on the staff of the Pitjantjatjara Council, worked with Johnston and Kirkby on legal aspects of PAC's proposals. At the time when procedures were initiated to incorporate the association of traditional owners (PAC), that Association and its temporary co-ordinator (Kirkby) began negotiations with CALM and other relevant government bodies and private organizations toward drafting a joint plan of management. These negotiations were greatly assisted by Johnston's appointment. All those who worked with PAC brought to bear their particular professional knowledge and experience in the process of consulting with the traditional owners and providing them assistance as they requested it. This was done in diverse ways that may however be summarized as enhancing communication, providing information not otherwise easily available to the PAC decision-makers, and facilitating their initiatives in park management and tourism.

A consistently held position of PAC was that the process of drafting a plan of management for the park should only begin after the principles of management and lease arrangements for Aboriginal residential areas within the park had been mutually agreed by PAC and the Western Australian Government. PAC also strongly urged, even before the beginning of CALM's active involvement in interim management, that the Purnululu area should be closed to visitors until completion of a plan of management and the establishment of an appropriate management infrastructure. Throughout the research period PAC remained concerned about CALM's apparently inadequately considered responses to the pressures of independent tourists and the tourist industry.

After a series of meetings and extensive discussions in mid 1987, PAC prepared a proposal for joint management of the park with CALM. The Minister for Conservation and Land Management rejected the proposal in favour of supporting a CALM planning team with PAC serving in an advisory capacity to the planning team. PAC nevertheless continued to press for a management plan that would embody the principles of joint

management even though not so named, and by September 1987 had prepared such a proposal. The W.A. Minister for Aboriginal Affairs supported this proposal and it was presented to Cabinet.

The proposal, approved by Cabinet, was that a Ministerial Committee be established. The committee was to be called the Purnululu Park Council (PCC) and would come into existence through a formal agreement between the Minister for Conservation and Land Management and PAC. The members of the PCC would be four representatives of PAC and four senior CALM officers. PCC would reach decisions by means of consensus agreement and would be responsible for making decisions on the procedure for preparing the plan of management for the park and the development of policy on matters of Aboriginal interest in the park. PAC engaged Bradshaw to assist in drafting the agreement for the establishment of the PCC. In November 1987 the first draft of the agreement was completed, and PAC members and the park planning consultant (Johnston) met with CALM officers in Perth to discuss the draft. It appeared to be satisfactory to all parties. However, as a result of changes made by the Crown Law Department in March 1988, the revised draft CALM transmitted to PAC was unacceptable to the traditional owners.

The revised draft failed to place any obligation on CALM to implement the consensus decisions of the PCC or to provide a mechanism for arbitration in the event the members of PCC could not reach a consensus decision. Moreover, the revised draft had deleted sections acknowledging the right of the Aboriginal owners to exercise their traditional stewardship of lands within the national park. At a formal meeting, the members of PAC determined to continue to work for the establishment of the PCC with the powers originally proposed. Negotiations continued.

At the end of 1986, despite the submissions of PAC, CALM had set up a 'Planning Group' composed of CALM officers and representatives of what CALM designated as 'interests groups': the Halls Creek Shire Council, the Western Australian Tourist Commission, and PAC. PAC contended in a series of discussions and written submissions that the interests of the traditional Aboriginal owners were of a superior order to those of a shire council or the tourist industry, and that because of their proprietary interests in and continuing association with the Purnululu area, they were entitled to an equal status with CALM in the planning process.

In pursuing their concern to exercise stewardship of their traditional lands in an ever-changing social, economic, and political environment, the members of PAC through their association have made submissions to State and Commonwealth conservation authorities and to non-government conservation bodies. They have requested that the area which includes Purnululu (Bungle Bungle) National Park be listed on the

Register of the National Estate under the Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975, and they have initiated investigation of the suitability of World Heritage listing under the UNESCO convention.

By June 1988, Johnston, Kirkby, Bradshaw and Williams, in consultation with the traditional owners, had completed a draft submission for PAC concerning the management plan for the Purnululu (Bungle Bungle) National Park, which PAC transmitted to CALM. This 60-page document provides in management terms the basic objectives that are of concern to the traditional owners in the management of the national park and the infrastructure for achieving them. In order further to ensure their stewardship of their cultural heritage within the park, PAC's management plan submission to CALM proposed the establishment of the Purnululu Cultural Heritage Committee (PCHC) comprised of representatives of Aboriginal people with traditional responsibilities covering all areas of the national park and conservation reserve and the Registrar of Aboriginal Sites as an ex officio member. The powers and the functions of the PCHC are based on the Western Australia Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972, the Act which also creates and defines the duties of the position of Registrar of Aboriginal Sites.

A cultural resources documentation programme planned and managed by PAC had by June 1988 resulted, *inter alia*, in the documentation of more than 250 areas of continuing significance to the traditional Aboriginal owners. An additional 80 sites of archaeological and/or historical significance had been located within the national park and conservation reserve. The management and protection of these areas and sites as well as others yet to be recorded is of great concern to the traditional owners.

Tourism and tourist visitation to the Purnululu area is a matter of concern to the traditional owners for a number of reasons, all arising out of their perceptions of their relationship with their land. In Aboriginal custom, owners are responsible for the safety and well being of all people on their land, including visitors. It is because of this responsibility and in conformity to the conventions governing permission to visit which acknowledge the rights of ownership, that the traditional owners of the park have made submissions regarding the control of visitors' activities as well as their own involvement in tourism. In addition, they are exploring with the assistance of professional consultants in tourism planning, their options as owners and managers of tourist enterprises within the park.

The traditional owners of the Purnululu area perceive the resources of their lands as having always supported them, and they join this perception to their intimate knowledge of the area and their management of its resources. The expectation of participation in any economic activity, including first option on tourist ventures, is logically related to their ownership of land: they assume that the land has supported them

in the past and should continue to do so. Their aspirations to engage in commercial tourist activities were acknowledged in a recommendation of the Final Report of the Bungle Bungle Working Group to the Environmental Protection Authority:

the first option for the development of tourist facilities within the national park on a leasehold or concessionaire basis should be available to the traditional owners (1986:67).

As of June 1988, three proposals to develop tourist facilities within the park had been put forward and developed by members of PAC. These proposals, developed by three family groups who have had the opportunity of consulting with professional tourism consultants and architects regarding their plans, are for environmentally and aesthetically appropriate accommodation and service facilities for visitors to the Piccaninny Creek area, a cultural centre for visitors to be developed in conjunction with a ranger station at a suitable location on the northern side of the national park, and a cultural tour service including 4-wheel-drive transport for visitors arriving by aircraft and guided tours to restricted cultural areas to enable visitors to learn about aspects of Aboriginal culture such as 'bush foods' and medicines.

With respect to the regulation of tourist operations in which they will not - at least initially - have direct involvement, the traditional owners have submitted that the plan of management for the national park provide for certain forms of control over the operators. The traditional owners have suffered desecration of sites and areas of significance to them, destruction of their personal property, invasion of their privacy, and the insult of having irresponsible and inaccurate promotional material about them, their history and their culture published by certain sectors of the tourist industry. PAC has therefore urged that the plan of management provide for the continuing collection and preparation of materials for use in brochures for general distribution and for informational manuals for licensed tour operations - ultimately for the development and production of a tour operation regulation manual and a tour operation accreditation programme to ensure that only those operators who conform to the tour operator regulations are permitted to conduct tours in the national park.

PAC continues to negotiate with government and non-government agencies for a suitable aircraft and operations programme. A joint venture with a privately operated air charter company based in the East Kimberley proved not feasible. It is at present proposed to establish an air service to be operated by PAC between Turkey Creek and the national park. PAC intends by means of this air service to provide regular passenger and freight transport between Purnululu and Turkey Creek for PAC members and their staff as well as mail services and supplies for CALM staff if required.

The work of those involved in action research with the traditional owners of the Purnululu area, including those engaged in consultancies, has been, often on virtually a daily basis, to:

- monitor developments in park planning;
- assist in negotiations with state and commonwealth conservation authorities as well as ministers and departments with some responsibility in Aboriginal affairs;
- to liaise with individuals involved in planning and implementing the Aboriginal ranger training programme;
- to advise and assist in the organization and conduct of the cultural resources documentation project of PAC.

A number of activities have been undertaken to provide continuity of support for the initiatives of the traditional owners of the Purnululu (Bungle Bungle) National Park. Specifically, they have aimed to provide:

- support for participation in the 'bush meeting' held in September 1988 at Bow River Station to discuss results of the EKIAP research, including that relating to the Purnululu (Bungle Bungle) National Park; informational tapes were made and distributed to Aboriginal communities and organizations in preparation for discussion of issues that included those relating to the park management planning process and tourism;
- opportunity at the 'Aborigines and Development in the East Kimberley' Conference at Kununurra, May 1987 (sponsored by the East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project and the Australian National University Centre for Continuing Education), to discuss with many other Aboriginal people, representatives of government conservation and tourism agencies and the private sector, including the tourist industry, opportunities and problems related to tourism and national park management.
- assistance in continuing discussions of issues raised at the meeting;
- assistance with preliminary planning, advice and support in the development of a Kimberley-based Aboriginally controlled research centre.

## II. GUIDE TO FEASIBILITY STUDY

This guide could be used (modified to suit local particular circumstances) by an Aboriginal organization or community undertaking a feasibility study on its own or with the assistance of specialists and/or employees. It is in parts similar to that used in a study of the socio-economic impacts of tourism in the Ayers Rock region proposed by the Central Land Council and the Pitjantjatjara Council in 1984 ('Sharing the Park: Anangu Initiatives in Ayers Rock Tourism' 1987).

The guide assumes that two local/regional entities exist: an Aboriginal group and a national park or protected area on land in which the Aboriginal people have some traditional interest. It is further assumed that tourist activity of some type impinges on the relevant land or that such activity is proposed.

### 1. Data Base

It is important to have base-line data both with respect to the relevant physical features of the protected area or park and the Aboriginal group or community.

a. Physical setting: data in this category are essential in formulating management policy and planning for the protected area and in assessing how land use patterns may change in response to presence of management personnel and their operations as well as to the presence and activities of visitors. Minimally such data should include:

- i. topography;
- ii. basic climatology;
- iii. land use patterns (historic and present);
- iv. ecological relationships within the area;
- v. descriptions of built structures.

In assessing the type of structures that have been built (if any), it is important to note how they have been/are being used, by whom, and for what purpose.

b. Aboriginal demography: these base-line data give a picture of the group at a given time. This will provide a reference point for comparisons at future dates which enable analysis of the effects of park planning/policy/development on the Aboriginal group and the relevant area; it will also provide a basis for making forecasts of the effects of changes so that appropriate planning can be undertaken. The specific categories of data required pertain both to demography and to service provision:

- i. population - individuals by age and sex;
- ii. language affiliation(s);
- iii. place and length of residence;
- iv. previous place(s) of residence;
- v. dwelling type, size; number of inhabitants;
- vi. services available; type and proximity (e.g., water, power, sewerage);
- vii. availability of educational services;
- viii. availability of health services;
- ix. access to store facilities;
- x. communication facilities, including type, access, and control.

These data allow assessment of demographic patterns and projections, group health profile, the degree and quality of service provisions at the time of the base-line data collection and projected future needs, and the levels of use and impact of existing service infrastructure.

- c. Economic data: base-line economic data provide information which can be used to assess the economic impact on the Aboriginal group of national park/protected area developments and of proposed tourism projects. The specific kinds of data needed include:
  - i. individual incomes by source;
  - ii. family incomes by source;
  - iii. expenditure patterns;
  - iv. employment;
  - v. use of bush foods and technology.
- d. Social data: data in this category will be important in assessing social effects of park or related tourism developments on the Aboriginal group. The following kinds of information should be recorded:
  - i. mechanisms for social order within the group (e.g., council of elders, law and order committee; their modes of operation and effectiveness);
  - ii. relations with external agencies having legal jurisdiction (e.g. police, magistrates, justices of the peace);

- iii. relations with external agencies such as state conservation authorities and land management departments;
- iv. levels of attendance and performance in jobs (both paid and volunteer);
- v. levels of school attendance (and assessment of interest, progress by subjects offered).

These (and other relevant social data) will be important in assessing the positive effects of joint management strategies and/or tourist ventures as well as the nature of any socially disruptive incidents which may occur as the result of creation of a protected area or introduction of any tourist venture (or the independent incursion of tourists to the area).

- e. Administration data: Administrative structures may be very complex and the processes by which they operate have a major bearing on an Aboriginal group's ability to negotiate with outside bodies. Data in this category include:
  - i. locally based governing bodies (e.g. community council, committee structures);
  - ii. role of administrative and/or advisory personnel, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (e.g. community advisor, book-keeper);
  - iii. formal and informal relationship of the Aboriginal group to administrative/advisory personnel to governmental and non-governmental agencies, on federal, state and regional basis (e.g. DAA, ADC, State agencies with responsibility in Aboriginal affairs, Shire Councils, churches and mission organizations);
  - iv. formal and informal relationships to other Aboriginal organizations and agencies (e.g. resource centres, land councils);
  - v. funding sources and levels of funding for administration.

## 2. Data Collection

Data can be obtained from a number of sources that will require different methods of research. Many of the base-line data pertaining to the Aboriginal group(s) (as outlined above) are most appropriately recorded by means of household census methods. Some data can be obtained from published sources and/or from government departments and agencies. Other data will need to be obtained by interview, observation, and participation in the activities of the relevant Aboriginal group(s). Questionnaires may be useful in obtaining some



categories of data; they will need to be carefully tested. Moreover, questionnaires should probably be used only where English is the first language (or one of the first languages) of the Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal people to be surveyed. Where an individual or team is administering a questionnaire to Aborigines, they should know and be favourably known to the Aboriginal group.

### **3. Social and Political Setting**

In order to undertake a feasibility study of Aboriginal involvement in the development of a protected area and/related tourist ventures, it is crucial to have an adequate understanding of the social and political context of these developments. Therefore, certain data are required in order to provide a description of the social and political history of the region, particularly in relation to the legal and administrative arrangements that have impinged (or are impinging) on the Aboriginal group(s) affected or likely to be involved in the developments. These data should permit:

- a. a general ethnography of the region, including concepts of land ownership and authority structures;
- b. history of land use in the region;
- c. a description and analysis of the strategies Aboriginal people in the region have used to deal with non-Aboriginal incursions into the area in the past;
- d. an account of recent developments and population movements resulting from the availability of residential facilities (if any) in the area; factors influencing residential choices.

Historical and ethnographic data may be available in published sources and/or in archives, both public and private. In addition, oral histories can be recorded from Aboriginal people with traditional interests in the region; some of these people may reside locally, others outside the region. It is important to record Aborigines' perception of the history of the region.

### **4. Regional Development**

The existence or proposed development of a protected area needs to be analyzed in the appropriate historical and political context. Data for analysis will include:

- a. the history of the development of the protected area (park or conservation zone), including consideration of the interests of all non-Aboriginal parties as well as the type of Aboriginal involvement if any;
- b. commercial aspects of the development, including projections of future development;
- c. service infrastructure developed (or planned) and degree of anticipated use;

- d. management practices of any existing development;
- e. attitudes of developers toward Aboriginal people;
- f. plans for future development of infrastructure in the region, for both protected area management and tourism.

#### **5. Aboriginal Attitudes and Expectations**

Accurate assessment of the Aboriginal group's attitudes and expectations with respect to the proposed development(s) is critical to their beneficial involvement - or at the least, to minimizing deleterious effects. This will require in the first instance monitoring the impact of any existing protected area or tourist activity on them, and would be essential in planning their involvement in future such developments, whether in terms of a plan of management for a park or for an Aboriginal tourist venture. In relation to tourism, the data necessary for analysis will minimally include:

- a. Aboriginal perceptions of and attitudes toward tourism and tourists (and possible contrasts with 'visitors' - see Kesteven, East Kimberley Working Paper No. 14);
- b. Aboriginal perceptions of the effects that tourism has in terms of their lifestyle and culture, and in terms of visitation on particular areas;
- c. Aboriginal expectations of the developments of tourist facilities;
- d. Aboriginal desires in terms of involvement in the tourist industry.

#### **6. Development and Management of a National Park**

If a national park exists in the region it is imperative to assess accurately the way in which it has been managed, including the influence of tourist demands in management strategies. In addition, Aboriginal involvement in the administration of the park and Aboriginal attitudes toward the administration policies and practices of the various organizations associated with the management of the park need to be recorded and analyzed. These matters are important if adequate account is to be taken of Aboriginal aspirations in future park management. Thus the data needed include:

- a. administrative policies related to the park, both past and present, including the involvement of Aboriginal people in management of the park;
- b. Aboriginal attitudes toward and involvement in the management of the park, including training as Park Rangers and in other areas such as tourism;
- c. any proposed revisions in presently existing plans of management and Aboriginal attitudes toward them.

**III GENERAL GUIDELINES IN THE CONDUCT OF A FEASIBILITY STUDY**

1. The work of a feasibility study and/or anything that follows from it needs to be viewed and carried out as action research (or participatory research).
2. Control is both the underlying need and the overarching goal in all planning. Unless Aboriginal people with traditional interests and responsibilities in the area affected by development have effective control over its management and use, or at least over those aspects they regard as important, provision of infrastructure for their involvement in specific park management objectives or business enterprises are likely to be of little benefit to them. (*Land of Promises* [1989: 43-55 and *passim*], the East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project Final Report, has recommendations for the procedures of negotiation that should be followed in any proposed activity on Aboriginal land.)
3. It is crucial for the Aboriginal people involved (whether incorporated organization, community, or outstation) to assess their present situation in terms of any projected development(s).
4. The location of any proposed development (national park, tourist enterprise, or combination) is critical to all assessment and planning. The difference between a park to be located near a major city or large town and a park to be located in a remote area is vast in terms of every aspect of potential Aboriginal involvement and benefit or detriment.
5. The Aboriginal people who are or will be involved need to meet initially to discuss any proposed development and their past and future initiatives with respect to it. Meetings need to continue on as frequent and regular a basis as feasible. Where meetings involve discussion with development proponents or planners (whether about a protected area or tourism) they must be structured so that Aborigines retain control of the discussion. Interpreters are essential if Aboriginal people present do not have English as one of their first languages.
6. Obtaining relevant information from persons technically able to interpret and discuss it is extremely important. Categories of such information include legislation, government policies, policy reviews, reports of commissions of inquiry and the like as well as private sector planning documents. It is important to identify and assess all pertinent legislation in terms of its potential use in ensuring the Aboriginal group's legal ability to protect its cultural heritage. In addition, continuity in the personnel advising and assisting the Aboriginal group in interpreting and discussing the information is important. Continuity of advisory personnel is especially important in negotiations and implementation of decisions and plans made jointly with

outside agencies whether representing a conservation authority or the tourism industry. A person acting in an advisory role must be credible to the party negotiating with the Aboriginal group. The importance of obtaining the most able and experienced advisors and specialist consultants, including lawyers, cannot be over-emphasized.

7. The Aboriginal group needs to articulate its aspirations regarding the area(s) likely to be affected by proposed developments; this is likely to require many meetings of different orders. Aspirations should be made explicit with respect to access to and control over specific areas and/or sites. Plans for future residence in terms of possible community development planning, should include type of residential arrangements envisaged (e.g. outstation community, satellite village) and the means by which the residential area will be provided with essential services.
8. It is very useful for members of the Aboriginal group, in articulating their plans for involvement in park planning and tourism, to visit other areas and have discussions with other Aboriginal people who have been involved in parks and tourist enterprises.
9. It is essential to identify the factors working for and the factors working against the Aboriginal group's aspirations; these will include but not be limited to:
  - a. state and local land tenure legislation and regulations;
  - b. policies and attitudes of conservation authorities;
  - c. history of the relationships between the Aboriginal group and non-Aboriginal residents of the region (including business people, civic groups, churches, and local government authorities);
  - d. policies, attitudes, and plans of tourism authorities and private sector organizations.

Outsiders with proposals for developments on Aboriginal land tend to assume that new developments will be welcomed by Aboriginal groups if economic benefits can be anticipated. National Park agencies seem to assume that they have a mandate to exploit the cultural values of their parks in the same way they exploit the natural features. Aboriginal people do not necessarily share these assumptions.

These guidelines for a feasibility study of Aboriginal involvement in the management of national parks or protected areas together with the description of an action research project in the first section of the paper are intended to provide both background and rationale for planning that involves Aboriginal people at all stages. It is only through such participation that Aboriginal people can maintain effective stewardship of their land while at the same time ensuring that any potential economic benefit is based on appropriate use of resources, including cultural resources.

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