

Rekindling Culture Through Resources:

Aboriginal resource management strategies and aspirations at Weipa

"I want them to read the wind, the tide, the stars, the moon"
Kaynayth, Bowchat Outstation, Weipa, 12/2/94

Sandra Suchet

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THESES AND RESEARCH REPORTS

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Abstract

Based on empirical evidence from Weipa, far north Queensland, this thesis focuses on the traditional Aboriginal landowners of the area. It explores the ways in which they are rekindling their cultural identities through resource management strategies and aspirations. In a locality where Aboriginal resource management is juxtaposed with the industrial resource management system of Comalco's bauxite mine, the thesis finds that local Aboriginal options are inextricably linked to wider scale processes. The main influencing forces identified are Comalco, the RAAF Base Scherger and the state and federal governments. The thesis examines the ways in which the local landowners are pursuing their aspirations more effectively by actively engaging with these forces.

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List of Abbreviations

AGSP	Alternative Government Structuring Program
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
CAFNEC	Cairns And Far North Environment Centre
CDEP	Community Development Employment Program
CYLC	Cape York Land Council
CYPLUS	Cape York Peninsula Land Use Strategy
DFSIA	Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs
DOGIFS	Deed Of Grant In Fee Simple
DOGIT	Deed Of Grant In Trust
FAIRA	Foundation of Aboriginal and Islander Research Action
GIS	Geographic Information System
NAC	Napranum Aboriginal Corporation
NACC	Napranum Aboriginal Community Council
NWTC	Nanum Wungthin Training Centre
PLT	Peppan Land Trust
PSMC	Public Sector Management Commission

RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RTZ	Rio Tinto-Zinc
WAS	Weipa Aborigines Society

Preface and acknowledgments

As with anything in life, a project such as this does not occur in mute isolation. Numerous forces were instrumental in helping me with the many processes which go towards an honours thesis.

If Dr. Richard Howitt had not arrived at Macquarie University two and a half years ago I have no idea where my life would have led. What I do know, is that there is no way I would have had the incredible opportunity to discover the wonders and warmth of Weipa. The trust and faith Richie bestowed in me by introducing me to the people of Napranum is an honour for which I will forever feel privileged and humbled.

In both intellectual and personal capacities, Richie was always there. His friendship is valued and his incredible skill in editing, pacing, and encouraging me throughout the last year and a half have been invaluable. I would also like to thank him for allowing me access to his field notes from Weipa, providing another avenue through which I could explore the voices of Napranum.

Just as I would not have found Weipa were it not for Richie, I would not be who I am today were it not for my parents. They instilled in me the values and beliefs which have guided their lives and for that I am eternally grateful. Their emotional and practical support throughout my life, and during this honours year - especially the fieldwork and writing period - has been the ever-steady foundations to my work and ambitions.

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I would like to thank NARU and David Lea for an honours grant which allowed me not only to get to Weipa, but actually see the wet season through in a comfy caravan as opposed to a sodden tent! Thank you also to the Reverend and his wife, my landlords, who were so supportive and

allowed me to use their phone - the link to family and friends which provided essential emotional backup.

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Now it is time to acknowledge the people who are fundamental to this thesis. The people of Napranum opened their hearts to me, and I could not help but respond by having my own heart captured - as I was warned, I now have "strings attached to my heart". Without Bella Savo's support, both during the fieldwork and throughout the writing period, this work would be greatly reduced. Her willingness to help provided the underpinning of my fieldwork, and her friendship is one I will always treasure. Buwith became a mother away from home. Our relationship is very special to me and I don't know what I would have done without her and her cheery calls outside my caravan. Kaynayth's warmth, intelligence and humour kept me constantly trying to write down EVERY word she uttered. I pray that good health will return to her and that many more words will flow from her lips to my ears. Thancoupie's determination and strength transfers to all who have contact with her. She not only introduced me to her dreams and actions, but also gave me an insight into Quintigan, a symbol of the potential and need for a land and resource management body. I would also like to thank Thancoupie for permission to use her designs in the thesis. Mathawanh, Alice, Irene, Atakani, Florence, Ernest and Thelma all gave their time and voices to help me gain an insight into their lives, accomplishments, struggles and dreams.

These people all welcomed me to their country, watched over me and showed me different ways of seeing life and land. I learnt so much during my four weeks in Napranum and try to convey much of that to you in this thesis. However, everything written here comes directly from me. Any misunderstandings or mistaken facts are a result of my own interpretations. I presume to speak for no-one but myself.

1: Introductions

Local Setting

The gigantic truck, belly full of freshly mined bauxite, speeds past our waiting bus; leaving a trail of red dust hanging in the air above the immense haul road. Kaynayth¹, on whose traditional land the road and large areas of the bauxite mine are located, stands up in dismay. Angry and indignant she yells at the truck in her language, shaking her fist and saying in disgust that they get money from her bauxite.

A while later, having driven through kilometre after kilometre of regenerating landscapes, we arrive at the red scar which is the active mining area. We sit and watch front-end loaders feed the trucks with red soil scooped up from the exposed earth. Kaynayth, extremely distressed and upset, sings a song in her language, a song she has composed to describe her despair and loss as the mining destroys Anang, her country. "My mother's belly is open with blood", she says, "I'm sorry for land". She describes how there was no consultation over the mine, no meetings: "It hurt me, my heart really sore ... this is what we got, bleeding heart, from this land". Despite the trauma of watching her land being ripped up and taken away, Kaynayth continues the tour of the mine. Intent, listening, questing and questioning, she observes everything, determined not to be ignored and excluded. Determined to show her strength and persistence and interact with Comalco to secure more equitable futures for herself, her people and her country (Kaynayth, 21/2/94²).

Thesis argument

Focusing on recent empirical evidence from Weipa (map 1), this thesis argues that despite domination by industrial resource management systems and hostile political structures, Aboriginal groups at Weipa are rekindling their cultures. The re-assertion of culture is achieved, in part, through the development and pursuit of resource management strategies and aspirations. In doing this the local Aboriginal landowners have no choice but to respond to wider forces. By taking advantage of these forces to create opportunities, and by negotiating and countering the constraints they construct, the local Aboriginal groups can pursue their

¹ The 'th' in language names is pronounced 't'.

² Quotes and references with a name and date only refer to field interviews and observations, a list of which appear in appendix 1.

goals more effectively. Pursuit and achievement of resource management aspirations has implications beyond the people themselves - influencing a range of wider scale processes.

Resource management







Different societies and cultures see and use natural resources in different ways. For many indigenous societies, including the landowners of the Weipa area, the management of resources is especially important as country and resources form the multidimensional, fundamental basis for their cultures and identities. The systems constructed to manage these resources can be characterised as small scale, decentralised, and consensus-based. They rely on customary practise, cultural tradition and local knowledge rather than 'formal science' (Berkes et al, 1991). The resources are used directly by the people for a range of interconnected purposes (food through to culture), and their successful management is essential for seasonal survival. The small scale of production means that failure of management practises produces geographically limited damage.

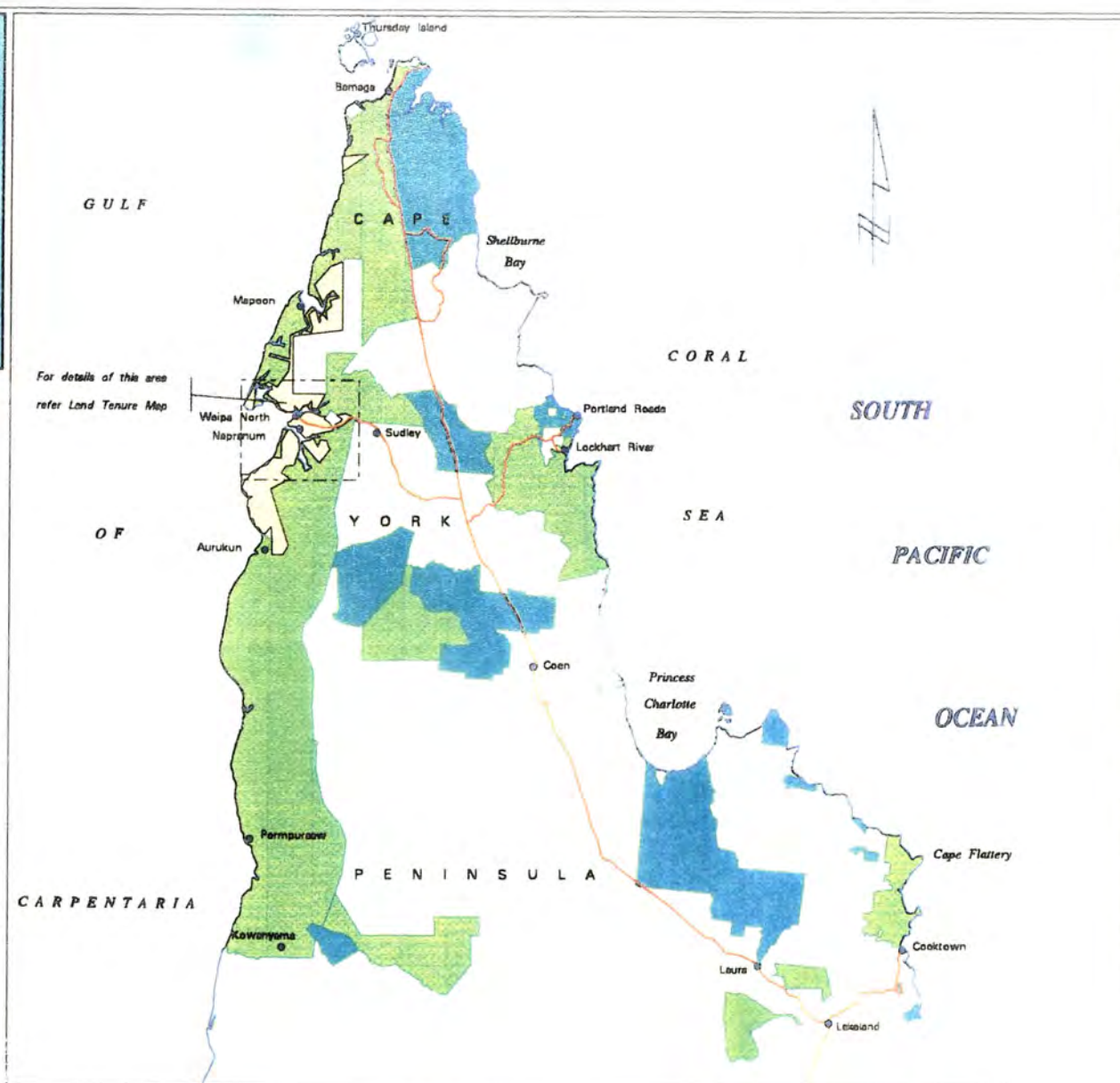
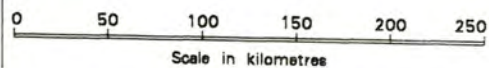
Contemporary industrial resource management systems, like that of Comalco's bauxite mine at Weipa, are constructed at larger scales. The resources are commodified, and their value comes from trade rather than local usage. Management is carried out by a centralised authority and is based on 'scientific data'. As the localised industrial system is often part of a global system, for example the aluminium industry, mismanagement at one part of the system does not threaten its overall survival. However, the large scale of production means that mismanagement of the resource being exploited could have global impacts.

Conflicts have, and are, occurring as industrial resource management systems seek to exploit resources where indigenous resource management systems are already in place. On one level, these conflicts involve questions of rights to land, resource use, management and aspirations. On another level, the validity of other people's worldviews becomes an issue (Berkes et al, 1991). At Weipa, both of these questions are pertinent as Comalco exploits bauxite on land which is managed by the traditional Aboriginal landowners. The way the local Aboriginal people have dealt with this conflict, the changes that have occurred over the life of the mine, and the current situation and strategies for the future, are the subject of this thesis. The experiences of the people of Weipa have much to offer indigenous peoples in similar situations elsewhere in Australia and throughout the world.



Map 1: Location of Weipa

-  National Parks and Departmental Reserves
-  Aboriginal Lands
-  Comalco Mining Leases
-  Other Land
-  Main Roads
-  Cape York Communities



Why Weipa?

Despite Weipa's history of marginalisation and alienation of local Aboriginal interests³ - especially in the circumstances surrounding the establishment of Comalco's bauxite mine - the traditional Aboriginal landowners of the Weipa area remain distinct from the dominant society, belief systems and worldviews. The Weipa locality is an excellent place to base my study due to the interaction between the industrial resource management system and the resource management systems of the local Aboriginal families (map 2). The last five years in particular have seen the revival and re-assertion of the local Aboriginal families' cultures and identities. This re-affirmation of identities has partly come through the pursuit of local resource management strategies and aspirations. These involve a range of issues, including the return to homelands through the establishment of outstations, increased control of resource use, more effective cultural transmission and maintenance processes, and the creation of resource management bodies.

Early in the research, the possibility of a case study at Yirrkala in Arnhem Land was considered. This is another site juxtaposing industrial and indigenous resource management systems. Circumstances led to the selection of Weipa, but comparative work with other groups in similar locations would be a valuable possibility for future research.

My work aims to document the experiences of the Aboriginal landowning families, and from there, work outwards to explore Comalco and the other influencing factors. The focus on local Aboriginal agendas, and the variety of voices I was introduced to during my time in Weipa, means that within the boundaries of this thesis, the locally dominant narrative of the Comalco mine and mainstream society will be challenged. Local Aboriginal voices will be given credibility in arenas where they have previously been ignored. The interface between industrial development and Aboriginal people at Weipa has been studied previously, but unlike my study, the vast majority of this literature starts with the industrial system, only then moving to explore the Aboriginal situation.⁴

³ Wilson refers to this as desolation when exploring community violence at Napranum, the Aboriginal community at Weipa, in the early 1980s:

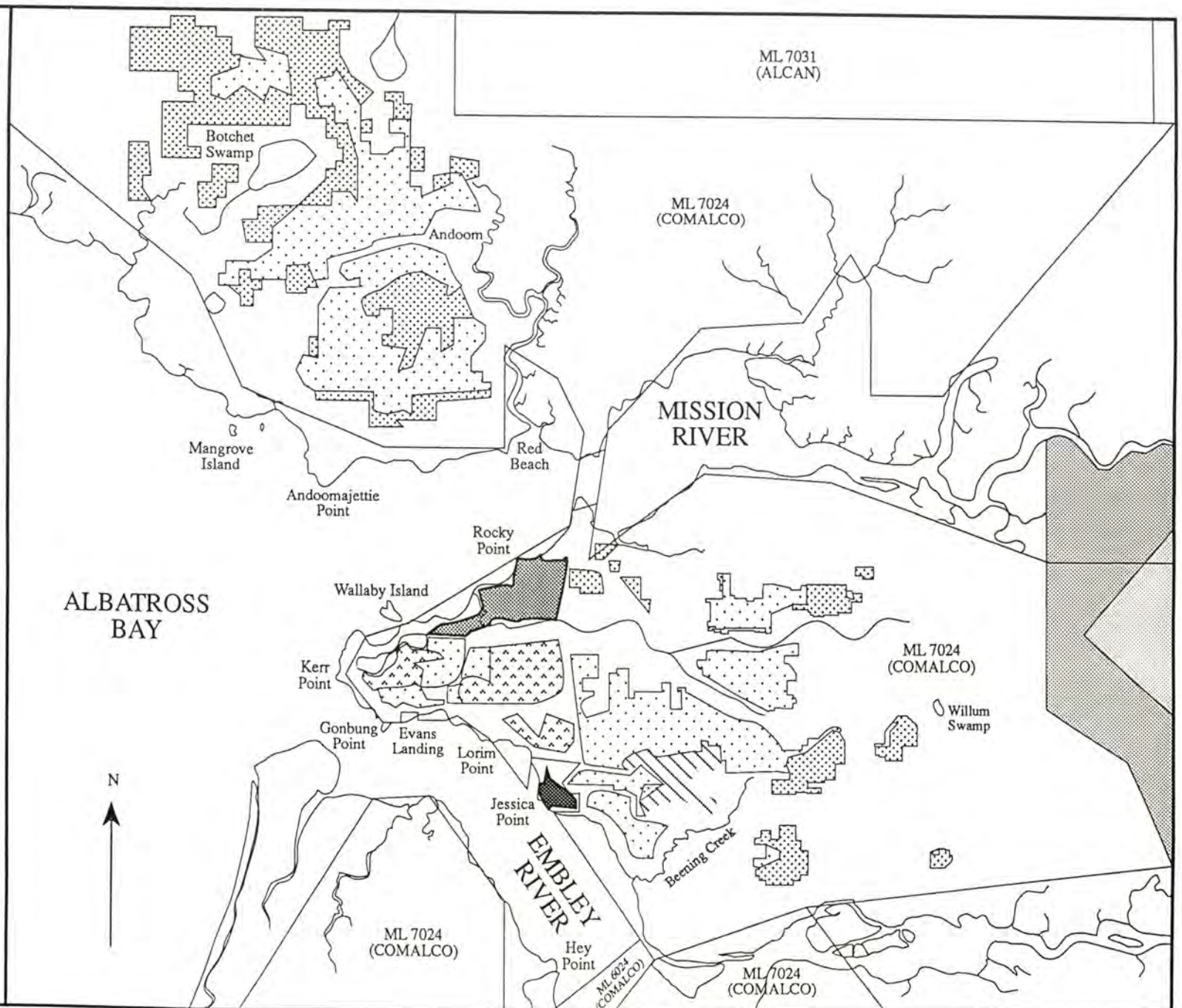
This desolation is, fortunately, not complete. In cities, communities and on reserves, distinctive Aboriginal ways of acting and conceptualising the world still exist. Aboriginality exists not simply in language and dance, but flows quietly in the minds and dreams of those who live in the city and the outback reserve. For it to be rekindled, Aborigines must have a future that they can control, rather than a present full of malice, tension and insecurity, determined by others (1982:9).

⁴ For example see Long, 1970; Stevens, 1981; Newbold, 1988; Connell Wagner, 1989; Howitt, 1978, 1992a.

Map 2: Land Use Map
Weipa Area

LEGEND

-  Active Mining Areas
-  Regenerated Areas
-  Active Tailings Impoundments
-  Napranum
-  Weipa North Town Area
-  RAAF Base Core Area
-  RAAF Base Buffer Zone
-  Airport and Surrounds
-  Mining Lease Boundaries



Orientation to the Field Setting

This thesis draws on background reading, coursework emphasising geographical methodology and Aboriginal resource use, and five and half weeks of field work in January-February 1994. The value of this fieldwork, especially the four weeks spent in Napranum (the Aboriginal community at Weipa, map 2), cannot be over-emphasized. Three and a half years of university study had not prepared me for the reality of the people I met in Napranum. These people, the experiences I had, and consequent knowledge and understandings I gained, could not have been created in the audio-visual room of Macquarie University, let alone its book shelves. Not only did this knowledge and contact expand me intellectually, but also as a person. The warmth and friendship shown me, as well as the alternative 'ways of seeing' introduced to me, have enriched my life, and irrevocably changed the person who first heard of Weipa two years ago.

Most of my time in Napranum was spent listening to, and learning from, members of the landowning families from the area. As I was in Weipa during the wet season, torrential and electrifying rain storms, boggy roads and transport limitations conspired to keep me in Napranum much of the time. An undercover area outside the church, and adjacent to my caravan-home in Napranum, served as an informal meeting place for many of my 'sessions' (learning and listening experiences rather than interviews) with the traditional owners, especially the "old ladies"⁵ (plate 1, map 3).

I was helped to make occasional local day trips which were invaluable in bringing home the centrality of 'country'⁶ to the people. They also gave me first hand insights into the local situation, and an opportunity to discuss resource management issues in country where conflicting perceptions, uses and resource aspirations will need to be addressed.

However, the more I learnt, the more I realised what I did not, and due to circumstances, could not know. Le Guin's eloquent warning echoes:

We have to learn what we can, but remain mindful that our knowledge not close the circle, closing out the void, so that we forget that what we know remains boundless, without limit or bottom, and that what we know may have to share the quality of being known with what denies it (1985:31).

⁵ "Old ladies" is a local term of recognition and respect for the ladies who are the elders of the landowning families.

⁶ The Aboriginal English word 'country' is used when referring to these territories as it not only indicates a special relationship to a place not a space, but also extends the definition beyond that of land to include coastal, riverine, estuarine and sea domains (Howitt, 1994b:2).

Time constraints, seasonal factors, restricted observations of resource use, limited access, absence of important people, and an inability to speak to everyone, all affected my fieldwork, and therefore this thesis. This work is also influenced by my own cultural background, as well as the learning and developmental processes that I have incorporated within my personal epistemology. Clearly, it is crucial that I emphasise that this thesis can only reflect a preliminary introduction to Weipa. Together with my understandings of the literature and university study, it is derived from the limited information gathered, and understandings developed, during my four weeks in Napranum.



Plate 1: Our meeting place outside the church in Napranum.

'Old ladies' around the table, from left: Florence Hecter, Buwith, Irene Jankai, Alice Mark.

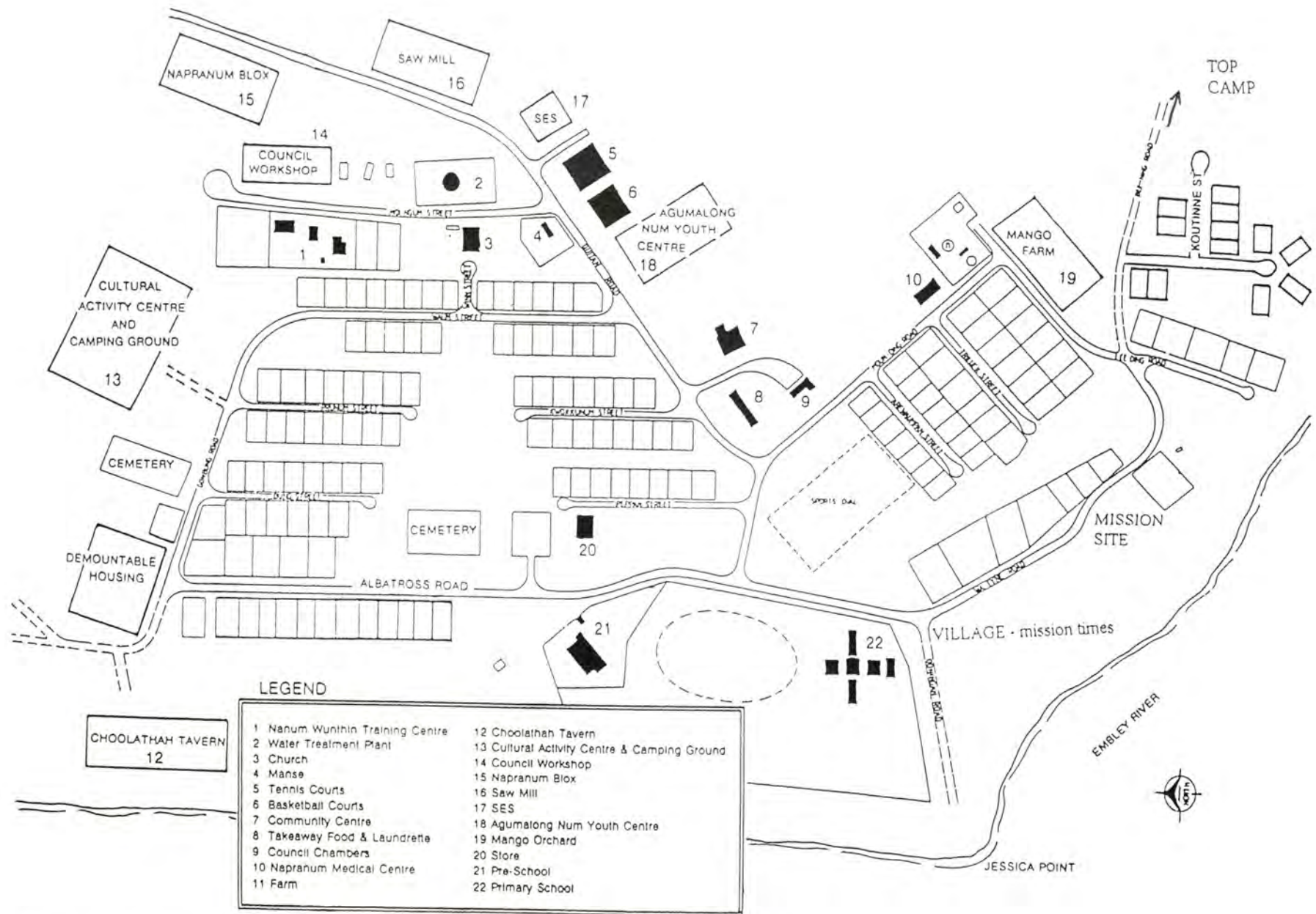
My 'listening and learning' was documented in my note books, with my tape recorder and through my camera, all of which become intimately known by those I spent time with (plate 2, appendix 2). The patience of these people allowed me to fill my notebooks with both notes and accurate quotes, the necessity of which are fundamental to this thesis (appendix 3).

The rest of my time in Weipa was spent getting an understanding of the workings of the Napranum community, including its organisations; and, by speaking to key Comalco employees, the mine.

From Weipa I went to Cairns and Brisbane, researching wider issues which impact on the Weipa locality. This included government departments and projects, Aboriginal organisations, environmental groups and Comalco employees.



Plate 2: Buwith singing into my tape recorder.



Based on Comalco, 1993e:12

Map 3: Napranum

Literature Review

Literature relevant to this thesis is drawn from geography, anthropology, ethnographic studies, archaeology, history, law, Aboriginal and indigenous studies, science, and philosophy. In framing a more holistic approach to the topic they each contributed towards an understanding of the resource management strategies and aspirations of the Aboriginal groups at Weipa, and the wider scale processes in which they are necessarily involved. Libraries in Sydney and the Cape York Collection in the Hibberd Library in Weipa North, the internet system, and readings recommended by various people, organisations and agencies in the field were all targeted as information sources.

Regional and local setting

Relatively little has been written on the diverse Aboriginal groups which inhabit Cape York Peninsula, and even less on the Aboriginal peoples of the Weipa locale, especially compared to other areas of Australia (eg. Central Australia and Arnhem land). My initial searching and reading targeted the Peninsula and its indigenous peoples generally. This set the broad regional scene by introducing me to the cultural history⁷, current situation⁸, and resource management strategies used over time⁹ by different Aboriginal groups on the Peninsula and elsewhere.

This led to work directly related to the situation in Weipa, including studies of local history¹⁰; the vast literature on Queensland and Commonwealth legislation on Aboriginal land issues¹¹; studies of the interface between the industrial and Aboriginal resource management systems¹²; and work which introduced me to the current situation and people of the Weipa area, and

⁷ For example see McConnel, 1930, 1936a, 1936b; Sharp, 1939; Moore, 1972; Harris, 1977; Bennett, 1983; Anderson and Robins, 1988; Mulvaney, 1989; Connell Wagner, 1989.

⁸ For example see von Sturmer, 1973; Anderson, 1980, 1986; Chase, 1980, 1990; Rigsby, 1981; Smith, 1985.

⁹ For example see Thomson, 1939, 1972; Lawrence, 1969; Harris, 1976; Hynes and Chase, 1982; Sutton and Rigsby, 1982; Chase and Sutton, 1987; Fox, 1984; Richardson and Boer, 1991; Kimberely Land Council and Waringarri Resource Centre, 1991; Dale, 1991; Braithwaite, 1991; Resource Assessment Commission Coastal Zone Inquiry, 1992.

¹⁰ For example see Ward, 1908; Long, 1970; Evans, et al, 1975, 1993; FAIRA, 1979; Fitzgerald, 1982; Wilson, 1982; Hodgkinson, 1991; Comalco, 1993a, 1993b.

¹¹ For example see Black Resource Centre Collective, 1976; FAIRA, 1979; Foley, 1982; Brennan, 1984, 1991, 1992; CYLC, 1991a; Legislation Review Committee, 1991; Tatten and Djinnabah, 1991; Sutherland, 1991; Preston, 1991; Miller, 1991; McKeown, 1992; O'Connor, 1992; Bartlett, 1992, 1993a, 1993b; McIntyre, 1993; Holden, 1993.

¹² For example see Tonkin, 1966; Hinton, 1968; Rogers, 1973; Rowley, 1971; Roberts et al, 1975a, 1975b; Howitt, 1978, 1992a, 1993c, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1994 in prep; Stevens, 1981; Cousins and Nieuwenhuysen, 1984; Newbold, 1988.

provided alternative sources through which I could explore and present the Aboriginal voices¹³.

Comparable studies

Identifying studies similar to my own proposed work was difficult. Despite thorough searching of Australian and North American sources, very few comparable studies were found. In Australia, the only study directly comparable to my thesis is ethnobotanical work by Rose in the Kimberleys (1984). This preliminary report explores and documents many of the same issues and responses I found in Weipa:

... research thus far indicates serious damage to the Aboriginal resource base and a skewing of Aboriginal use of land and resources to meet the necessities of European domination. It documents the tenacious efforts of Aboriginal people to live in, and manage, their own country to the fullest extent possible given legal restrictions and a diminishing resource base. In addition, it documents managerial strategies which Aboriginal owners are proposing to deal with the ecological and social problems currently facing them (Rose, 1984:1).

Rose's study sets important precedents for this work because of its subject matter and findings, its dependence "upon an historical perspective" and because it is a qualitative study basing its methodology on "extensive formal and informal interviewing" and photography. It also demonstrates that worthwhile preliminary work can be undertaken despite constraints related to time, travel and the number of people accessed (1984:1-2).

Also relevant are aspects of Rose's ethnographic work with the Yarralin people of the Victoria River valley region east of the Kimberleys (1988, 1992). At Weipa parallels exist to her findings about "an Aboriginal land ethic" and the ways in which the Yarralin view the cosmos and their place in it (Rose, 1988). Her work introduced me to some of the different 'ways of seeing' present in indigenous and mainstream societies.

A small number of comparable studies came from Canada. These papers are particularly relevant to my resource management agenda because they, like my thesis, deal with the implications, conflicts and responses which arise from the development of non-renewable resources in landscapes upon which indigenous peoples depend for their identities and livelihoods.

¹³ For example see Isaacs, 1982; Taylor, 1988; Wharton, 1988; Thexton, 1993; Department of Defence, 1993; Sykes, 1993; and back issues of the local newspapers the *Bauxite Bulletin* and *Napranum Cha*.

A position paper by the Dene Nation (1984) describes how the rapid and inappropriately controlled development of non-renewable resources has implications for Northerners, as they have:

little control over land use and resource management ... increasing amounts of land are alienated ... the effects on the renewable resources and the peoples who benefit from them directly also have been great (1984:305).

It must be noted that the four principles the Dene paper outlines to "guide the establishment of a comprehensive northern land and resource management policy", are similar to issues at Weipa. These include:

**Control and ownership of land and resources.*

**Protection of land and renewable resources.*

**Access to renewable resources.*

**Participation by Northerners in developing policy (1984:306-307).¹⁴*

Feit's paper on conflicts in renewable resource management in the Canadian north, identifies the "protection of renewable resources from the effects of non-renewable resource development" as a key arena of conflict (Feit, 1984:452-454). He finds short term strategies for resource maintenance and enhancing local control can resolve some of the issues, however longer term efforts engaging with political, economic and cultural processes are needed "to find effective resolutions in this area of fundamental conflict" (1984:454).

Work by Michalenko and Hall, together with and for the Muskrat Dam First Nation, identifies a situation similar to Weipa:

This small and geographically remote community must respond to many external issues and agents, and initiate plans, strategies, and information needed to cope with change (1993:107).

Exploring ways in which the Muskrat Dam people can empower themselves and thus interact on an equal basis with development forces, Michalenko et al describe a land use mapping exercise whereby community members' resource use is mapped out and overlaid on a Geographic Information System (GIS). This follows on work by Brody (1981) who mapped both Indian land uses and those of competing resource and recreational interests in British Columbia. This technique of mapping competing land uses and aspirations highlights the "extensive range from which they [the indigenous peoples] harvest food and obtain livelihood".

It also visually illustrates the potential and real conflict that exists as

interruption of this territory through hydro-electric power generation or mining [or any other inappropriately controlled resource developments] would be catastrophic in terms of maintaining traditional lifestyles and activities (Michalenko et al, 1993:107).

¹⁴ See Howitt, Crough and Pritchard (1990) for an exploration of similar issues in regard to Aboriginal empowerment in the resource management systems of central Australia.

Unfortunately, time constraints and the relatively small number of people I worked with in Weipa, did not allow me to apply this technique in this thesis beyond generating present land use and land tenure maps (maps 2 and 6). However development of this approach at Weipa has potential.¹⁵

The relatively small number of similar empirical studies identified, highlights a significant gap in the literature.¹⁶ Hopefully this study will contribute towards opening the topic to further study and action.

Geographical frameworks

Working within geography allowed me to simultaneously explore the local and wider scale processes and agents which act on the locality, and are affected by what occurs there. This perspective is quite distinct from the often locally bound work of anthropologists.¹⁷ My conceptual framework and methodology is based on geographical works from the new regional geography or locality studies¹⁸, postmodern concerns¹⁹, concepts, methodologies and terminologies born in cultural geography²⁰ and contributing to many of these areas, the relevant debates in anthropology²¹.

Human geography's concern with space/place, nature, scale and society has resulted in a diverse range of schools within the discipline. The new regional geography, or locality studies, which emerged in the 1980s, represents the discipline's rediscovery of the study of the specific (Gilbert, 1988:208). Place-based aspects of my work follow Massey (1984a, 1984b, 1991, 1993). Her approach explicitly recognises the relationships between the spatial, natural and

¹⁵ See Taylor, 1976 and von Sturmer, 1979 for culturally appropriate ways of mapping Aboriginal land use.

¹⁶ This inadequacy is highlighted when compared to the vast amount of work exploring the shared landscapes of indigenous peoples and national parks and conservation interests. For example see Yapp, 1989; Head, 1990; Berkes et al, 1991; CYLC, 1991b; Young et al, 1991; Birckhead et al, 1992; Baker and Mutitjulu Community, 1992; Reid et al, 1992; Stanton, 1992; Braithwaite, 1992; Fenge, 1993; Dearden and Berg, 1993; Nutting, 1994; Woenne-Green et al, 1994.

¹⁷ There are exceptions to this. For example Marcus and Fischer explore the "radical challenge" of how ethnographies can represent the embedding of richly described local cultural worlds in larger impersonal systems of political economy ... the perception that the "outside forces" in fact are an integral part of the construction and constitution of the "inside" (1986:77).

Nader proposes a revitalisation and redirection for anthropology towards "studying up" - whereby relevance and intervention can be gained from attempts to get behind the facelessness of bureaucratic society, to get at the mechanisms whereby faraway corporations and large-scale industries are directing everyday aspects of our lives (1974:288).

¹⁸ For example see Gilbert, 1988; Massey, 1984a, 1984b, 1991, 1993; Howitt, 1992b, 1993a, 1993b, 1994b.

¹⁹ For example see Harvey, 1990 and Gregory, 1989.

²⁰ For example see Richardson, 1976; Usher, 1984, 1993; Duncan and Duncan, 1988; Young, 1988a, 1988b, 1992, 1993; Relph, 1989; Baker, 1989, 1993; Jackson, 1991; Young et al, 1991; Dale, 1991; Anderson and Gale, 1992.

²¹ For example see Nader, 1974; Rose, 1984, 1988, 1992; Marcus and Fischer, 1986; Rodman, 1992.

social and by doing so allows a concern for place, scale, specificity and uniqueness to regain significance.

In exploring a specific place I have tried to take into consideration the postmodern concern with diversity, fragmentation and pluralism. I have done this in a way which allows for 'otherness' and the right for all groups to speak for themselves (Harvey, 1990:44-48). In deconstructing the dominant voices and agendas, I have rejected the universal, and reconstructed new narratives. In doing so I allow for the multiple voices, that McDowell (1992) and Rodman (1992) identify as essential to any conceptualisation and empowerment of place, to speak through the thesis. As Howitt states:

*In a real sense, then, we need to **move** the centre - to **displace** and **replace** the dominant narrative. We need to envisage, and constructively engage with, diverse centres, located **within** the resource localities themselves, and from which alternative futures - including alternatives to development - and different avenues for political action to address negative impacts of development, may emerge (1994b:5, emphasis in original).*

In reconstructing new narratives and engaging with the multiple voices of the locality, I have drawn upon terminology, concepts and methods from cultural geography and anthropology.

My qualitative approach follows cultural geography as Gilbert states:

the conceptualisation of the region in cultural terms is an attempt to reverse the perspective of regional study from the geographers' to the inhabitants'. The leading concern is with the subjective and the experiential ... (1988:210).

Similarly, Jackson calls upon developments in anthropological theory to allow a more relevant methodological approach whereby 'local culture' enters into locality studies (1991:215). He finds that the

insistence on an ethnographically informed sensitivity to 'local knowledge' has considerable relevance to contemporary debates about 'locality' ... emphasising the capacity for oppositional readings and the subversion of dominant ideologies (Jackson, 1991:223).

Terminology and concepts from cultural geography, such as 'reading the landscape' (Duncan and Duncan, 1988) 'sense of place' and 'ways of seeing' (Relph, 1989; Jackson, 1989), have been drawn upon as an aid in presenting the multiple voices at Weipa. Works by Australian cultural geographers and anthropologists all explore and examine the implications of different ways of seeing the landscape by different groups.²²

The locality school's concern with scale, requires that each study should go beyond the local specificities to explore dialectical influences from a range of scales:

²² For example, cultural geographers such as Anderson and Gale 1992; Young 1988a, 1988b, 1992, 1993; Young et al, 1991; Baker, 1989, 1993; Dale, 1991, and anthropologists such as Rose 1984, 1988, 1992.

Each study should attempt both to link the fortunes of the local area to the wider national and international scene, which is part of the explanation for the changes taking place, and also rigorously to link together the different levels of change taking place within the local area (Massey, 1984b:xv).

Howitt (1993b:33) argues that Harvey's "'applied peoples' geography" - an interventionist and empowering geography - involves "a framework which conceptualises geographic scale as dialectically and internally related to the totality of social relations". The conceptual framework he outlines, and which I have attempted to apply in my case-study,

encompasses forces and processes operating at other scales to shape opportunities for, and constraints on, local action in diverse localities articulated with the international economy (1993b:33).

Howitt argues that in order to deal effectively with linkages, "new ways of thinking about geographic scales" need to be found. This includes: the breakdown of the rigidly defined boundaries between scales; rejection of the concept of 'nested hierarchies'; and acceptance of the dynamic, multidirectional and dialectical nature of scales (1993b:34-38). As Massey states:

*not only was the character of a particular place a product of its position in relation to wider forces ... but also that that character in turn stamped its own imprint **on** those wider processes (1991:271, emphasis in original).*

Disempowerment and marginalisation are constructed at a range of scales. The application of Howitt's concept of geographical scale allows for a more balanced identification of the practical mechanisms behind these processes (1992b:74-77). By considering the wider scale forces which have influenced and continue to influence the locality at Weipa, my aim has been to construct an interventionist and politically relevant geography, one in which marginalised concerns and disempowered people can be addressed and empowered.

The literature has thus influenced the content, methodology and conceptual framework of this thesis. Works from an extremely diverse range of areas all contributed towards a more holistic understanding of Weipa and its regional setting. The limited number of comparable studies from Australia and North America dealt with issues and strategies similar and relevant to those faced by the Weipa Aboriginal landowners and explored in this thesis. Aspects from current trends and studies in geography and anthropology contributed towards my conceptual framework and methodology. This helped create a relevant and interventionist thesis in which real, multidimensional concerns are confronted. Within this thesis, the multiple voices and experiences of the previously marginalised Aboriginal landowners at Weipa are put on a more equal footing with the previously dominant narratives.

Reading the Thesis

Writing strategies

Focusing on the local Aboriginal people, my thesis does not only contain my own interpretations and analyses of the situation but also allows the multiple voices and agendas of the local Aboriginal landowners to speak through it. Brody (1981) effectively achieves this by alternating his chapters between the voices and agendas of the Beaver Indians and his own interpretations and wider agenda. The scope of an honours thesis precludes this approach. The main method I have adopted is to use quotes, letting the actual voices I heard in the field speak to the reader. Even this approach became problematic when it was necessary to have my voice dominate the text. To counter this I have attempted to create a dual narrative, especially in chapter 5, where my own analysis is the main text and the voices of the Aboriginal people are in a sub-text in the footnotes.

Terminology

Certain terms used in this thesis require clarification. Although Napranum and the Aboriginal people living there are the focus for the thesis, I have mostly referred both to the people and the area in terms of Weipa. Napranum is a relatively new name (officially adopted in 1987) and although the township and region have had a range of names, Weipa²³ is the oldest known name, and is still used by many people for both the immediate living areas and wider region.

Trying to differentiate between the Aboriginal people who have primary affiliations to country within the Weipa area and those whose country lies elsewhere has also been a problem. Referring to them as 'traditional landowners' without clarifying 'from the Weipa area' creates connotations of authenticity and 'real' versus 'not real'. This is most certainly not true and not intended. Similarly referring to the 'local Aboriginal people' denies the existence of Aboriginal people from other areas now living in Napranum. I have tried to overcome the problem by clarifying and stressing primary affiliations to the Weipa area, and by referring to 'landowners', which is meant in the Aboriginal sense, and includes land which they are not recognised as

²³ It is not known if the name Weipa was related to the missionaries who came to the area in the late 19th century by their guide from Mapoon or a member of the local tribe. It was originally thought to mean "hunting ground" but recent research suggests "fighting ground" is the correct interpretation (Comalco, 1993a:15).

'owning' in the Western sense. However if in some cases I fail to clarify the terminology, no negative connotations for other groups are intended.

Thesis structure

Figure 1 illustrates the way the thesis is structured, how it flows and the voices which underlie it. Each chapter tends to have its own character as it contributes to the overall argument of the thesis.

Chapter 2 explores the historical and geographical setting by examining different readings of the Weipa landscape. It concentrates on the readings of the people who have primary affiliations with the area and who have historically been marginalised and disempowered.

Chapter 3 moves on to examine the situation I found in Weipa. It explores the way the local Aboriginal landowners are overcoming the legacies of history and are re-asserting their links to country by the way they use, manage and see their resources.

Chapter 4 then documents the aspirations the Aboriginal people have to further their self-determination and self-management aims through the continued assertion of resource management strategies. It examines their options and the specific forces which impact on them.

Chapter 5 explores the framework the Weipa landowners have to work in. Comalco, the RAAF Base Scherger and the state and federal governments are identified as the main influencing forces. The way they act as both opportunities for and constraints on the achievement of the resource management options of the local families is examined.

Chapter 6 concludes the thesis. It re-examines the Weipa-specific situation and states the conclusions. It then explores the limitations of the thesis and suggests areas for further study that these limitations highlight. Finally, it discusses the implications of the thesis beyond Weipa.

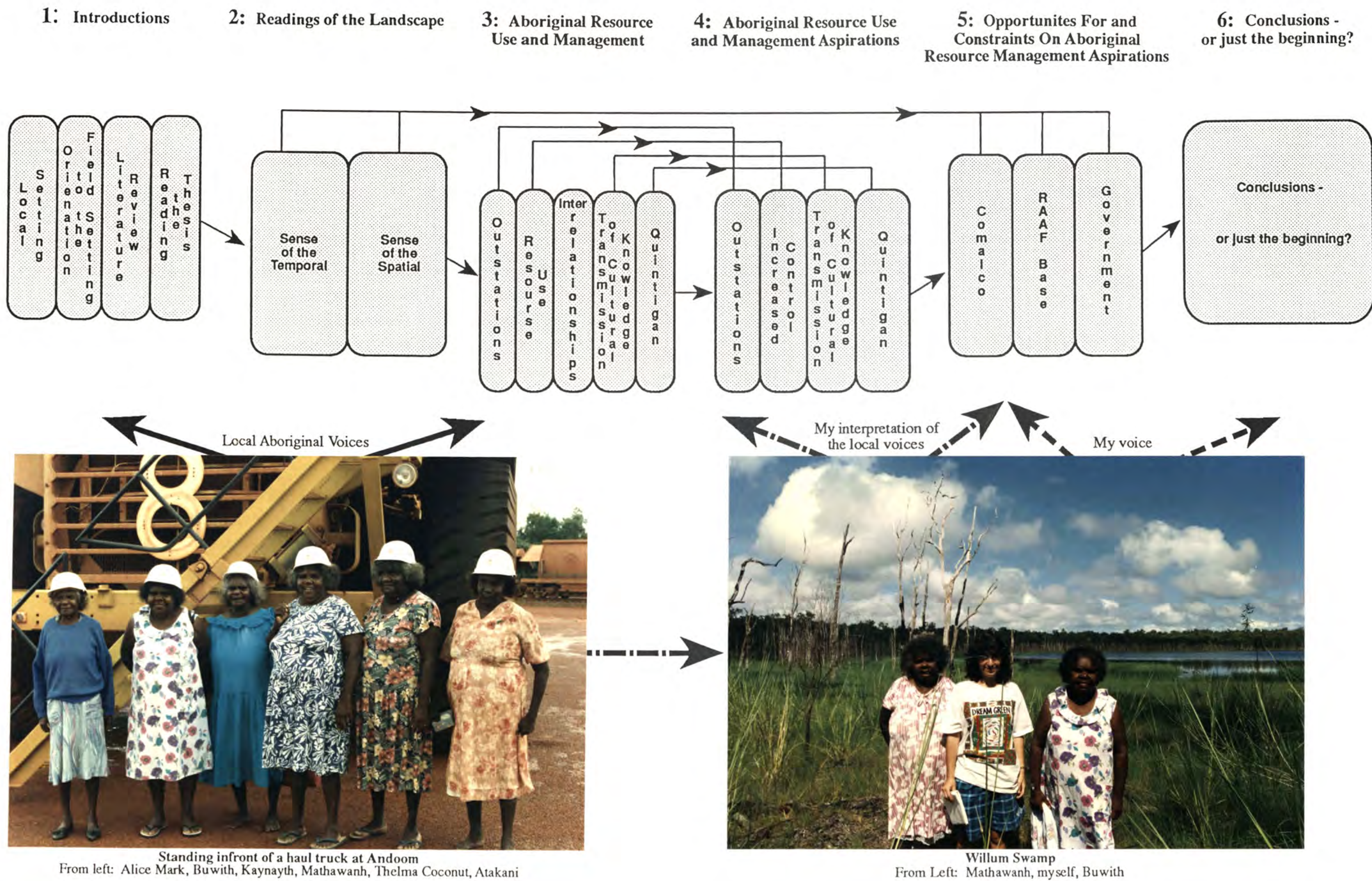


Figure 1: Thesis structure and underlying voices

2: Readings of the Landscape at Weipa

As geographers, the textualized behaviour that concerns us is the production of landscapes; how they are constructed on the basis of a set of texts, how they are read, and how they act as a mediating influence, shaping behaviour in the image of the text.

Duncan and Duncan, 1988:120.

Interactions between the various ways of reading the landscape have occurred from the time people with a different worldview first entered the space of the Aboriginal landowners of the Weipa area. However, the stage for the largest conflict was set when mining began. The emotional consequences of this conflict for the traditional landowners was brought home to me during an excursion taken by Kaynayth, her granddaughter Mildred, Bella Savo and myself (14/2/94). After visiting Uningan Bicentennial Nature and Recreation Reserve we drove to the very sacred Cool Pool (map 4). On the way back to the main road Kaynayth was 'reading' the landscape for us as we drove. She told us the story of the two porpoises which begins at Cool Pool; she showed us where people come to collect seeds for Comalco's regeneration program; she told us of Eddie John's song for the area; she then started telling us about the good spear handles that the men would get from a certain place. She started pointing out the place where the trees should be when she realised it was no longer there. The area had been mined and was being regenerated. Kaynayth's intimate knowledge of the area assured her that this was the right spot, however her sense of place was totally destroyed by the disruption caused by the bauxite mine. Her puzzlement, disorientation, distress and despair permeated the car as we slowly drove back to the main road through the regenerating and active mining areas.

Reading the landscape

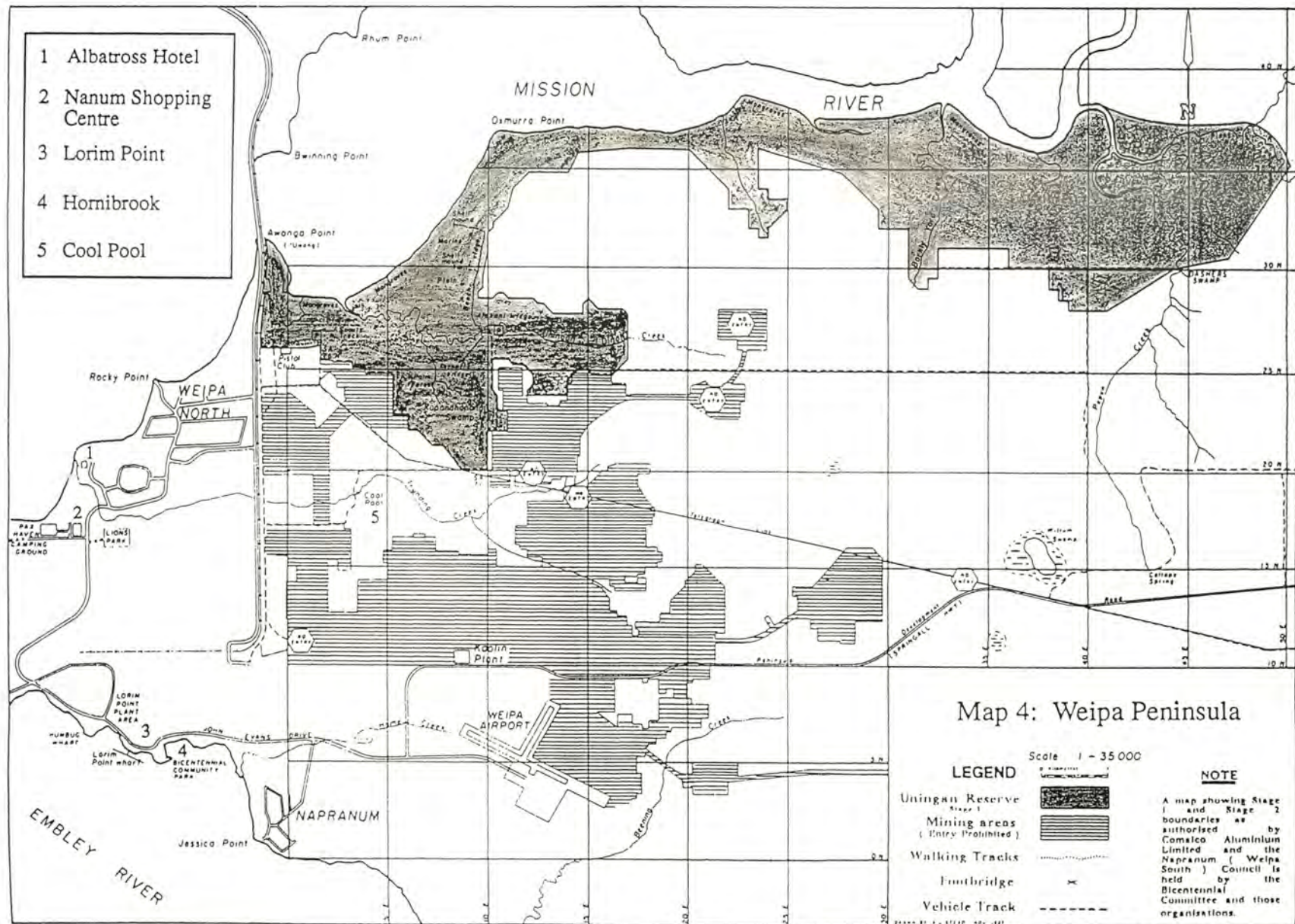
The idea of 'reading the landscape', introduced to cultural geography by Duncan and Duncan (1988), follows geography's central concern with the notion of a 'sense of place'; an understanding of place as a cultural and social construct (Rodman, 1992:643). Duncan and Duncan go beyond this and contend that a landscape, like a text, can be read. This allows important concepts from literary theory, such as textuality, intertextuality and reader reception, to be introduced to geography. However, Duncan and Duncan identify as a key element missing in literary theory, and essential to reading the landscape, "a consideration of the sociohistorical and political processes through which meaning is produced and transformed" (1988:117).

The landscape at Weipa can be read in this way, building an understanding of how the current landscape and situation is "linked both historically and in the present to social and cultural organisation" (Young, 1992:255).

Just as a text is read in different ways by different readers, there is more than one way of reading a landscape. Multiple 'ways of seeing' (Jackson, 1989:181) are influenced by social and cultural backgrounds and can intersect when different groups interact on the same landscape. The domination of hostile political structures and the industrial resource management system has introduced 'ways of seeing' to the Weipa landscape that often conflict with indigenous readings.

At Weipa, different groups have interpreted the spatial and temporal environment in various ways. As most of the fieldwork was spent with the local Aboriginal landowners, it is their reading of the landscape with which I am most familiar.

It must be noted however, that my own historical and geographical reading of Weipa - my interpretation of other peoples' 'ways of seeing' - was informed by months of background reading, and only four weeks of actual seeing, listening and experiencing. My reading of the landscape is thus limited by my own cultural background, the time of year, the people I had contact with, and the places I saw and experienced. Despite this, the vibrant, animate environment at Weipa allowed me to gain a preliminary insight into those collective perspectives I identify as dominant amongst the infinite ways of seeing Weipa and its temporal and spatial environment.



Based on Wharton, 1988:2

Sense of the Temporal - the historical reading

"We have seen so many changes: mission days, white manager, currency change, Comalco, now everyone taking charge, doing their own thing" Thancoupie, 24/2/94

Continuous transformations

Young finds that the landscape consists of;

'layers', reflecting historical processes which have resulted in its continuous transformation, and which stem from changing economic, political, cultural and demographic factors (1992:255).

This section attempts to read these 'layers' - predominantly through the eyes of the local Aboriginal landowners, but contrasted with other ways of seeing the historical landscape.

Early history

Different readings of the contemporary landscape lead to very different interpretations of the early history in this area. For the indigenous peoples, who see themselves as literally coming from country, it was not until the white exploitation of the region's resources in the late 19th century that severe impacts on local cultures and peoples occurred. Following this exploitation, the establishment of missions began the next 'layer' of history. Directly experienced by the older generation of local landowners, this period saw the introduction of many new and challenging concepts and lifestyles.¹

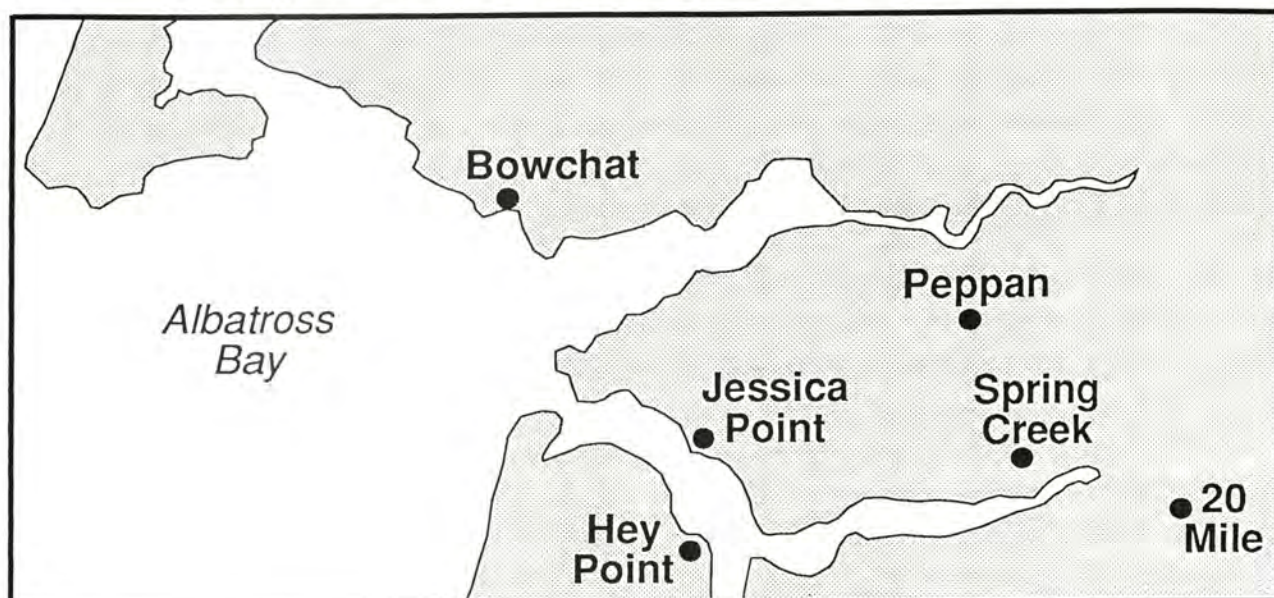
The mission days

Alice Mark, on whose traditional land at 20 Mile the Weipa Mission Station was first located, grew up in the mission dormitories (map 5). She describes how the children used to stay in the dormitories during the week, cutting wood to cook the food (7/2/94). Reverend and Mrs. Brown, the missionaries at 20 Mile, were more tolerant and respectful of local Aboriginal cultures than were Reverend Winn and his wife later at Jessica Point. The Browns allowed the children to use their traditional languages in the dormitories and let them "go bush" with their parents, especially during holidays (Alice Mark, 7/2/94). Alice was the last person to get married at 20 Mile before the mission was relocated downstream to Jessica Point in 1932 due

¹ See appendix 4 for my account of the area's early history.

to "infertile soils, intermittent water supplies, termites, malaria and the tortuous shipping channel" (Comalco, 1993a:15)(map 5).

Map 5: Outstation and Weipa Mission Station Sites



The Weipa Mission Station at Jessica Point² was managed by Reverend Winn and his wife. The ladies, who grew up in the segregated dormitories, describe a much stricter, less tolerant up-bringing. They were taken away from their parents and moved into the segregated dormitories at age five whilst their parent's generation lived in the village at Jessica Point; hunting and gathering and "living the traditional way" (Isaacs, 1982:20)(map 3). Mathawanh remembers her early childhood, "as kids really had a good time, when little, before the dormitories ... [then] we were taken way from our parents so we missed out all that time we should have been with our parents learning things" (31/1/94). Children's contact with their parents was severely curtailed. On Sundays the children were allowed to visit the old ladies and say prayers with Mrs. Winn, but Mathawanh says they "didn't learn things" there (31/1/94). The childrens' parents would visit them on Wednesdays and Saturdays bringing them traditional food such as stingray, fish and arrowroot that they had prepared in the village. That was the only time they saw their parents, they would speak to them over the fence "give them a

² The settlement at Jessica Point has both moved and had name changes since 1932. Retaining the name of Weipa Mission Station at Jessica Point, it became known as Weipa South with the establishment of Weipa North and the settlement's move inland and transformation into a government settlement in 1966. In 1987 the Weipa South Council changed the town's name to Napranum as a symbol of its Aboriginal identity (Taylor, 1988:254).

kiss and cry and cry" (Buwith, 31/1/94). The missionaries were very strict with the children and suppressed any expression of their culture. They were not allowed to speak their traditional languages; "Mrs. Ward, she cut out our language" (quoted in Hodginson, 1991:3), or practise any aspect of their Aboriginal lifestyle; "We weren't allowed to walk through the bush with the rest" (Ina Hall, *Napranum Cha*, 1988, No. 18).

The mission days are remembered with mixed feelings, "really sad, plenty happy too" (Buwith, 7/2/94). Many of the old ladies say how much they liked going to school and learning how to read, maths, history and geography. They enjoyed industrious work, learning domestic skills such as house work, kitchen work, how to set tables, cook, iron and clean clothes (Mathawanh and Buwith, 31/1/94; Isaacs, 1982:24). They also remember with fond detail participating in various sports and competitions. Thancoupie recalls a New Year Day's sports day saying "Zoe [Buwith] was always the fastest, she always beat me. Alice could almost swim across the river" (24/2/94). The children stayed in the dormitories until they were allowed to get married at the age of twenty-one. It was then that they learnt a lot of the stories and information about their land from their parents (Mathawanh, 31/2/94).

With the commencement of bauxite exploration in the 1950s, the previous sixty years of mission life and influence had had a profound impact on local Aboriginal culture. Disturbance of the 'traditional' lifestyle³, together with the removal of children from their home environment, meant a disruption of family life and cultural transmission processes. Cheryl Pitt explains how the removal of children by the missionaries "broke up parenting skills", creating one of the factors contributing to family problems in Napranum today (6/2/94). The old ladies are aware of the loss of cultural knowledge due to their separation from their parents. Asking Mathawanh if there was a language name for a certain place she replies in frustration "our parents would have had a name for this place but I don't know it. That's the problem, because of the dormitory system we've never been with our parents" (16/2/94).

Despite the efforts of the missionaries to assimilate the Aboriginal people of the Weipa area into white society, the old ladies of Napranum, brought up in the missionary system, retain an astounding knowledge of and pride in their culture. The fundamental link to the land was never broken and it is a testament to their strength, and the love they have for their culture, that it survives.

³ Any knowledge we have of Aboriginal society in the Weipa region prior to European contact comes from oral history and archaeological evidence. For post-contact 'slice-in-time' data one can turn to early explorers' observations (Heeres, 1899; Jack, 1922; Mulvaney, 1989), early anthropological accounts from the 1930s (McConnel, 1930; 1936a; 1936b; Sharp, 1939; Thomson, 1939; 1972) and other missionary and early accounts (Ward, 1908; Roth, 1901).

Enterprise time

In 1955 Mathawanh's husband, George Wilson, drove a man called Harry Evans to Weipa from Silver Plains (Mathawanh, 31/2/94). Evans was a geologist for Consolidated Zinc Pty Limited, and when George Wilson showed him the red cliffs at Weipa, he identified the mineral as bauxite. With the assistance of Aboriginal guides he took samples from a widespread area to ascertain its grade (Comalco, 1993a:16)(plate 3). In 1956 the "Enterprise Company⁴ came and made a big camp, they built dongas, a post office, laundry, everything" at Top Camp just east of Napranum today (Mathawanh, 31/1/94)(map 3). "Men and woman started to get jobs - Enterprise time", cutting trees for baselines, working in the laundry, guiding exploration crews (Mathawanh, 31/1/94). Many new aspects of Western society were introduced with the Enterprise company, as Ina Hall states "When the mine came, people found it very hard, because we're not used to the way they are, but everywhere we go, we must learn to cope with good and bad" (quoted in Taylor, 1988: 268).



Plate 3: The 'red cliffs' of Weipa at Hey Point (map 5).

⁴ Enterprise Exploration Pty Limited was a subsidiary of Consolidated Zinc.

'I yelled but nobody heard me'

By the end of 1956 Consolidated Zinc formed a new company called Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty Limited (Comalco)⁵ to develop the bauxite deposits at Weipa (Comalco, 1993a:17). In December 1957 mining leases were granted to Comalco by the Queensland government under the special legislation of the *Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty. Limited Agreement Act 1957 (Comalco Act)*. This Act contained the terms and conditions for the mining project and was negotiated at a time when Aboriginal people were denied both Australian citizenship and basic human rights: "Protestant missions and the Queensland state government felt they were better placed to protect Aboriginal interests than the Aboriginal people themselves" (Howitt, 1992a: 226). Nowhere does the Act protect the rights of the Aboriginal people. Aboriginal voices were denied a platform and any protests ignored, as Kaynayth states "We weren't consulted the first time, they just went on ... I yelled but nobody heard me" (2/2/94).

'We want our mission built here'

The granting of the mining leases meant that the reserve area on which the mission was built was revoked.⁶ The Aboriginal people at Weipa found themselves "simply occupying part of the mining lease" (Long, 1970:163). From the time of the lease agreements in 1957 there were seven proposals by Comalco, the Church and the Government to move the Weipa Mission Station from Jessica Point as "the view of both the mission and the government seems to have been that the Aborigines were unprepared to adjust themselves to living as part of a White mining community" (Long, 1970:162). All proposals, including moves to Aurukun, Hey Point and Spring Creek were opposed by the Aboriginal people at the mission. Mathawanh describes how they had a meeting and decided "no, can't have that, we want our mission built here" (31/1/94). In contrast to the situation at the Mapoon Mission, where some people's wish to stay was ignored and they were eventually physically removed and the mission closed and burnt in 1963 (Rowley, 1971:137-139, Roberts et al, 1975a:8-20; Wharton, 1993), the wishes of the local Weipa Aboriginal people were finally respected. In 1963 the state government, Comalco and the Board of Missions negotiated the creation of a reserve of 308 acres (124 hectares) immediately around the mission area (Rogers, 1973:55).

⁵ Comalco is majority owned by Conzinc Rio Tinto Australia (CRA), the Australian subsidiary of United Kingdom based Rio Tinto-Zinc (RTZ).

⁶ The reserve area consisted of 354,828 hectares.

Part of the agreement included a new housing area for the Aboriginal community, then known as Weipa South, to be built inland behind the old village area (map 3). Sixty-two new houses were built with a Comalco grant of £150,000 and Commonwealth funds (Long, 1970:158).⁷ Mathawanh says they had to move because the soil by the beach was too soft to build on. She describes how hard it was to move from the beach because of the good fishing there, and Buwith says they should have stayed by the water because of the breeze (Mathawanh, 31/1/94; Buwith, 1/2/94). Kaynayth explains how it was a "really hard time in those days" as the houses leaked and got flooded in the wet season (and still do) and there was no sewerage or bitumen roads (2/2/94). Responding to a request by the Presbyterian Church, Weipa South became a state government settlement in 1966 to be administered by a superintendent who represented the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs (Rogers, 1973:55).

The consequences of having bauxite on your land

Apart from having to deal with threatened relocations, a new settlement and changes in management, the traditional landowners of the Weipa area were confronted with an influx of people, a mining settlement and the bauxite mine itself. From the early 1950s Aboriginal people had easier access to alcohol due to the presence of the Enterprise Company. Mathawanh explains how that was when "the men started sneaking grog into the village" (31/1/94). With the establishment of the mining settlement only 14 kilometres north of Weipa South it became easier to get alcohol and Mathawanh says "once grog got them [the men] don't work any more. Everything dropped down" (31/1/94). In regard to her own resistance to drinking alcohol Mathawanh says "lucky, [or] I would have been a drunk woman today, not standing up for my land" (31/1/94).

During the 1960s the population at Weipa South experienced the withdrawal of the missionaries and were then confronted with the paternalistic attitudes of the Queensland government and its damaging policies and legislation. In describing government moves in the early 1970s to replace terms such as 'settlement' and 'mission' with the term 'community', Smith finds that no attempt was made to explain the usage of this word (1989:13-16). Treating a "geographic community" - "a body of persons in the same locality", as if it were a "socially organised community" - "a self-governing social unit", denies the possibility of smaller communities of "solidarity" existing within the geographic community (1989:12). Smith identifies many damaging implications of this bureaucratic assumption for policy and service delivery (1989:17-19).

⁷ See Rogers (1973:66) for a detailed description of the housing that was built.

The 'community' of Napranum was a non-Aboriginal construct from the time of mission settlement. The mix of local family groups itself leads to tensions. In Weipa South in the 1950s and 1960s this situation was exacerbated by "demographic changes associated with the construction of the company town at Weipa North, the influx of displaced persons from Mapoon, and the increased movement of other Aboriginal and Islander people to Weipa in search of work at the mine" (Howitt, 1992a:226; Newbold, 1988:19).

One of the impacts of these changes was an increase in violence within Napranum. Wilson identifies historical and cultural factors, such as dispossession, re-settlement, and a paternalistic system of laws and structures as responsible for the "suffering and humiliation that our economic 'progress' has inflicted on Aboriginal and Islander people" (1982:ix).

Among the most traumatic outcomes of the discovery of bauxite in the Weipa area was the physical impact of the mine. Kaynayth describes the pain the traditional landowners felt as "every blade went into the earth. We said "Oh my mother", and the earth was just like blood spurting out. The land is our best friend, that is where we come from" (2/2/94). Rogers finds that the establishment of Comalco's bauxite mine resulted in the

loss of land usage ... and all that means to Aborigines - freedom, security, hunting grounds, association with their religion, heritage and the past. In short a loss of everything important to them (1973:68).

Kaynayth went to London and Europe in 1981 to try and further the land rights cause of her people.⁸ She visited the factories in England that were using the aluminium made from her land and was appalled to see not only dinghies and houses being manufactured but bombs, tanks and munitions. Kaynayth asks "why are they taking bauxite to feed the war machines, these machines which make people suffer and die?" (2/2/94). Her question is especially poignant as Kaynayth's father was killed in active service in the Torres Strait during World War Two.

The sum of these impacts, as well as many others not as tangible, "were dramatic and regrettable. In many ways, within a decade of becoming operational, Weipa became an icon of the inability of mining to deliver benefits to local Aboriginal groups" (Howitt, 1994a:4).

⁸ This tour by Kaynayth was part of a political campaign against the United Kingdom mining company, Rio Tinto-Zinc (RTZ). The company was coming under "the biggest barrage of criticism experienced by any mining company in recent times". This was a response to the company's treatment of indigenous peoples on whose traditional lands many of their projects were located (Moody, 1988a:159; also see Moody, 1988b and West, 1972 for background material on RTZ and this campaign). Appendix 5 reproduces Kaynayth's testimony, delivered in London on behalf of her people.

Weipa Aborigines Society (WAS)

Although the adverse impacts of the mine on the local Aboriginal population were shadowed in mainstream eyes by its "industrial success"⁹, there was some public criticism of its performance (Howitt, 1994a:4). This factor, together with other Aboriginal land rights initiatives over resource conflicts, such as the Gurindji Walk-off at Wave Hill Station and the Gove Land Rights Case, was the impetus for Comalco to form the Weipa Aborigines Society (WAS) to "depoliticize and localize the problem" (Howitt, 1994a:5). Established in 1973 by agreement between Comalco and the state and federal governments, WAS had five traditional Aboriginal landowners from Weipa on its board of directors. Jointly funded by Comalco and the governments, WAS was extremely paternalistic and marginalised Aboriginal concerns by concentrating its efforts on "a predominantly commercial and industrial model of development success" (Howitt, 1994a:5). Despite some shortcomings, WAS was important for relations between Comalco and the local Aboriginal population. It provided an avenue through which community and company leaders could meet and develop a degree of comfort working together. This led to an "increasing personal understanding and respect on both sides" (Howitt, 1992a:230).

The earlier "bricks-and-mortar development" (1973-1985) and later "people development" (1982-1993)(table 1) initiatives of a paternalistic WAS were needed and are valued by the Aboriginal people of Napranum. Despite this, Howitt identifies differences between the Aboriginal and industrial views of "people development" (table 2). He emphasises that:

an Aboriginal model of 'people development' at Napranum will give priority to work which reinforces and strengthens people's Aboriginal identity, cultural knowledge and values, building on their existing strengths and skills not only in ways that are marketable to industry, but also in ways that make sense within Aboriginal frames of reference (1994a:5).

Napranum Aboriginal Corporation (NAC)

The chance to implement a shift from the industrial model to the 'Aboriginal frames of reference' came in 1993 with the "Aboriginalisation of WAS" by the establishment of a new community organisation, Napranum Aboriginal Corporation (NAC) (Howitt, 1994a:5). Concomitant with the assertion of Aboriginal priorities, Sandy Callope says that NAC "should

⁹ By the end of 1972, the Weipa operation was producing 10 million tonnes of bauxite a year. This was made possible by new treatment plants and shiploading facilities erected at Lorim Point in 1967 and the extension of the mining area to Andoom, together with a railway bridging the Mission river and Andoom Creek, from 1970-1972 (map 2)(Comalco, 1993a:17).

be geared towards the traditional owners" (10/2/94). In order to achieve this it is proposed that the new structure of NAC will have five elders from the Quintigan Land Management Committee (a committee created by and for the traditional landowners of the Weipa area) on its Executive Committee (figure 2). To actively bring the Aboriginal landowners of the Weipa area back into NAC, and to help implement many objectives of the Aboriginal model of 'people development', the new position of Director of Cultural Programs has also been created (appendix 6).

1973	Town Plan	\$77,000
1974	Pre-School	\$349,000
1976	Sewerage	\$751,000
1977	Roads and drainage	\$310,000
1978	Community Hall	\$125,000
1979	Accommodation for pre-school teachers	\$52,000
1981	Convenience Store and laundromat	\$180,000
1982	Alcohol rehabilitation and workshop training	\$260,000
1984	Useful skills training (annual operating costs)	\$100,000
1986	Pre-school expenses (annual costs)	\$65,000
1986	Training centre	\$108,000
1986	Fish farm feasibility study	\$1,000
1986	Snack bar renovation	\$55,000
1987	Pre-School and Training Centre operations	\$183,000
1988	Pre-School and Training Centre operations	\$213,000
1989	Pre-School and Training Centre operations	\$244,000
1990	Pre-School and Training Centre operations	\$377,000
1990	Napranum Systems Development	\$40,000
1991	Pre-School and Training Centre operations	\$543,000
1991	Napranum Systems Development	\$89,000
1992	Pre-School and Training Centre operations	\$488,000
1992	Napranum Systems Development	\$184,000
1993	Pre-School and Training Centre operations	\$341,000
1993	Napranum Systems Development	\$97,000

Source: Weipa Aborigines Society, *Audited Financial Statements*, 1981-92, unaudited accounts, 1993.

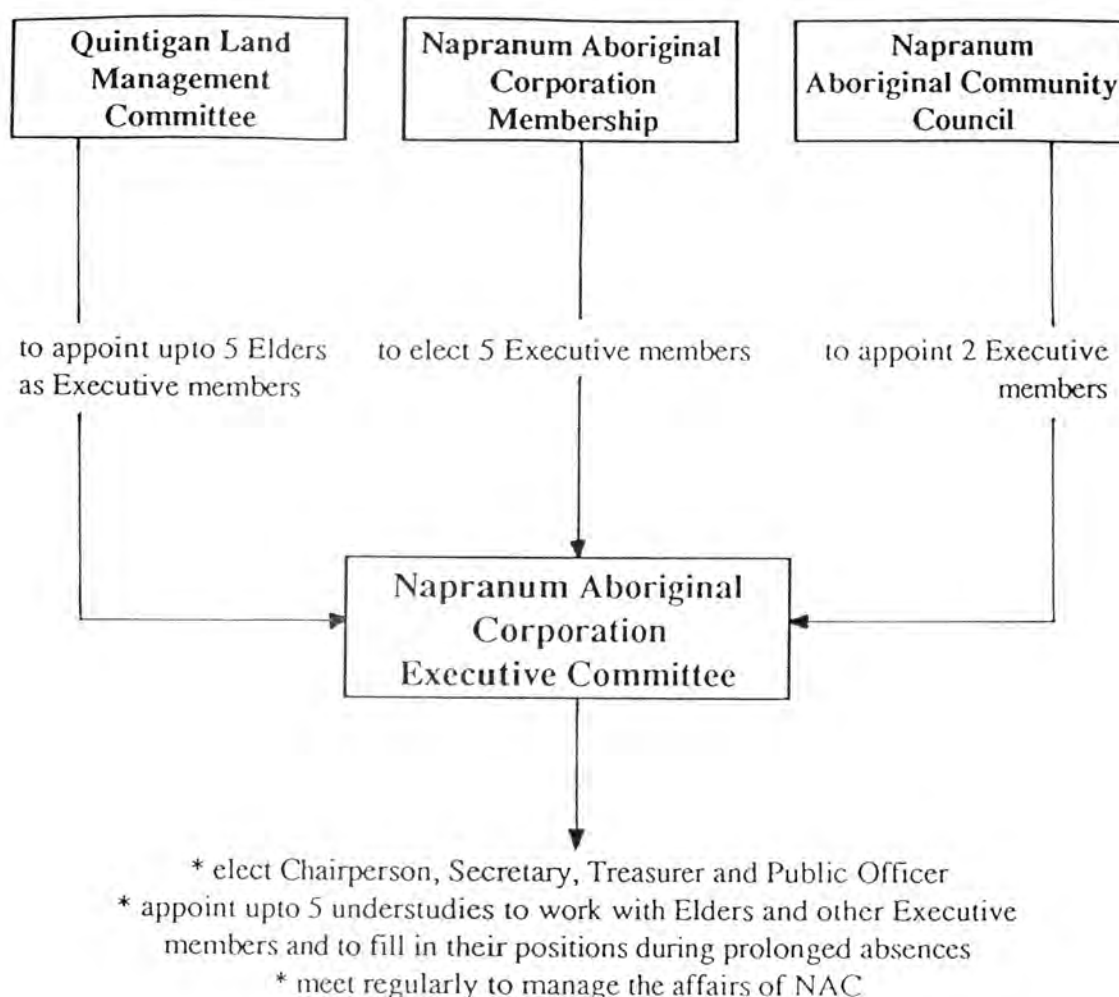
(Source: Howitt, 1994a)

Table 1: Weipa Aborigines Society: Projects and Programs 1973-1988.

<p>The Comalco Side</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* industrial/commercial model* targets identified skills that are useful in industrial and commercial employment* uses the market as measure of success* value is measured in largely financial terms	<p>The Aboriginal Side</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* less 'centred' than the industrial/commercial model* focus is on Aboriginality as a strength rather than as an implied 'disability'* cultural sustainability important criterion in measuring success* community wealth seen as the most relevant measure of value
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(Source: Howitt, 1994a).

Table 2: Different views of 'people development' at Weipa.



(Source: Howitt, 1994a)

Figure 2: Proposed structure of Napranum Aboriginal Corporation.

Napranum Aboriginal Community Council (NACC):

In April 1984 the *Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984* was "rushed" through the Queensland parliament (Brennan, 1992:61-63; Legislation Review Committee, 1991:8). Fourteen Aboriginal Community Councils were created in Queensland under this Act including Napranum Aboriginal Community Council (NACC). The Councils have the functions of other Local Governments in Queensland (*Local Government Act 1936*) as well as a range of other responsibilities from personal and social issues to health, housing maintenance and plumbing.¹⁰ As Dick Namai, current Napranum Council Clerk, puts it "mainstream Local Governments ... only look after water reticulation from the tank to the yard ... in our Aboriginal Communities

¹⁰ See the Legislation Review Committee, 1991:112-115 for a list of the functions and powers of Community Councils.

we are responsible from the tank to inside the house" (18/2/94). Although the Minister for Aboriginal and Islander Affairs said that the Community Services legislation *reflects the Government's desire to unfetter Aboriginal and Islander people in formulating decisions which affect the development of their communities and which shape their future position in Queensland society (cited in Brennan, 1992:63),*

Brennan argues that the Bill "contained a series of restrictions on community councils which did not apply to any other local councils in Queensland" (1992:63). These restrictions include:

**requirements that the councils submit an annual budget and monthly and annual financial statements to the minister,*

**that all items of expenditure from funds allocated by the Queensland Parliament were to be approved by a public servant and*

**that council accounts were to be audited by the Government.*

Brennan finds that the councils

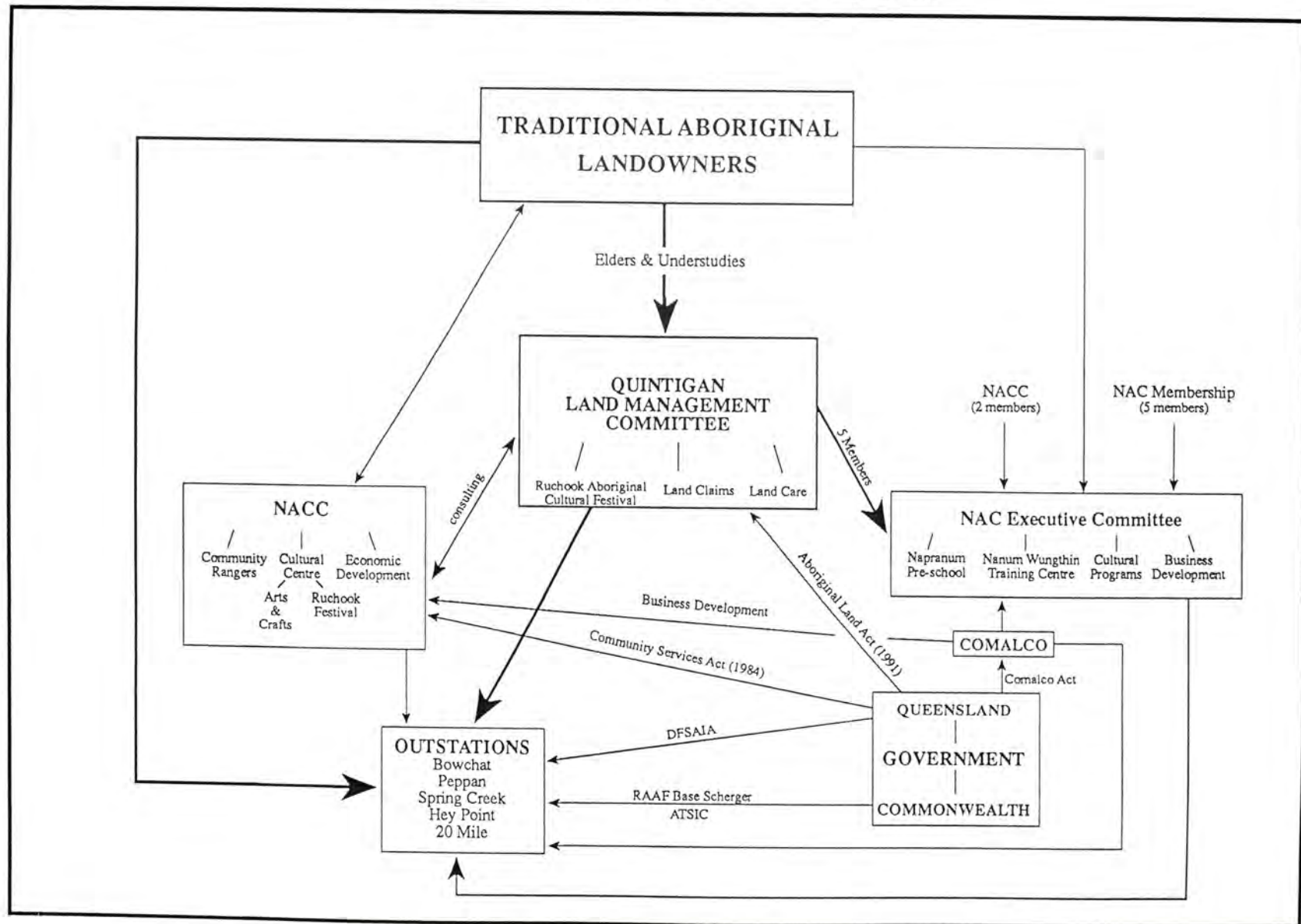
were not viewed as responsible, elected councils expending their own funds, but as public servants expending government funds and therefore accountable to the Queensland Government (1992:64).

The NACC is responsible for infrastructure, resource management and economic development. Council members are elected from the entire Napranum community and are thus not necessarily from the local area. Therefore ongoing communication and education is very important (Dick Namai, 18/2/94). NACC has contact with the traditional landowners through a variety of projects such as the council-funded Cultural Centre, the Ruchook Aboriginal Cultural Festival, Community Rangers and a range of economic and enterprise activities. Dick Namai identifies the Quintigan Land Management Committee ("a good thing for Council to have a committee like that to consult with about land issues") and NAC (two NACC members sit on the NAC Executive Committee (figure 2)) as important avenues through which the local Aboriginal voices can be heard (18/2/94).

Like NAC, NACC is currently moving from 'bricks-and-mortar development' projects to a 'people development' emphasis. In 1986 the community entered the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) whereby community members work a certain number of days per week in order to get their unemployment benefits (Taylor, 1988:254). Through CDEP, the Council runs 'people development' projects such as arts and crafts at the Cultural Centre and education courses in communication and counselling (Dick Namai, 18/2/94).

Figure 3 illustrates the institutional structure of the Napranum 'community', the position of the traditional landowners and outside influences.

Figure 3: Institutional structure of Napranum



Sense of the Spatial - the geographical reading

"As far as the eye can see - the sky, the sea, the land - you know that's all yours" Thancoupie, 24/2/94

Although an historical understanding of a locality is essential in order to read the landscape, a sense of space cannot become a sense of place without some understanding of how the relevant actors see the environment. Once again, I will concentrate on the understanding I gained of the ways the traditional Aboriginal landowners perceive their surroundings. More obvious here than in the historical reading, and more relevant due to their resource management implications, are the contrasts between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ways of seeing the environment.

Relationships to place

The concept of 'nomadic wanderer' which dominates Western perceptions of hunter-gatherer societies can be refuted as a myth by the reality of the Weipa situation. Instead of a random group of people wandering over undefined territories I was introduced to distinct families with codified relationships to discrete territories.

Individual's relationships with country are not restricted to a single tribal area but overlap and network throughout the region as a result of secondary associations through marriage and relocations. However, primary associations are usually based on patrilineal descent, centred on a discrete area or estate (Connell Wagner, 1989:Appendix A:6-7). This links individuals not only to physical landscapes but also to the stories and ancestors of the country. These links also involve responsibilities towards country, obliging individuals to look after the area and its interacting and interchangeable physical and spiritual components. As Roy Jingle states "the land is our mother ... we have got to look after it. We must self manage it with love and respect" (*Napranum Cha*, Special Edition, No 19, 1988:12). The discrete territories I was introduced to during my time in Napranum¹¹, together with the family groups and members associated with them, form the basis of my understanding of the Weipa situation and thus the thesis.

¹¹ When visiting Willum Swamp, Buwith identifies herself and Mathawanh, together with Bella and myself, to the country and the ancestors whose presence imbues it with life. She says "We are here, we your mokwi, your people". As she does so, the birds and insects which fell silent at our arrival burst back into song (9/2/94).

Whereas Aboriginal relationships to country are "inextricably bound to the people, who 'belonged' to it", non-Aborigines generally regard land as "a commodity that can be bought, sold, altered and exploited" (Connell Wagner, 1989:Appendix A:2). Western law codifies relationships to land through the land tenure system. Prior to the 1992 High Court decision on the *Mabo* case¹², its recognition of native title, and the *Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993*, the land tenure system evolved so that:

Resource developers and holders of resource titles have long been accustomed to a legal recognition of the dominance or paramountcy of their rights to use land (Bartlett, 1993a:118).

Western land tenure systems are very different to indigenous property systems. Usher, for example, characterises the property systems of indigenous Canadians in the following way:

**people occupy specific territories, their systems of tenure, access and resource management amount to ownership and governance;*

**property is communal - resembling neither individualised private property or common property, members of discrete territories have unquestioned access to that territory. Although permission to another territory has to be sought, it cannot be denied;*

**country and its resources are not considered as commodities that can be "alienated to exclusive private possession" (Usher, 1993:39-40).¹³*

Western land tenure systems have also been at odds with Aboriginal systems as Western law does not recognise the Aboriginal 'ownership' of coasts, seas or estuaries. As McIntyre states:

it has not been the custom of English common law that external seas have vested in the subjects of the Crown (1993:112).¹⁴

Differences between Aboriginal and Western property systems have had implications for the traditional landowners' resource management aspirations at Weipa.

DOGIT

Amendments to the *Land Act 1962* from 1982 to 1988¹⁵ provided for an Aboriginal Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT). Under the Act crown land reserved and set apart as Aboriginal

¹² See Bartlett, 1993b for the full text of the decision in *Mabo and others v State of Queensland*.

¹³ To illustrate the parallels of indigenous Canadian property systems to that of Australian Aborigines see Sutton and Rigsby, 1982; Williams, 1986; Myers, 1986; Young, 1992.

¹⁴ In the *Mabo* Case, sea rights were originally claimed along with rights to the land. However:

the Commonwealth was concerned about the claims to waters beyond the three mile limit from the land and was suggesting that their generally benevolent approach to action on behalf of the Plaintiffs would be less benevolent if a claim was pursued beyond the three mile limit ... It was for that reason that, in 1989 the Plaintiffs agreed to adjourn any further hearing in relation to their claims to seas beyond the three mile limit (McIntyre, 1993:107-108).

reserves¹⁶ are granted freehold DOGIT title (described in the title deed as an estate in fee simple). Aboriginal Councils act as trustees for DOGIT lands (Brennan, 1992:82).

At Weipa, where the reserve land of 354,828 hectares was reduced to 124 hectares with the *Comalco Act*, DOGIT title did not have much relevance (Brennan, 1984:5). It was not until October 27 1988, that after "protracted negotiations" DOGIT was granted to the NACC for an area of 200,730 hectares (Brennan, 1992:88)(map 6). Despite the limitations of this title compared to other 'land rights' legislation and the terms of native title, a special edition of the Napranum community newspaper, *Napranum Cha* (No. 19, 1988), recorded local people celebrating the granting of DOGIT:

The Weipa people always knew it was their land but now they have DOGIT everyone will know it is their land (Corine Matasia:9):

I think it's great we got our land back, at last the government has realised that the Aboriginal people do own the land they live on (Laura Pitt:9):

For so long now we have been made a stranger in our mother land. Now the lost children are found (Roy Jingle:12).

Aboriginal Land Act 1991

The election of the Queensland Labor Government in December 1989 raised hopes that it would be a government committed to social justice with a sense of morality (Tatten and Djnnabah, 1991:13). Although Aboriginal land rights were part of the election platform, the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991*, which the Goss government "rushed through the Queensland parliament", met with accusations of deficiencies and a total lack of consultation (Preston, 1991:5; Sutherland, 1991:16; CYLC, 1991a). The Act does not create rights to land but provides a statutory framework for claims to land which has been gazetted at the discretion of the government (Brennan, 1991:12).

DOGIT, Aboriginal reserves and Shires, which are already Aboriginal land, do not need to be gazetted to be claimable. The DOGIT land around Weipa is claimable once it has become transferred land (Tatten and Djnnabah, 1991:14). Contrary to recommendations by the Aboriginal Coordinating Council a "double process" is required for DOGIT and reserve lands to be transferred (Brennan, 1991:10). The Minister appoints grantees as trustees for the land

¹⁵ *Land Act (Aboriginal and Islander Land Grants) Amendment Act 1982; Land Act (Aboriginal and Islander Land Grants) Amendment Act 1984; Land Act Amendment Act 1986 (No. 2); Land Act Amendment Act 1987; Land Act and Another Act Amendment Act 1988* (Brennan, 1992:80)

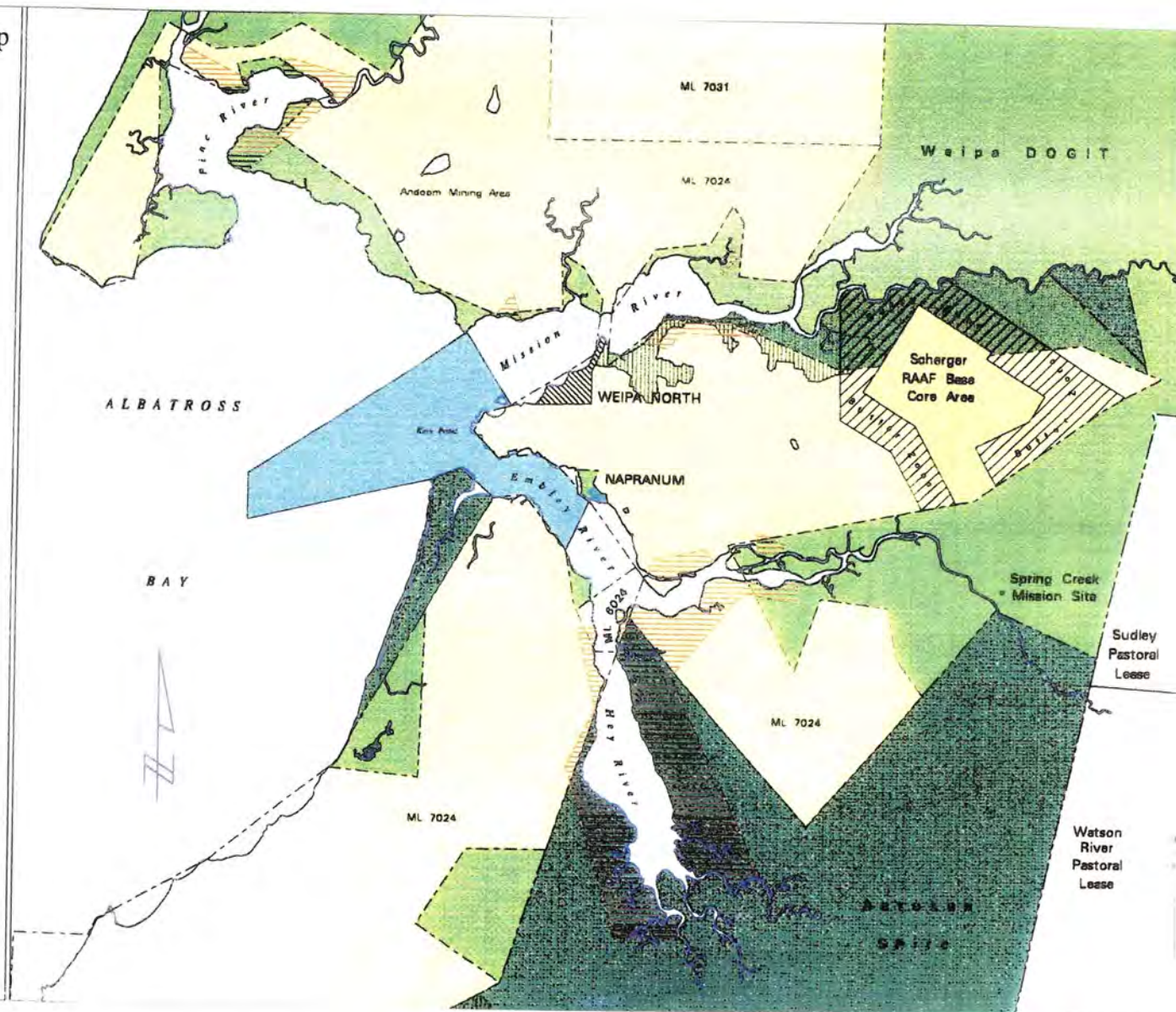
¹⁶ The reserve system was set up under the *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897*, underwent changes over the years and culminated in the "infamous discriminatory" *Aborigines Act 1971* (Qld) (Miller, 1991:10) For commentaries on the *Aborigines Act 1971* see FAIRA, 1979 and Black Resource Centre Collective, 1976.

Map 6: Land Tenure Map
Weipa Area

As at September 1993

-  Weipa DOGIT
-  Weipa DOGIT / Subject to final surrender from ML 7024.
-  Aurukun Shire
-  Peppen DOGIFS
-  Current Mining Leases ML7024 & ML8024
-  ML7031 (Alcan)
-  Weipa Harbour
-  Pastoral Leases
-  Scherger RAAF Base Core Area
-  Uningan Nature Reserve
-  Weipa Shell Mound Area registered under National Estate.
-  RAAF Base Buffer Zone
-  Mining Lease ML7032.
-  Weipa North Town Area
-  Mining Lease Boundaries

SCALE



(not necessarily the existing elected Councils) who are then issued a new deed, transferring the land and making it available to claim (Brennan, 1991:10).

The complex nature of this claim process has resulted in a delay of claims for the DOGIT land in the Weipa area. NACC is currently the trustee for the DOGIT land and for it to become transferred land a new group of trustees will have to be set up. A process which Warren Smith recognises as difficult for Aboriginal people to reconcile with 'traditional' structures (23/2/94).

Peppan 'Deed Of Grant In Fee Simple' (DOGIFS) and the RAAF Base Scherger

A section of Aboriginal reserve land, whose traditional owners are recognised as the Ntran-ngit and who, together with their land, are referred to here as Peppan (Mathawanh, 31/1/94), was not included in the transfer of reserve land to DOGIT in 1988 (Department of Defence, 1990:10)(map 6, the reserve land is shown as DOGIFS). As reserve land it became claimable under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* through a simpler process than if it were DOGIT. The need to claim the land was fairly urgent as in 1987 the Department of Defence targeted an area, including a large part of the reserve land, as a possible site to complete a chain of airfields across northern Australia (Department of Defence, 1990:9)(map 7).

Negotiations between the Peppan traditional landowners and the Defence Department began in 1987. Mathawanh and Buwith, traditional owners of the Peppan area, say how at first they did not want the base on their land (31/1/94). However, after recollecting their experiences on the Weipa Mission Station during World War Two;

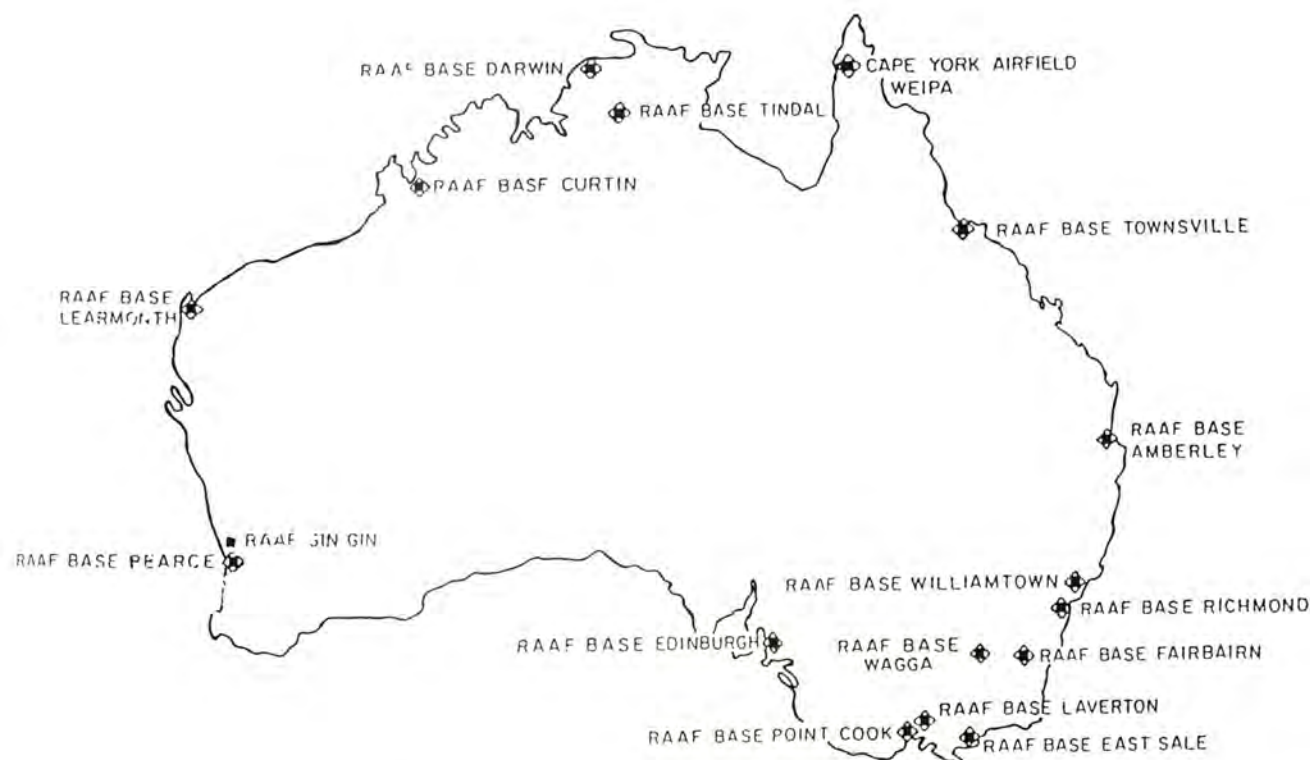
when we were in the dormitories, little girls, we heard the Japanese planes come over Weipa ... there were four to five trenches in the dorms ...we had to sleep without lights at night (Mathawanh, 31/1/94; Buwith, 16/2/94).

Mathawanh says she realised they needed the base for protection. She spoke to the other traditional people of that area saying "we don't want to give our land away, but for the good of Australia ..." (31/1/94).

Initially the traditional landowners of that area were not bargaining from a position of power, having no European title over their land. Brennan notes how they were faced with "dispossession by the Commonwealth itself" when the Commonwealth requested the state to *proceed with the appointment of trustees as quickly as possible, so that we can negotiate directly with the trustees for the purchase of their interest in the land (cited in Brennan, 1992:172, emphasis added).*

The Commonwealth altered its position when the feelings of the traditional owners became known:

[We are happy to talk about leasing some of our land to you. But will never agree to your taking away our land rights without our consent (cited in Brennan, 1992:172).

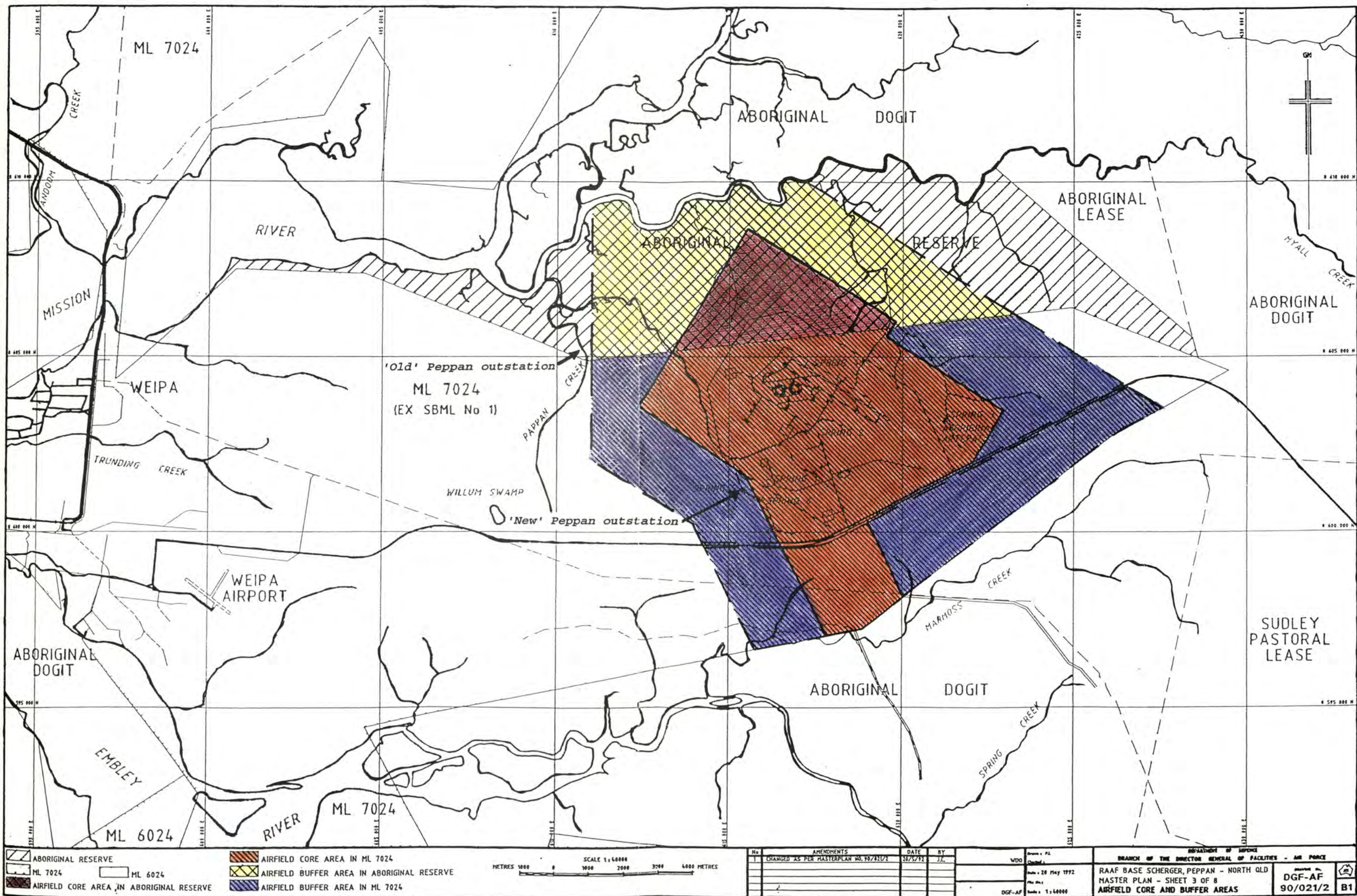


Map 7: RAAF base sites across Australia.

On 13 November 1992 the reserve land was transferred under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* to the Peppan Land Trust (PLT) as freehold title in trust (Deed of Grant in Fee Simple - DOGIFS). The PLT consists of five traditional owners¹⁷ and the NACC. The NACC was brought into the negotiations by the traditional landowners and it was Council's intervention which was responsible for achieving a lease arrangement rather than a \$5000 once-off payment (Dick Namai, 18/2/94). In 1992 the 99 year lease agreement was signed between the PLT and the Defence Department, with an option to extend for another 99 years. It provides for an initial payment of \$250,000 and yearly rental of \$75,000. A condition of the agreement was that the present site of Peppan outstation be relocated due to its proximity to a planned RAAF explosive ordnance storage (map 8). The RAAF will assist with the relocation. Construction of the RAAF Base Scherger began in March 1993 and is due for completion in June 1999.

¹⁷ The traditional owners who are members on the Peppan Land Trust are Mathawanh (Chairperson), Thelma Coconut (Deputy Chairperson), Mabel Dick, Buwith and Rosina Gible.

Map 8: Land Tenure of RAAF Base Scherger



Source: Greg Thexton, RAAF, Weipa

Wik and other claims

Conflict between the non-Aboriginal relationships to land and the Aboriginal relationships to country was highlighted by the Wik claim, lodged in the Federal Court by the Cape York Land Council in June 1993. The Wik Aboriginal people based at Aurukun, seek recognition of native title to over 35,000 square kilometres of land, coasts and seas (map 9). The Wik claim goes beyond the Mabo case in four vital areas:

- *claim of ownership over coastal and sea areas;
- *claim of ownership over sub-surface minerals;
- *a breach of fiduciary duty by the Queensland government for granting land titles over Wik land without consultation and whilst they were under the 'protection' of the state (therefore invalidating the titles);
- *claims for damages and the possession of country, and where this is not possible, compensation (Howitt, 1994b:10).

Two other land claims in the Weipa area have been lodged with the Federal Court since the Wik claim.

Non-Aboriginal sense of place

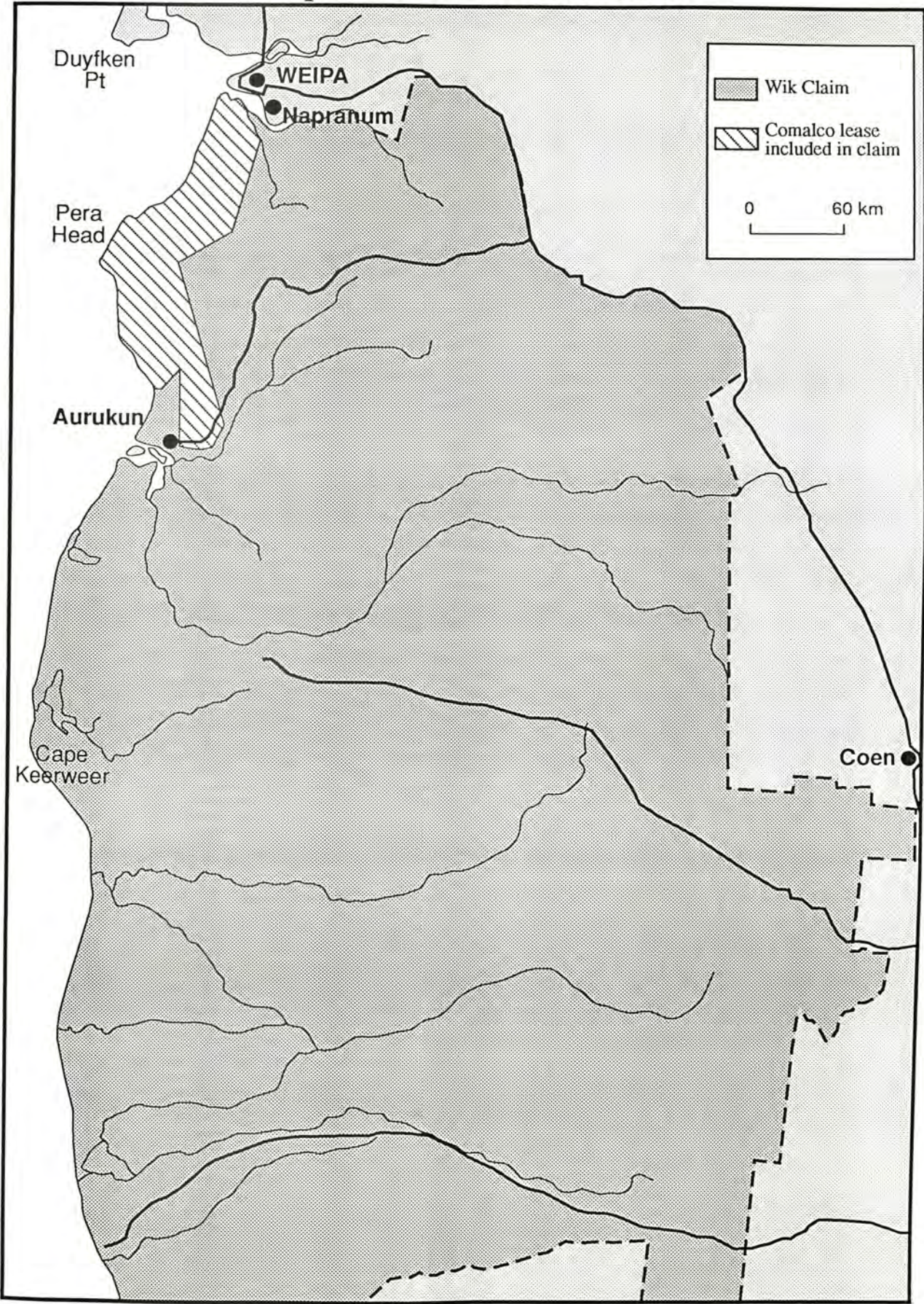
Harman identifies the scientific revolution of the 17th century as "one of the great watershed epochs in history" (1989:3). It was from this point that the Western world embraced objectivity, positivism and reductionism as basic assumptions for its perception of the environment (Harman, 1989:5). Suzuki describes this as

the belief that by stripping Nature to its most elementary components, we can gain insights that can be fitted together like pieces in an immense jigsaw puzzle to reveal the deepest secrets of the universe" (1992:xxii).

The need to separate human from nature, to objectively collect provable facts, and to classify, compartmentalise and breakdown all aspects of our environment has resulted in a "human centred" Western perception of space in which "deeply embedded notions of hierarchy, centralisation, specialisation and progress" dominate (Rose, 1988:386).

Western perceptions of the environment around Weipa reflect these concerns. Scientific research around Weipa consists of studies which fragment, name and classify as many elements of the environment as possible (eg. Specht et al, 1977; CYPLUS, 1993:28). Comalco, whose objectives are to "produce the materials demanded by society and to create wealth" (Newbold, 1988:1), understandably centres on the Western scientific paradigm. This reliance is reflected in the sense of place constructed by the Comalco literature and employees consulted. In a Comalco brochure, part of the space of Weipa is compartmentalised as 'Geology and Reserves'. This deals with a geological history of the area, the chemical breakdown of bauxite and the soil

Map 9: The Wik Claim Area



profile (Comalco, 1993a:5-6)(appendix 7a). Similarly, despite his knowledge of Aboriginal concerns, Geoff Wharton consistently referred to the environment around Weipa in terms of its scientific classification.¹⁸ He especially emphasised "land unit 2b - *Eucalyptus tetradonta*", the main area in which high grade bauxite is found (18/2/94).

Aboriginal sense of place

The sense of place that the traditional landowners of the Weipa area introduced me to is in total opposition to this scientific worldview. Instead of a fragmented, human-centred view of nature, the environment to the traditional landowners is multidimensional and intricately interconnected. There is no strict division, with the different aspects of the environment so holistically integrated that strict compartmentalisation would be hard to achieve.

What Western science divides into land units, mineral resources, food resources and cultural sites, are interlinked and multidimensional in Aboriginal readings. The fact that cultural and physical environments are inseparable is discussed in Richard Baker's exploration of the way the Yanyuwa of the Gulf country see their environment (1989:137).

My time with the traditional owners of the Weipa area introduced me to their worldview which includes not only detailed knowledge of their country, but an intimate relationship, in which the land and its resources are alive and animate. One needs to be introduced to the land as "parents are not really dead, ancestors, spirits still there, still alive, listening" (Buwith, 31/1/94).

Rose found that the Ngarinman people of the Northern Territory "believe that human life exists within the broader context of a living and conscious cosmos" (1988:379). She cites examples of different agents within the cosmos sending out messages, "'telling' about the system", but emphasises that

the messages themselves are not organised into a centralised, hierarchical structure ... Specifics emerge from a background of broader categories; simultaneous emergence indicates a shared ontological status. From this perspective the cosmos cannot be seen as human-centred (1988:379).

¹⁸ The land units are classified according to soil type, drainage and vegetation.

Rose goes on to discuss the usefulness of the term 'acentred' in describing Ngarinman senses of place.¹⁹ In my four weeks at Napranum I was told of numerous instances of 'agents within the cosmos sending out messages':

We know when it's harvest time when we see grass seed burst and the seeds fall off (Mathawanh and Buwith, 31/1/94; Kaynayth, 21/2/94):

When dragon flies are around it's good fishing, especially salmon (Mathawanh and Buwith, 31/1/94):

When the flower [crab flower, Bu'uk] blooms the mud crabs are ready to eat (Thelma Coconut and Buwith, 21/2/94):

You know it's ready [a root that tastes like cassava] when you see white flowers (Alice Mark, 7/2/94).

Actors in the environment send out messages, much more reliable than the Western calendar, yet these messages are not specifically directed towards humans. From this one can understand the relevance of the term 'acentred' when describing the way the traditional landowners in Weipa view their relationship with country. They are not superior or central, there to control nature, but as custodians they have responsibilities, equal to those of all the conscious agents in the cosmos, to ensure that country is well cared for.

¹⁹ Christie (1992) makes a similar point in discussing the "ex-centric" nature of Yolngu ontologies in Northeast Arnhem Land.

3: Aboriginal Resource Use and Management

"It's still here, it's still happening" Cheryl Pitt, 6/2/94

Almost a century of contact with Western society has brought many changes to Aboriginal life in and around Weipa: bush foods no longer form the basis of the average diet; the landscape has been altered; traditional morals and values have been challenged and supplemented by Christianity and the presence of an industrial and materialistic culture; the community is part of the cash economy; and problems which face the Australian community as a whole - alcoholism, domestic violence, unemployment - are all present in Napranum. Despite these daunting changes and challenges, the traditional Aboriginal owners of the region have survived with a complete sense of their Aboriginal identity. As is the case elsewhere in Australia¹, the foundation of Aboriginal identity at Napranum is the complex relationship between culture, people, country and resources. By understanding the present Aboriginal use and management of resources, the 'tenacious efforts' of the traditional people of Weipa to continue practising, asserting and passing on their Aboriginality can be recognised and valued.

These efforts are evident in many aspects of daily life: in individual commitments to family and relationships to tribal areas (eg. the establishment of outstations); the enjoyment, use and recognition of food, material, economic and cultural resources; and initiatives in cultural maintenance such as workshops and festivals. In both everyday life and in community events, the interconnectedness of the various elements of the Aboriginal domain, and people's dynamic relationships with them (and inter-relationships with each other) are constantly a centre of attention.

Central to these efforts to maintain and strengthen Aboriginal identity is the importance placed on the transmission of cultural knowledge and values. Passing on oral traditions and knowledge is essential to Aboriginal culture, and thus education is one of the underlying objectives of Aboriginal resource use.

The Quintigan Land Management Committee is involved in many of the efforts and initiatives in Aboriginal resource management in the Weipa area. It assists with the aspirations for land and resource management and the practicalities and interactions of it with the wider society. Such work illustrates the persistent efforts of the traditional families of the Weipa locale to continue to use and manage their resources.

¹ For example see Strehlow, 1965, 1970; Rose 1984, 1988, 1992; Myers, 1986; Williams, 1986; Baker, 1989; Young, 1992.

Outstations

"Let's go sit down on the land" Thancoupie, 28/1/94

The recent establishment of several outstations exemplifies the efforts of the local landowners to re-assert their relationship with and interest in their land. Used predominantly in the dry season for weeks or months at a time, outstations have been established by the traditional landowning families on their respective land at Bowchat in 1990, Peppan and Spring Creek in 1992, and Hey Point and 20 Mile in the dry season of 1993 (map 5).

The move to establish outstations began about five years ago when Thancoupie and Kaynayth decided it was time to re-establish stronger connections with their country. This was achieved when Thancoupie, Kaynayth and their aunt Atakani "started standing on the land" (Thancoupie, 24/2/94). Going out to Bowchat they started with "no blanket, a billy can for our tea, fish, damper, and we slept under the stars" (Kaynayth, 10/2/94).

Establishing a dry season camp on their traditional land under DOGIT tenure at Bowchat re-asserted their connection to country, and created a foundation from which they could work with the younger generations on the important tasks of cultural maintenance and transmission. The outstation also provided a place where the ladies and their grandchildren could escape from the noise and stresses of life in Napranum (Buwith, 29/1/94; Thancoupie, 24/2/94). As Kaynayth states as we sit under a shade tree at Bowchat, listening to the background chatter of the lorikeets, "this is a peaceful place, that's why we want to stay here" (12/2/94)(plate 4).

The success of Bowchat set a precedent for the establishment of other outstations. The enthusiasm, pride and determination exhibited by the various members of the landowning families during my time in Napranum seems to ensure the outstations' successful continuation.

Although initially established as semi-permanent camps, the locations of the various outstations have been known and used throughout the lives of the old ladies. Kaynayth recalls going to Bowchat as a little girl where the children would be looked after by their kuku ("big mother"), whilst their parents went hunting (12/2/94).

Many outstations are located at or near sites of significance. The creek at Bowchat was made by Whaarrh, the stingray, as he swam down to the sea, and Yarra, the frigate bird, created the oyster beds at Ovolong and He'etim. They then sat together with Wellenger the flying

squirrel and made a big dance to celebrate (Kaynayth, 2/2/94; Thancoupie, 24/2/94). As a result, Bowchat is surrounded by plentiful food resources, permanent fresh water and material resources (figure 4). Similarly Peppan and the other outstations are surrounded by resources, although of different kinds, being located in different environments.



(Photo by Richard Howitt)

Plate 4: Kaynayth and myself at Bowchat.

Factors such as shelter, access and a lack of funding limit the permanent use of the camps to the dry season. Nevertheless, they are visited when possible during the wet season for day trips. The camps have strict rules. No alcohol is allowed and shooting is prohibited.

Despite the youth of the outstations, the determination of the individuals and families involved testifies to the strong links and feelings still present between the traditional people and their country. These outstations form a strong and steady foundation from which these links and feelings can be further strengthened.

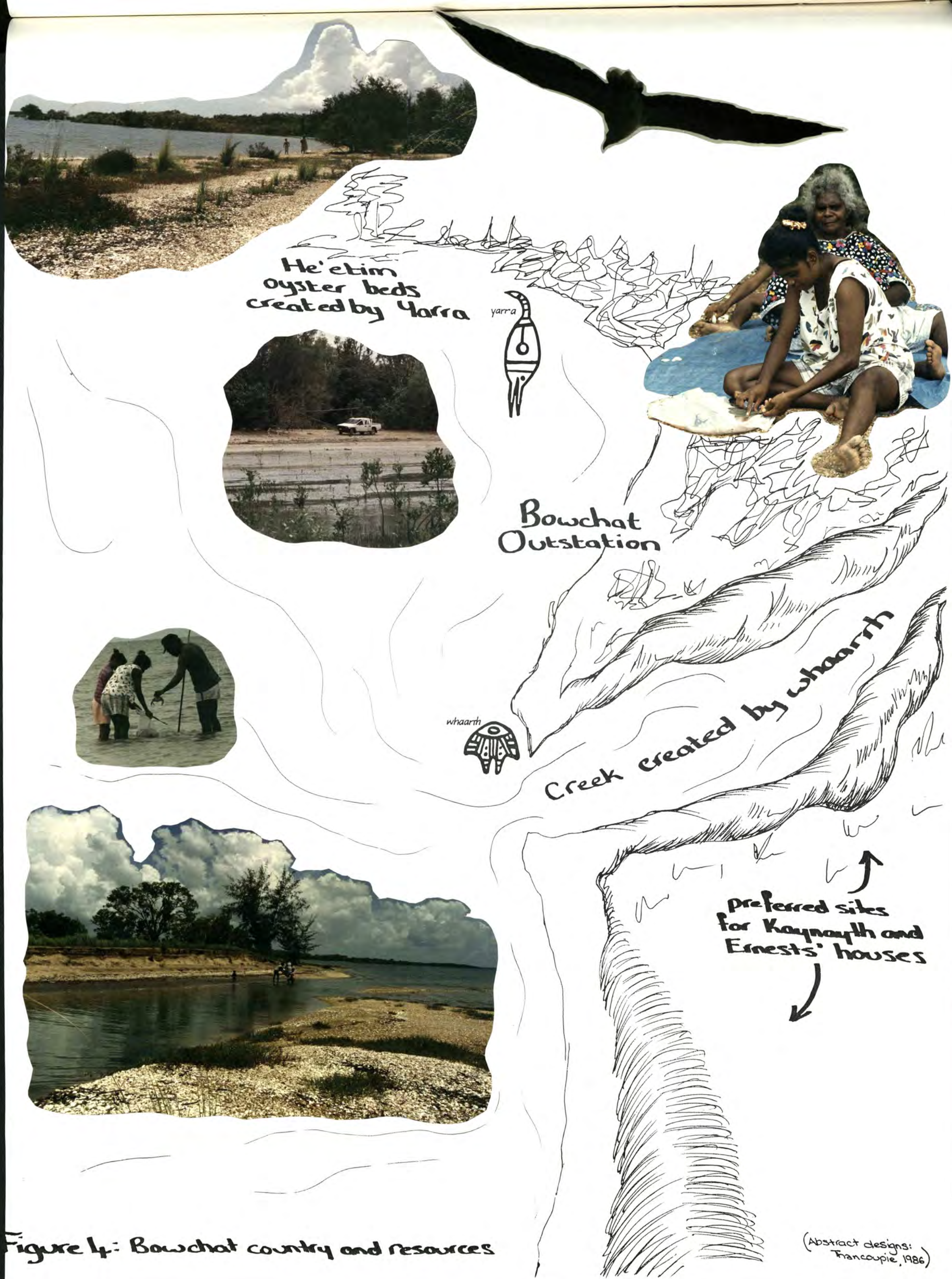


Figure 14: Bowchat country and resources

(Abstract designs: Francoupe, 1986)

Resource Use

"Too long I've been waiting for my land, it's good to have it on the go again" Kaynayth, 2/2/94

As the Mission at 20 Mile, and later Jessica Point, became established, reliance on bush foods² and material resources diminished in the face of European material goods and agricultural produce. Disruption to systems of resource collection also occurred due to the loss of men to pastoral stations and fishing fleets over long periods of time. Therefore, although they were still used during shortages and trips out bush, food and material resources became marginalised due to infrequent usage. The need for bush foods currently seems even less due to the presence of a Woolworths supermarket and various other shops. However, the use of bush resources has never completely ceased. They have always been used as a supplement to Western goods and foods. Although one reason for this is financial (a stingray is cheaper than a steak; a spear cheaper than a gun), recent increases in the use of bush resources reflects the rekindling of local culture by the establishment of the outstations and efforts at cultural maintenance and transmission.

Food resources

"Those foods we miss. When we came here we just eat European foods" Alice Mark, 7/2/94

Although staples such as flour and sugar, bread and cheese, will be taken to outstations on day trips and during longer stays, meals are always supplemented by bush foods. Bush food is hunted or gathered by either traditional (eg. spear, yam stick), modern (eg. cast net, rifle) or a combination of both means (eg. spear attached to a nylon fishing line)(plate 5). Similarly, the food is prepared in a range of ways. Although the first stingray I was treated to for lunch was fried, a later stingray was boiled to be prepared in the traditional manner called *ande* (2/2/94). Both stingrays were captured using a traditional multi-pronged spear, albeit with wire prongs rather than stingray barbs (plate 6).³ Regardless of the exact manner of capture and preparation, traditional knowledge and techniques are firmly embedded in the resource use. I

² Bush foods is the term used by the Aboriginal people at Weipa to mean any foods collected or caught 'out bush' - not bought from shops. Although bush conjures up images of terrestrial resources it is very important to point out that the term bush food includes coastal, estuarine, sea and riverine resources (eg. dugong, turtle, stingray, fish, shellfish).

³ For descriptions of the technology used in the region from the contact period to contemporary times see McConnel, 1930, 1936a, 1936b; Thompson, 1939, 1972; Lawrence, 1969:210-213; Moore, 1972; Harris, 1976, 1977; Smith, 1985; Chase and Sutton, 1987:72.



Plate 5: Bella Savo placing a captured stingray in a bag at Bowchat.

Plate 6: Trevor Callope with the stingray and his multi-pronged spear.



I was told repeatedly that the pinker the stingray the fatter it is (Kaynayth, 26/1/94; Bella Savo, 26/1/94; Thancoupie, 24/2/94)(plate 7), and Mathawanh and Buwith told me how their dogs are used as hunting dogs at Peppan during the dry season (16/2/94).



Plate 7: Mildred with the pink and fat stingray at Bowchat.

As I experienced the outstations during the wet season, the use of vegetable resources was at a minimum (figure 5). However I was told of and shown many examples of the different vegetable resources used, from hairy yams to arrowroots and wild hibiscus (plate 8). I was also given detailed, mouth watering descriptions of how they are gathered or dug up and prepared during the harvest season (Mathawanh and Buwith, 31/1/94; Alice Mark, 7/2/94; Kaynayth, 14/2/94). Although a lot of the bush foods are collected and used at outstations, they are also obtained from other areas of tribal land. Coastal sites and creeks nearer to Napranum, which the general population from Napranum and Weipa North has access to, are

also exploited. With the use of cooler bags, fridges and freezers, foods acquired at outstations and on tribal lands are often brought back to Napranum and stored for later use.



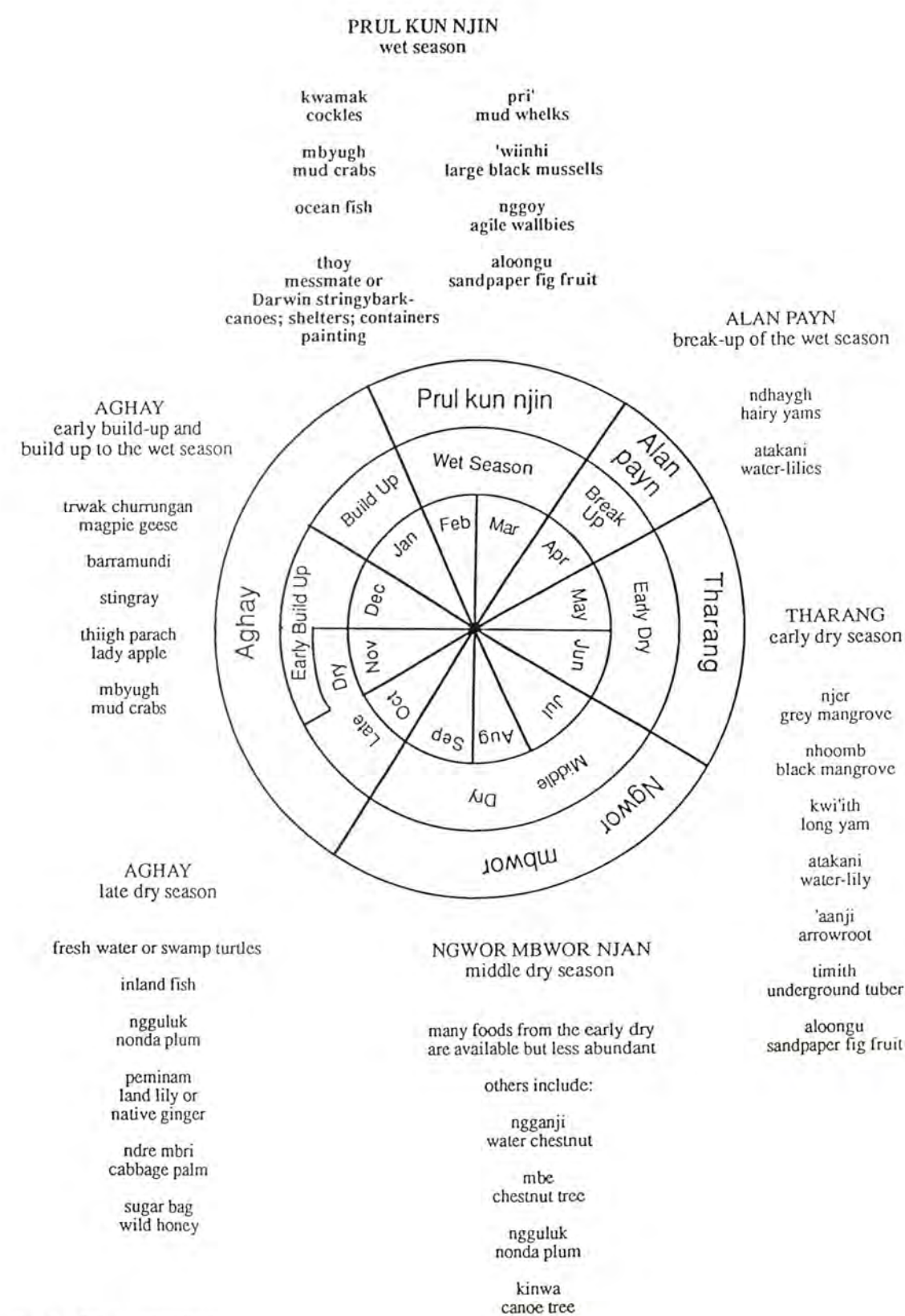
Plate 8: Mathawanh showing a hairy yam at the site of the new Peppan.

Material resources

The use of bush resources for functions other than food is also significant. Springwood (gee wuudtha) is used to make spear shafts. Resin from a gum tree (chachinta) is used with bush twine to secure the four wire prongs (*Napranum Cha*, No. 16, 1988; Mathawanh, 1/2/94). Apart from being used to hunt and collect food resources, spears are also made to sell to other locals and tourists.

Figure 5: Aboriginal calendar and the main resources used in each season.

The language names are in the Thaynakwith dialect. I experienced prul kun njin, the wet season and its resources.



Based on Wharton, 1988:6-16

Arts and crafts are a growing trade in Napranum with a section at the Council's Cultural Centre set aside for this purpose. Traditional and non-traditional skills are practised using bush materials such as ironwood for clap sticks, bloodwood sap to seal skinbark canoes, stringybark for paintings, sandpaper fig leaves to smooth ironwood boomerangs, bailer shells to paint, and shells and seeds for necklaces (Richard Barkley, 17/2/94)(plate 9).



Plate 9: Richard Barkley with a small skinbark canoe at the Cultural Centre.

Arts and crafts are also practised on the outstations. Work is especially prolific at Bowchat during the holiday workshops and preparations for the Ruchook Aboriginal Cultural Festival. Banana tree bark is used for skirts, and pandanus leaves are prepared as dyes and woven as head and arm bands and as baskets, mats and other items (Kaynayth, 26/1/94; Thancoupie, 24/2/94).

Water resources

"The kids love the creek, won't come out" Kaynayth, 12/2/94.

Other resources, whose presence and use are as important as that of food and materials, are not as tangible. The need for fresh, unpolluted water, especially during the dry season, is of paramount importance for the existence of outstations and many of the bush resources.

Recognition of this importance is evident in the concern expressed by the Peppan trustees that the construction and presence of the RAAF Base does not pollute or affect their spring sites and creeks. Mathawanh regularly goes out to the Base to oversee the impacts of the construction process and to check on the condition of the water sources (Mathawanh, 1/2/94, 16/2/94).

At Bowchat, the freshwater creek created by Whaarrh is carefully monitored. When news that it is running (after sufficient rains during the wet season) reaches the children at Napranum there is great excitement:

The kids love the creek, won't come out. When we tell them it's running, they all want to come. It runs 'til September" (Kaynayth, 12/2/94)(plate 10).



Plate 10: Mildred playing in the creek at Bowchat.

Economic resources

With the incorporation of the landowners of the Weipa area into the cash economy, they now access aspects of their country for economic purposes. Resources which bring in cash for the local families include: seeds, collected for Comalco's regeneration program during the dry season; trees, felled by Napranum's saw mill for local timber purposes; soil, used by the block plant for pavers and bricks; and possibly the introduction of neem trees for a longer term sustainable program.

Cultural resources

The country is networked by story places. Even less tangible in a European sense than food, material or water resources, cultural resources form the bridge between country and people. As a resource, story places have multiple purposes. In the transmission of knowledge they teach people about how places were formed, about the relationships present between humans, animals and the landscape, about the location and proper use and preparation of resources, and importantly values, morals and laws. Story places provide a link between the present generation and ancestor spirits, as well as a medium through which contemporary events can be understood and interpreted. Story places are important as a cultural resource for they represent the ultimate connection between the landowning family and their country. A reciprocal relationship in which the 'owners' are responsible for the site and its story, whilst the site sustains, guides and gives meaning to the owner's Aboriginality.

Inter-relationships Between Resources

"Animals, they're related to us" Ernest Hall, 10/2/94

"Animals were human before" Kaynayth, 10/2/94

Raised and educated in a Western society I have conveniently categorised the resources used by Aboriginal people in Weipa. When I was learning about local resource use in Weipa, no such distinctions were made. What was made clear is that one is surrounded by and living in an animate, interconnected, multidimensional system. Everything is reliant on, related too and interchangeable with everything else. There is no separation or classification.

Story sites, which I have seen as cultural resources, are often sites of significance for a particular food or material resource, for example, the oyster beds made by Yarra at Bowchat. The stories themselves teach people morals and values. When Mathawanh told me the Flying Fox story she ends it by saying "That's for disobedient boys", and after the Dog Story she says that's why she always remembers to feed her dogs, she must feed them or else they'll burn her house down (Mathawanh, 31/1/94)(appendix 8).

Stories illustrate the relationships between people and country, especially animals. Ernest Hall describes how he can not eat emu, even if someone else kills it, because the emu is his totem (10/2/94). The stories show that animals were originally humans (appendix 8), thus creating a relationship between humans and nature whereby your responsibility to country is based on a common heritage.

Damage or disturbance to a story place can have devastating repercussions. The disturbance of pandanus trees on Gonbung Point (the trees are sacred as they are part of a story incorporating that site) caused the violent cyclone 'Mark' to hit Weipa (Bella Savo, 24/1/94; Geoff Wharton, 18/2/94)(map 2). Similarly, proper use of resources and ceremonies can help control these forces. The use of a bitter type of arrowroot, together with the correct dances, songs and ceremonies can turn a cyclone away (Buwith, 31/1/94; Ernest Hall, 10/2/94; Richard Barkley, 17/2/94).

Figure 6 illustrates the intimate relationships that exist between resources and the local people. When Alice saw the photograph of a stork I had taken she immediately pointed out that the stork was her totem. This in turn led her to tell the Stork Story. She then sang her brother's song about the stork talking to her grandparents (8/2/94).

The Stork Totem

The Stork Story

Alice Mark, 8/2/94

Father and Mother went out hunting with their baby. They left their eldest boy behind with stork. (They were real humans and then they turned into a bird, the Crow).

Stork said to his cousin the Crow (Akah) "Let's go and get some white fruits (ooyam)."

So they got a dilly bag (made from bush vine). Stork said to Crow "Keep that bag ready for me while I knock the fruit down from the tree." (For the rest of the story see appendix 8c).

The Stork Song

Alice Mark, 8/2/94

Alice's brother's (Morris's) song about a stork talking to their grandparents. (For the song see appendix 2, song 3).

Figure 6: Inter-relationships between Resources



Inter-relationships are also constructed at larger scales. Primary responsibility for country is inherited through patriline. However secondary responsibilities are inherited through matriline. This, together with the fact that the old ladies' grandfathers - and the generations before that - had more than one wife⁴, means that responsibilities for land crisscross throughout the Weipa area and within and between family groups (Kaynayth, 14/2/94).

These inter-relationships illustrate that the classification of resources into distinct categories is my own, non-Aboriginal construction. Keeping in mind the preliminary nature of this study, it is precisely the lack of boundaries I observed, the interlinked, inter-related way of seeing country, that I found distinguishes the resource use and management of the traditional families of Weipa from Western, European use and management.

⁴ Kaynayth and Thancoupie's grandfather, Harry Mail Man, had six wives from six different clan groups and territories (Kaynayth, 14/2/94).

Transmission of Cultural Knowledge

"If they won't learn anything from us how will it be passed onto the next generation? Once it's dead, it's dead" Kaynayth, 12/2/94

Outstations

"I want them to read the wind, the tide, the stars, the moon" Kaynayth, 12/2/94

The return to country and establishment of outstations by Weipa Aborigines has created a foundation for teaching the children about their culture. Once the physical connection with the land has been made, the transmission of knowledge can ensue. Kaynayth, Buwith, Mathawanh and Alice told me of the Dreamtime stories they tell the children when camping at the outstations (Kaynayth, 12/2/94; Buwith, 29/1/94; Mathawanh, 31/1/94; Alice Mark, 8/2/94). Kaynayth describes how the children cry when she tells them of the boys who turned into turtles as a punishment for their disobedience (12/2/94).

Children not only learn about their heritage through stories but also learn traditional values and morals from the lifestyles practised on the outstations. Thancoupie says;

we want our grandchildren to learn morals and a way of life from us. This leads to self-esteem. Things broken up in Napranum, for example they don't have meals together. In the bush we do eat together (24/2/94).

Kaynayth is very proud of the love her grandchildren have for Bowchat. She says they always nag her to go and say "come on granny, what time we going, we want to get dancing on the go" (10/2/94). Kaynayth sees Bowchat as the base for passing knowledge on to the children. She wants them to "know that when the grass bursts it's time for harvesting. I want them to learn about digging arrowroot" (12/2/94). At Bowchat Kaynayth not only teaches the children stories and dancing but also how to hunt, gather and prepare food, use other material resources and the skills needed for traditional arts and crafts (plate 11).

When at the outstations the children are not only taught about their cultures and identities but are also kept up-to-date with their mainstream schooling. Thancoupie describes how, with the help of correspondence school, they get the children to write stories, practise letter writing as well as maths (24/2/94).

Bowchat is not only a place for the old ladies to pass on the knowledge of their culture to their grandchildren. It is also a quiet, safe place where they can take the children away from the violence and stress of Napranum and show them another way of life. Kaynayth describes how the "children want to go with me because they frightened of shooting and drunkards and fighting, they want to be quiet and stay in peace and harmony at Bowchat" (2/2/94).



Plate 11: Kaynayth and Mildred preparing the stingray.

Other initiatives

"Only my own story, Weipa story on pots ... pass it down so children can learn" Thancoupie, 28/1/94

Community leaders in Napranum use their skills in many ways to ensure that their culture is passed down to the next generations. Thancoupie, a potter of international repute, uses the stories, heroes and totems from the tribal groups in the Weipa area as inspiration for her pots' abstract designs (figure 7). Isaacs's biography notes:

Thancoupie's work means the black children of Weipa and all of north Queensland can 'read' their stories and history in clay, and the old women who have kept these stories alive need not fear that the tales will die with them (1982: 12).



(Source: Thancoupie, 1986)

Figure 7: Thancoupie's abstract designs based on local culture

Richard Barkley, Thancoupie's nephew, is a community ranger who loves working with the children and teaching them what he knows as he continues to learn from his elders. He works at Bowchat helping with the holiday programs and takes children out to Uningan Reserve to show them different plants, "what is poisonous, what is good to eat, which ones are medicines for what, love magic potions and snake bite cures" (17/2/94)(map 4). This year he also has groups of children from Weipa North school coming to the Cultural Centre where he teaches them about different Aboriginal skills, such as the materials and methods used in the construction of a skinbark canoe (Richard Barkley, 17/2/94)(plate 9).

Holiday programs and the Ruchook Aboriginal Cultural Festival

"If you saw those people, the effort, you could cry ... It made us feel good, we started it, it worked, the children dancing, walking with their heads up high" Thancoupie, 24/2/94

Hand-in-hand with the establishment of the outstation at Bowchat, Thancoupie, Kaynayth, and Atakani together with the help of artist/weaver Stewart Lloyd and his wife Catherine, initiated holiday programs at Bowchat. By re-establishing the link with the land, it was possible to bring the children out of Napranum and with the stimulus of country pass on knowledge (Stewart Lloyd, 24/2/94).

The programs started in 1990 on a shoe-string budget with no support from the Napranum community or Council - in the beginning pension money was pooled to get petrol and food. They continued for the next four years with very limited funding (local sponsorship and a Community Aid Abroad grant) and help from family members in Napranum. The programs appeal to children and parents from both Napranum and Weipa North and to date have included: weaving, dying, firestick making, traditional singing and dancing, food gathering and preparation, healing as well as non-traditional skills such as screen printing (plate 12). The organisers have an extensive program planned for this year, the main objective to train other individuals as cultural teachers to take over the running of the programs (Thancoupie, 24/2/94). Thancoupie emphasises this need as she finds "her energy is now starting to slow down, time is very important" (24/2/94).



(Photo by Bella Savo)

Plate 12: Thancoupie showing the children bush foods at Bowchat, 1994.

Two years ago Thancoupie embarked on another project of cultural maintenance. As chairman of a committee of traditional elders, the Ruchook Aboriginal Cultural Festival had its debut in 1992 (figure 8). The festival attracted other Aboriginal communities to its dancing competitions, as well as spectators from Weipa North and tourists. Apart from dancing, the festival featured many local Aboriginal skills and arts and crafts. Importantly it re-ignited the interest of the children and was a forum in which they could gain pride and self esteem by having the cultural knowledge and skills they had learnt at Bowchat acknowledged and enjoyed by the wider public (appendix 9). Thancoupie describes how

if you came one time before the festival, the children's heads down, swearing. Today they are very careful who hears them because we're putting so much pride back into them and giving time to them (24/2/94).



Old man kangaroo, Eddie John honoured

The Ruchook Culture Centre was named after the late Eddie John who was the tribal elder of the Alngit people, who own the Weipa peninsula. Eddie, who died a couple of years ago is remembered as an outstanding man for his contributions to the Napranum and Weipa communities.

Born in 1917, he was a stockman in his younger life and worked on pearl luggers before spending 20 years with Comalco, in the bauxite sample shed. He was known as Ruchook, which is the Alngit word for old man red kangaroo.

Eddie was the traditional owner of Napranum, and respected by the various Aboriginal tribes which lived at Napranum.

A special monument was unveiled at the official opening of the Ruchook Culture Centre.

It was designed by internationally acclaimed artist and Ruchook Festival chairperson, Thancoupie.

Pictured above are Eddie's son Ron, his wife Grace and their daughter Deborah John, who is holding her daughter Kirra. Leaning against the monument is Ron's grandson and one of the smallest members of the Napranum dancing team Trevor John.



(Source: *Bauxite Bulletin*, September 27, 1992:1,7)

Figure 8: The Ruchook Aboriginal Cultural Festival

Quintigan Land Management Committee

"Quintigan stands for the tribal people of Napranum" Thancoupie, 24/2/94

"Make the land work" Thancoupie, 28/1/94

Quintigan Land Management Committee was formed three years ago with Thancoupie as its chairperson. A co-ordinating body for all the traditional landowning families of Napranum, Thancoupie says that she is doing Quintigan for the future, for the children (24/2/94). The committee is structured according to tribal law with five elders representing five tribal areas on the committee. Each elder then nominates an understudy (Thancoupie, 24/2/94).

The committee is presently in the process of becoming incorporated. One reason for this is so that it can apply directly for funds rather than having to receive them through the Napranum Aboriginal Corporation or the Napranum Aboriginal Community Council.

As an umbrella organisation for the tribal areas Quintigan can interact with the wider society more effectively than individual family groups. Acting like a local land council, it can place cultural concerns and land and resource management issues more formally and effectively on the community agenda.

Quintigan has advised researchers who document anthropological and linguistic data and can act as a platform to initiate moves to claim DOGIT lands under the Queensland *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* (Sandy Callope, 10/2/94). As a land management committee it can co-ordinate resource and land management programs for tribal lands and outstations and has many plans for this sort of project. It also has identified many possible initiatives for infrastructure and economic activities on the outstations.

As a representative of the tribal people of Weipa and their initiatives for active cultural maintenance and transmission, Quintigan symbolises the tenacious efforts and achievements of the tribal elders over the last five years - five years of struggle and determination which have laid strong foundations from which to launch into a new phase of realising their aspirations for further, closer links to country.

4: Aboriginal Resource Use and Management Aspirations

"I want my bush life" Kaynayth, 12/2/94

Since Bowchat's establishment there has been a resurgence in the use and management of resources by the traditional landowning families of the Weipa region, with plans, dreams and goals being proposed, discussed, explored and implemented. These resource management aspirations are not pursued in a vacuum. It is necessary to consider factors, both supportive and constraining, which impact directly on them.

Aspirations of the local landowners include:

- *permanent residency in decentralised outstation communities;
- *economic initiatives to support outstations;
- *increased control of resource use and management; and
- *cultural maintenance and transmission processes.

Quintigan is developing as a vehicle for realising many of these aspirations. Bella Savo observes that "as long as the people stick together and keep fighting for their traditional land, they'll get there" (14/2/94).

Outstations

"I'm making my choice to get away from here. All my life I've wanted to live in the bush"

Kaynayth, 12/2/94

It is clear that the old ladies' basic goal is to live permanently on their land, together with their families, throughout the year. To realise this dream, a range of practical concerns need to be addressed, including the provision of infrastructure and support services, sustainable economic activities and funding. Achieving these aspirations depends on outside forces.

Bowchat

"I'm going to try and bring Aboriginal life to earth, make it real. For the dream to end, to live permanently at Bowchat" Kaynayth, 12/2/94

Just as Kaynayth and Thancoupie saw their dream come true five years ago with the establishment of Bowchat as a semi-permanent outstation, they now work towards making it a permanent home. To achieve this, they are presently investigating logistics of housing, energy, transport, aesthetics, support services, and, as the key to all this, funding.

Climatic conditions at Weipa dictate that appropriate housing is fundamental to life at Bowchat during the wet season. Kaynayth is constantly looking for designs and ideas. She likes the idea of open plan space and a verandah to watch "the boys coming home with stingray and fish, and see when the tide's low" (2/2/94). Kaynayth would like to locate her house, together with one for Ernest, either on the creek bank or on the first sand ridge facing the sea (figure 4).

One of Thancoupie's main concerns is that the dwellings at Bowchat "blend with the creeks and bush ... I don't want to see an eyesore" (24/2/94). Thancoupie favours the McIvor Shelter designed at Docker River. It is a large, open design, covered shelter which Thancoupie envisages as the central place at Bowchat in which people can meet and visitors stay (24/2/94). The main limit on the ladies' aspirations for suitable housing is funding. Government funding possibilities do exist, but are limited. Generating funds from economic activity is identified as an important alternative.

Thancoupie argues that appropriate housing also needs to be available in Napranum. She states that people will need to come into town, at times for prolonged periods, for health care, special occasions etc., and will need somewhere to stay. Thancoupie proposes that if the Council re-allocates houses in Napranum when they move permanently to outstations, she would advocate construction of houses for the tribal people, possibly on land past the Cultural Centre (map 3). She sees this as a necessity, especially as a place for the children to stay when going to school in town (24/2/94). Although this is not an unattainable plan - hostels for school children are common in other centres - it will require approval from the Council and again, the necessary funding.

The question of energy is basic to any plans for the future of Bowchat. Diesel generators are looked upon with dismay due to the noise and pollution they produce (Kaynayth, 2/2/94). Solar energy has been targeted as a quiet, clean source of power. However its limitations still need to be explored. Richard Barkley identifies the possibility of using an "enviro pump" for fresh water as "it's very quiet and doesn't litter and the water is really pure" (17/2/94). The local Aboriginal groups need to access environmental and appropriate technology groups in Cairns, and elsewhere in Australia (such as the Centre for Appropriate Technology in Alice Springs), for further information on the effectiveness and practicality of the above energy sources.

Transport is another major constraint. A troop carrier and a school bus service is seen as the most appropriate solution (Kaynayth, 2/2/94). For effective transport, funds must not only be available for the purchase of the vehicles, but also for maintenance and running costs. Appropriate structures are needed to ensure responsible use of the vehicles.¹

The provision of basic community services, such as a store and petrol supply, and basic health, communication, banking, and religious needs to supplement services in Weipa and Napranum, are also important issues for Bowchat, "so the people aren't forever going in and out of town" (Thancoupie, 24/2/94; Kaynayth, 12/2/94).

Schooling is another major concern. Ultimately the ladies would like to see schools developed on the outstations themselves. Kaynayth would like to have a permanent school at Bowchat that teaches the children both European and local Aboriginal knowledge and skills (12/2/94).² Before that occurs the ladies recognise the need to help the children with correspondence

¹ The necessity for these structures is well known as a result of past experiences with vehicles which have affected relations between Bowchat and NACC.

² Outstation schools were established around Aurukun in the 1980s and the practise is widespread in Arnhem Land.

studies when they are at the camps. They would like to see this supplemented by having teachers visit the outstations and give the children lessons there (Thancoupie, 24/2/94). The ladies are creating their own opportunities in this area. Running holiday workshops at Bowchat, and including them in the local schools' curricula, has already illustrated the practicality of semi-permanent school facilities at the outstations.

The old ladies include in their plans an economic agenda, targeting fund raising from NAC, Council and government bodies (Thancoupie, 24/2/94). They have plans for outstation-based fund raising and economic activities. As Kaynayth states, "I feel something else we should do to help ourselves" (2/2/94). Potential activities include making and selling artefacts, arts and crafts as well as selling fresh fish. The potential of tourism has also been recognised (Kaynayth, 2/2/94).

Richard Barkley, traditional owner of Bowchat, also identifies the tourism potential. He intends to print brochures telling tourists about Bowchat during 1994 and to organise low-cost tours with the consent of the traditional elders. In the longer term Richard would like to include board walks around a nearby rainforest and cabins for overnight stays (17/2/94). He emphasises the need to "go at it step by step, like climbing up the ladder" (17/2/94).

Peppan

"Stay out in the bush where I can hear the birds singing" Buwith, 31/1/94

The old ladies from Peppan and the other outstations articulate similar aspirations. Buwith emphasises the wish to build houses at Peppan so she can "stay out in the bush where I can hear birds singing" (31/1/94).

The new site chosen for the Peppan outstation has "an everlasting spring" and good soil (Buwith, 9/2/94)(plate 13, map 8). Buwith and Mathawanh are hoping to utilise this and their skills from the mission days to grow some vegetables on the land. They are also trying to find suitable shade trees to plant as soon as possible (9/2/94).

Buwith and Mathawanh have also identified the need to build a school at Peppan and are presently trying to buy a bus (31/2/94). They are better placed than the other outstations

because they have access to, and can plan with, the knowledge of receiving annual lease payments from the RAAF Base.



Plate 13: Mathawanh standing at the creek at the site of the new Peppan.

The Peppan trustees have aspirations to use some of their land for tourism. Willum Swamp is a sacred and beautiful site (plate 14, map 4). It is part of the Dog Story, and if not managed properly could produce sickness. Buwith tells us that if you are not introduced correctly to the site and spirits, or if you abuse it, you will "get rheumatism for life because dogs bite you" (9/2/94). For the present, Mathawanh would like to get signs put up next to the road to the swamp saying: "Please do not enter. Sacred place. No shooting" (9/2/94). Mathawanh says that at the moment "them tourists don't know of this place" (9/2/94). In the longer term tourists can come to the site as long as they show respect and pay a fee. Bella suggests building a house at the swamp where someone can stay and watch the land and get the tourists to pay (9/2/94).



Plate 14: Mathawanh and Buwith at Willum Swamp.

Mathawanh is also discussing plans with Geoff Wharton (Willum Swamp is on Comalco lease land) to have the Nanum Wunghthin Training Centre (NWTC) erect a viewing platform and walkways around Willum Swamp during 1994 (18/2/94). NWTC constructed and erected the walkways around the Uningan Bicentennial Nature and Recreation Reserve (plate 15).

20 Mile

"I'm choosing a place where I'm going to live" Alice Mark, 7/2/94

Alice Mark's country runs from the Sudley Pastoral Property to the old mission at 20 Mile. Alice says that when the time is right she wants to go back to her land (7/2/94). She grew up at 20 Mile and now finds "I'd like to stay there 'til God calls me" (7/2/94). She has plans to move back and stay in a house that was used by stockmen in the past. It is near a "lagoon that never runs dry", and with the house in proper condition, she can stay there during the wet season. Alice says her grandsons will come with her. She finds that as family members hear her plans they want to go with her back to country, "we're all family, stay in one place" (7/2/94).



(photo by Richard Howitt)

Plate 15: Walkway constructed by NWTC in Uningan Reserve.

Discussion

Although many of these aspirations sound unattainable, the precedents for outstation occupancy have been set. The homelands movement is well established elsewhere. Outstations exist around Aurukun, and Mapoon, 80 kilometres north of Weipa, was re-established as a decentralised community in recent years. Cheryl Pitt, traditional owner of Peppan, emphasises the need to treat outstations as actual communities. She says that if the children are to survive on the outstations then they need to be more like villages (6/2/94). She argues that children are caught between their Aboriginal identities and the culture of the mainstream. To live on the outstation they need many aspects of the mainstream culture, which they have also been brought up with, to give them the appropriate cultural balance. Thus Cheryl envisages a 'village', a little community with a school, a basketball court, a shop, a recreation place and houses, a "Peppan village" (6/2/94).

Increased Control of Resources

"We're just waiting patiently to get our sea rights, then we can stop them from getting too much turtle and fish" Kaynayth, 12/2/94

The way in which the local landowners are re-asserting their links to country through current strategies and aspirations can be viewed as the beginning of an Aboriginal-centred local development plan. The groups seek to increase the control they exercise over local resource use and management. Apart from the control they exert by occupying their lands and interacting with the wider community, the landowners discuss plans to increase their control over resources. These plans are supported by the recent recognition of native title, which, although presently ambiguous, does convey a moral recognition of the historical rights of the local landowners to manage and control their resources.

Richard Barkley emphasises the need to control access to, and use of, resources. He argues initially for the erection of fences around sensitive and sacred areas; such as fences to keep cars and four wheel drives off the beach at Bowchat and to stop people from sunbathing because the sacred site of the Oyster Story lies just off-shore. The big swamp by Bowchat, part of the Duck Story and a place where young girls cannot go, also needs to be fenced off and signs posted. Richard is also responsible for policing areas people are not allowed to camp in without permission (17/2/94).

Controlling access to land, sites and resources is also an issue for people on the outstations. The Peppan trustees want to erect signs at Willum Swamp (Mathawanh and Buwith, 9/2/94). Kaynayth expressed a wish to up-date the signs on the road to Bowchat (12/2/94).

Richard Barkley hopes the community rangers will be given additional powers to monitor and control the use of both land and sea resources. He cites cases of bad and wasteful resource use such as "dead carcasses of fish and baby's nappies left on the beach" (17/2/94). Kaynayth also emphasises this issue; "we're just waiting patiently to get our sea rights, then we can stop them from getting too much turtle and fish" (12/2/94).

Although physical deterrents, such as fencing, helps control short term resource abuse, what is needed is an increase in respect for, and understanding of, local culture. Hence the importance of cultural transmission and maintenance programs.

Cultural Maintenance and Transmission

"They're children of Bowchat and when I die I want them to know that" Kaynayth, 12/2/94

Permanent residency of outstations will ensure more evenly balanced education, with children growing up with and learning about both mainstream and local Aboriginal cultures. The hope is that an understanding and appreciation of their heritage, knowing they are "children of Bowchat", will result in "the children growing up knowing they're their own person, in their own right, they've got self value and self worth" (Kaynayth, 12/2/94; Thancoupie, 24/2/94).

Plans are already being made for this year's Ruchook Aboriginal Cultural Festival with the organisers hoping to make it even bigger and more successful than in previous years (Thancoupie, 24/2/94). The plans for the holiday workshops have also been expanded with arrangements made for students to spend time out of their school program at Bowchat (Thancoupie, 24/2/94). Thancoupie hopes to include the themes of The International Year of the Family and the Aboriginal calendar in this year's workshops (24/2/94)(figure 5).

The continuation and expansion of these initiatives should mean local children will continue to learn about and gain pride in their Aboriginality. As Thancoupie states "I want the grandchildren to learn morals and the way of life from us, this leads to self esteem" (24/2/94).

Quintigan Land Management Committee

"We have ideas and dreams, but only work brings it about" Thancoupie, 24/2/94

Since its inception, Quintigan has identified those aspirations of the traditional landowners that it can assist with, and in some cases already set in motion the necessary procedures to pursue these aspirations.

Quintigan has helped outstations with fund applications and land tenure. In January it was decided that as soon as Quintigan is incorporated it will seek outstation funding (Thancoupie, 24/2/94). They will approach NAC for assistance with outstations and housing, and follow through on recent meetings between Quintigan and the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs (DFSAIA). They will also apply for funding for outstation support from ATSIC and other government departments and will possibly approach Comalco as well (Thancoupie, 24/2/94).

Quintigan has also identified specific areas of land that they want to see returned to traditional Aboriginal landowners. These include areas of land currently within Aurukun Shire (map 6). Quintigan identifies Willum Swamp as a significant area which should be excised from Comalco's lease for the Peppan landowners (Thancoupie, 24/2/94).

The procedure for getting DOGIT land back through the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* (Qld) is complicated at present, but it is hoped that the *Native Title Act 1993* (Comm.) will help simplify the procedure and Quintigan can then initiate more claims (Warren Smith, 23/2/94).

Quintigan also anticipates helping with economic activities on outstations. Thancoupie says that "people say 'go back to the land and make it work'" without realising that "we've already made it work" (24/2/94). Thancoupie feels that the success of the holiday programs should be enough to show Council and governments that the traditional people are serious and capable of making the land work - in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal senses - and they should assist them (24/2/94).

Even without immediate assistance, Thancoupie identifies tourism as the next phase of economic development for Quintigan to address: "I'm sure when we're up and going the next thing we've got to do is tourism" (24/2/94). Aware of the negative impacts of tourism around Cairns, Thancoupie is adamant that;

the tourism [must] come from the tribal people, otherwise others will take it over and exploit and use it all ... it must be a guarded thing so others don't get it (24/2/94).

Thancoupie hopes tourism around Weipa will develop so "tourists don't need to just come and buy things but can stay and camp and experience" (24/2/94).

Education is seen as essential to successful tourism activities; "the people who do it must know how to do it" (Thancoupie, 24/2/94). Tourism initiatives and programs on Cape York Peninsula generally, are increasing and can be accessed by Quintigan. These include the Cape York Peninsula Land Use Strategy (CYPLUS, 1993:10); Pajinka Wilderness Lodge; Laura; and Cape York Peninsula Development Association Incorporated (1992:15).

To access practical knowledge on economic development Thancoupie proposes a series of study tours to "travel and see what other people have done in other areas" (24/2/94). In particular she would like to take the five members of the Quintigan executive to Uluru to "see the Rock and all the artifacts they make in a very large shed"; to Yirrkala in Arnhem Land; to Cairns and then up to Laura which is "a huge centre for tourists ... [and where they have] small bush houses on the creek beds for tourists" (24/2/94). Thancoupie also wants to visit other outstations and resource management initiatives throughout the country (eg. Kowanyama) so that the ladies can see what is happening there (24/2/94).

Quintigan also sees a role for itself in the aspirations for increased control of resource use and management. The Committee wants to incorporate community rangers into its agenda. Thancoupie wants the rangers to get more involved in holiday programs, tourism and the outstations. Thancoupie would like to see the rangers become more familiar with the lands and cultures. She feels the rangers have an important role to play and would like to see a situation based on the successful precedent set by the community rangers at Kowanyama (Thancoupie, 24/2/94; Dale, 1991; Daphney et al, 1992).

Quintigan is potentially the vehicle through which many of the aspirations of the traditional landowning families can be pursued. Together with the plans of many of the individual family groups and members, a thoughtful, practical agenda has been formed. However, apart from the forces which impact directly on specific aspirations, many wider scale processes influence the situation at Weipa. As is discussed in the next chapter, the local landowners have limited choice but to work within the frameworks of these wider influences to effectively pursue their goals and aspirations.

5: Opportunities For and Constraints On Aboriginal Resource Management Aspirations

A variety of forces influence and impact on the resurgence of the local Aboriginal cultures at Weipa (figure 9). The previous chapters have introduced these forces, players, processes and relationships. They are clearly different to anything past generations at Weipa have faced. The three main influences identified are Comalco, the RAAF Base Scherger and the state and federal governments. None of these elements play unambiguous roles at Weipa, with most constructing both opportunities and constraints for local Aboriginal families.¹

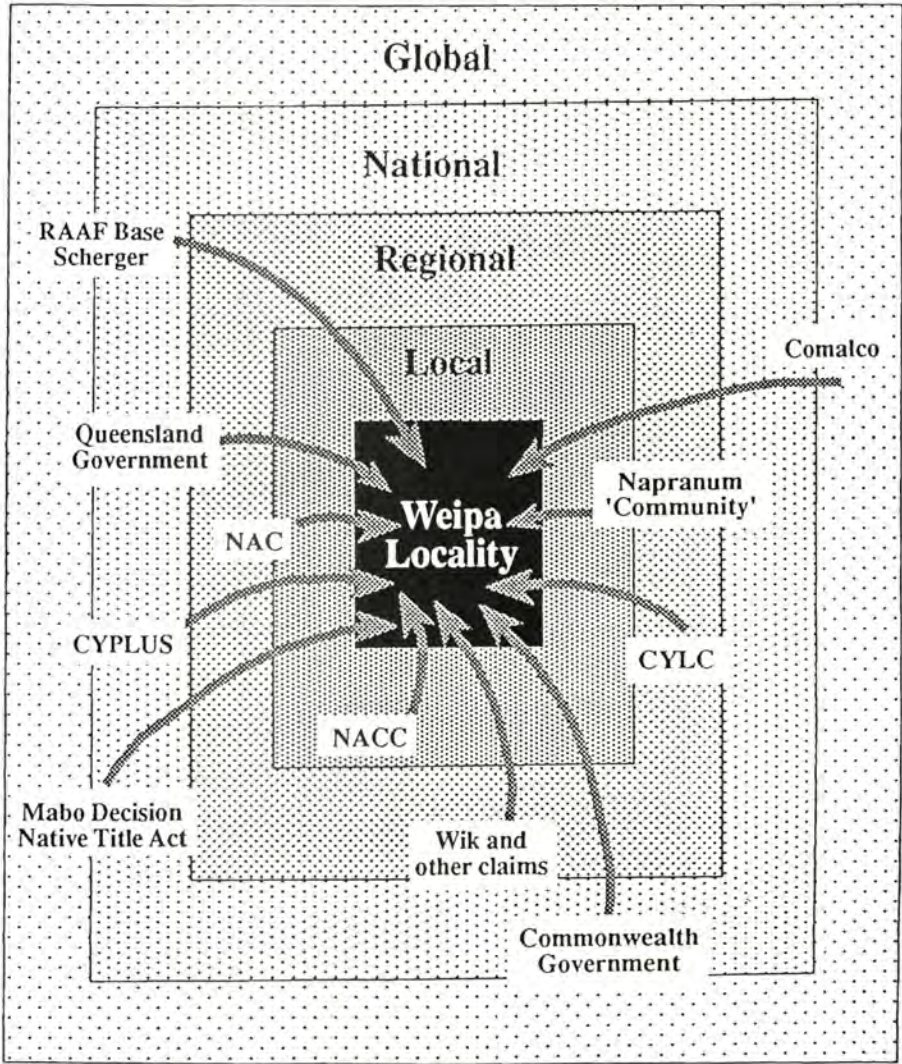


Figure 9: Influencing forces on the Weipa locality

¹ Throughout this thesis the voices of the local landowners must be heard. In this chapter, where my voice dominates the text, it is necessary to maintain a dual narrative. Through the footnotes, the traditional landowners' voices constantly interrupt the text; re-enforcing, challenging and re-orientating the reader to what is being said in the main body of the work.

Comalco

The presence of Comalco's mining operation at Weipa has both positive and negative impacts on the resource management options available to the local Aboriginal landowners. Not only does the mine's physical presence have direct impacts on resources used by them, but the associated infrastructure and mining settlement, company attitudes and policies, and the history of relations between Comalco and local Aboriginal landowners influence the way in which the local family groups can achieve their aspirations (figure 10).

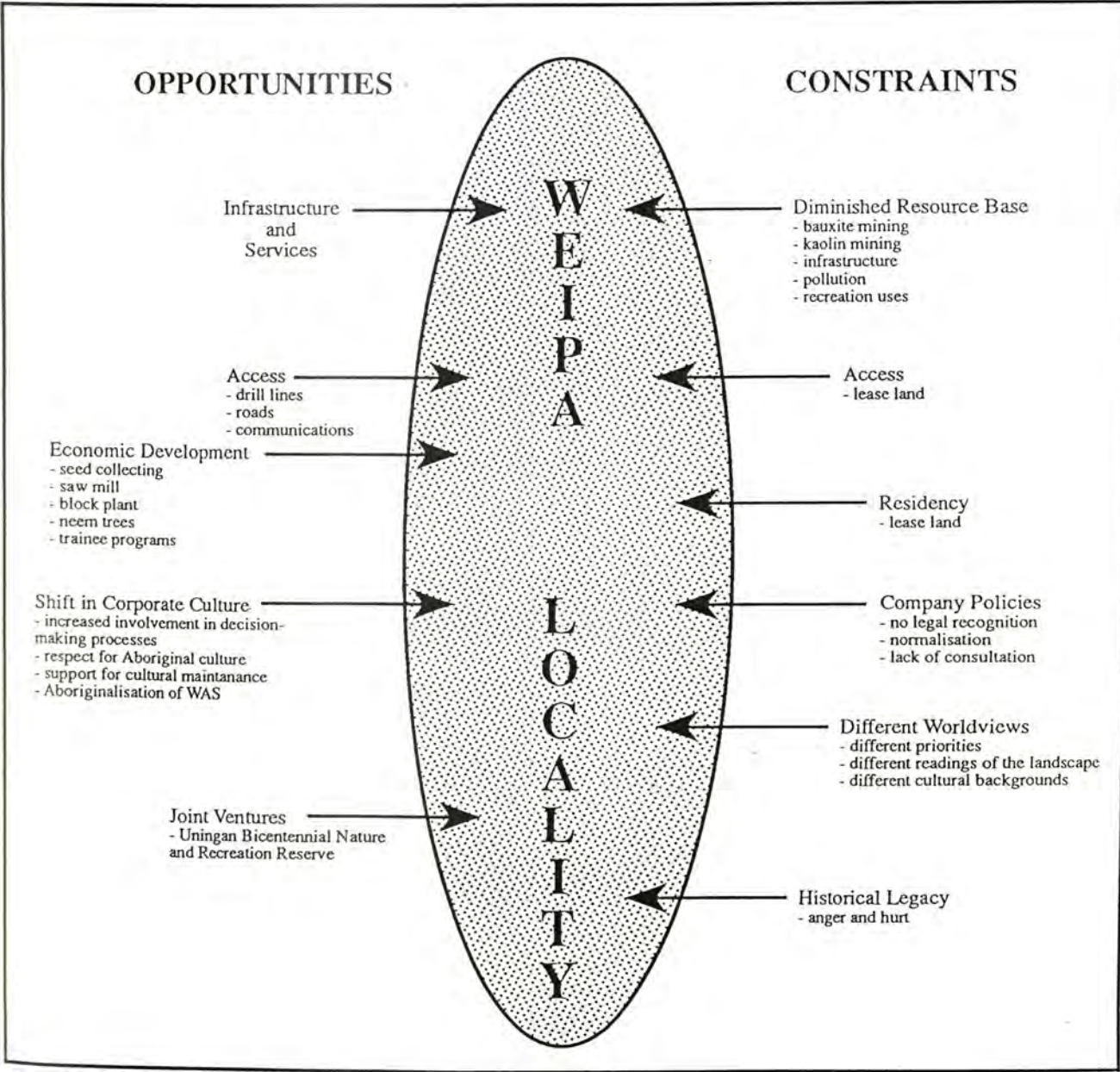


Figure 10: Opportunities and constraints from Comalco

Constraints

"Now everything is gone - the roads, tracks, funeral places - everything is gone, only holes, like wounds, boils" Kaynayth, 2/2/94

Disruption to country is a constraint on local Aboriginal people's ability to pursue their dreams. Comalco's extraction of bauxite has direct impacts on country and its multiple layers of resources.

The strip mining not only destroys the vegetation, but the removal of 2-6 metres of bauxite lowers the ground level (appendix 7b; plate 16). Regeneration therefore employs different flora associations producing changes to the ecosystem and associated resources (Paul Warren, 17/2/94; Comalco, 1993c, 1993d)(appendix 7c). This alienates people from vast areas of country.² Alteration of country is further exacerbated by Comalco's kaolin operations, which began in 1985. Drastic changes will occur as larger areas of land are mined.³



Plate 16a: An active mining area in Andoom.

² This alienation is illustrated by the following comments:

One day we'll be walking through these areas and we'll want food. We want our bush foods to grow in these areas (Kaynayth, 21/1/94);

since mining started no echidnas come around anymore ... no possums either in trees (Kaynayth, 14/7/94);

can't get wild honey any more (Bella Savo, 14/2/94);

those trees [messmate and bloodwood], that's the ones we want (Kaynayth, 21/2/94).

To date Comalco has cleared and mined approximately 9000 hectares of land with 6000 hectares regenerated (Paul Warren, 17/2/94)(map 2, plate 17).

³ As kaolin mining reaches to below the water table, Paul Warren describes possible regeneration techniques in terms of ponds and wetlands (17/2/94).



Plate 16b: A front-end loader scoops up the bauxite-rich soil and pours it into an awaiting truck's belly.



Plate 16c: An 'island' of un-mined earth remains as a monument to what the landscape used to look like in an area mined for bauxite and presently regenerating.



Plate 17a: Aerial photograph of the Andoom area.

Taken October 31, 1993

Bottom right - Mission River Bridge
Deep red - active mining areas
Light brown - regenerating areas
Left of centre, bottom - Bowchat outstation and Mangrove island

(Source: Paul Warren, Comalco, Weipa)



Plate 17b: Aerial photograph of the Weipa peninsula.

Taken October 31, 1993

Top centre - Mission River Bridge
Right of bridge - Uningan Reserve
Left of bridge - Weipa North
Centre right - Willum Swamp
Deep red - active mining areas
Light brown - regenerating areas
White - kaolin mining and storage
Centre left - Napranum

(Source: Paul Warren,
Comalco, Weipa)

To develop mining at Weipa, supporting infrastructure had to be built and maintained. The construction of the Lorim Point facilities, the Nannum shopping centre and the Weipa North township altered and destroyed many resources which were important for the local Aboriginal culture in terms of interchangeable food and cultural resources (map 4, plate 18).⁴ Pollution is associated with both mining and settlement. This can damage and diminish aspects of the resource base underlying the Aboriginal culture.⁵ Further impacts on the resource base has occurred as people from Weipa North, which has a population of almost 2,500, take advantage of the rich environment around Weipa. Their recreational use of resources (fishing, shooting, four wheel driving etc.) has had noticeable impacts on the resource base.⁶

Although these impacts range in severity, local Aboriginal families must come to terms with them. By influencing the decision-making processes within Comalco, taking advantage of areas in which they can assert their control, and adapting to and taking advantage of new landscapes, local

⁴ Sandy Callope describes how he used to collect turtle eggs on the beach which is now right in front of the Albatross Hotel (Sandy Callope, 10/2/94)(map 4). Marie Chevathan also talks about the changes wrought by the presence of Comalco:

... Lorim Point used to be a beautiful beach. The old people used to camp there ... The area near Nannum is more or less a sacred swamp. We won't be able to have control over it and what will happen if they sell the blocks in Nannum. They took away our hunting grounds. People used to walk to that point for oysters and now they can't. They changed the name - Rocky Point was called Kumrunja in language. Along this way (to the southeast of Napranum) we only get mud shells and wallabies. Along the other way, women used to walk toward Kumrunja and collect arrowroot and oysters, and wild berries and all kinds of other things. Now we can't show the kids not because the kids don't want to, but because it's not there. They've taken that from us (Howitt: Fieldwork interview, Napranum, July, 1992).

⁵ Sandy Callope cites the dredging of the Embley River and Albatross Bay together with water and noise pollution from the tankers and other boats as one of the reasons dugong and turtles "have all gone out now". He describes how the area between Hornibrook and Jessica Point used to be sand but due to the dumping of dredged sediment is now all mud (Sandy Callope, 10/2/94; Thancoupie, 24/2/94)(map 4). Richard Barkley finds that ballast water discharged from the tankers is causing algae to bloom at the water edges killing the mangroves and moving up the Embley River with the tides (17/2/94). Thancoupie describes how Beening Creek (map 2) "was one of the main Sunday afternoon fishing spots", but now most of the time the water is dirty and murky being polluted with mining dust and runoff (24/2/94). Brought to the attention of the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC) has been the dumping of kaolin from the Lorim Point Wharf. A press release brought some of the possible environmental impacts this practise could have on the water resources to the attention of the Department of Mines and Energy (Jim Downey, 25/2/94)(appendix 10). Representatives of the Department flew up to Weipa and spoke with Comalco who have given reassurance that they will stop the practise (Jim Downey, pers comm, 6/6/94). Most urgent has been the results of a preliminary survey of environmental conditions in the Mission and Embley Rivers which found that samples of oysters and prawns near two sewerage outfalls had "levels of intestinal bacteria which exceed National Health and Medical Research Council standards for edible shellfish" (appendix 11). Both Sandy Callope and Bella Savo expressed their disgust and dismay at not being able to collect shellfish from the areas which get contaminated by sewerage and oil (10/2/94; 14/2/94).

⁶ Hunting is a popular recreation activity which Cheryl Pitt identifies as causing drops in both pig and kangaroo populations (6/2/94). Thancoupie also finds that "some places for hunting scarce" (24/2/94). Mathawanh and Buwith describe how "Comalco people come and use the lagoon [Willum Swamp], they go shooting and leave pellets behind" (9/2/94). Kaynayth finds that use of Mission River for recreation purposes has disturbed the dugongs, turtles and crabs "so they hid themselves, like humans. When disturbed they went far away places" (10/2/94).

There have also been impacts on shellfish and fish populations. Cheryl Pitt says that seafood is limited with "not much fish around". She also describes how "we used to go to Bowchat and get 1, 2, 3 crabs, enough for your family, but there are no crabs left at Bowchat any more" (6/2/94). Due to the loss of an important resource, its repercussions and the lack of respect for a sacred area Kaynayth says "we stopped the white people from turning over the rocks and taking the crabs. Stopped them so now we've got oysters coming back" (2/2/94).

Other recreation activities can also destroy country and resources (appendix 12).

With many of their resources under 'attack' from non-local usage Cheryl Pitt says with relief "Thank God that they [white people] don't know how to eat stingray yet. We still got our stingray out there, waiting for us every Sunday" (6/2/94).

Tensions and conflicts are also created by a diminished resource base as people need to go further afield, often entering other family's territories, to get certain resources (Cheryl Pitt, 6/2/94).

Aboriginal landowners are creating opportunities and countering many of the physical and emotional impacts of the mine and its associated activities.



(Used with permission from Mirror Image Photographics).

Plate 18a: An aerial view of Lorim Point.

Bauxite stockpiles and the beneficiation plant can be seen in the foreground. The shiploading facilities and an awaiting tanker are in the middle ground. On the left of the shiploading facilities is Hornibrook. Across the Embury river on the left is Hey Point.

The *Comalco Act* gives Comalco the right to manage the lease area - most of the land in the locality (Paul Warren, 17/2/94)(map 6). This also constrains Aboriginal resource management options in terms of access⁷ and residency⁸ (plate 19). Improved communication and closer

⁷ Although Geoff Wharton did not see a problem with Aboriginal usage of resources on Comalco lease land, he did go on to point out that vehicles are not allowed on haul roads and people are not allowed to enter active mining areas (28/2/94). Access is further curtailed by infrastructure such as at Lorim Point and confusion exists amongst many of the local Aboriginal people I spoke to about where they actually were allowed to go. Bella Savo describes how it is "really hard for elders to believe that Comalco is kicking them out of their own land where they're standing" (14/2/94). Despite this, local Aboriginal people continue to assert their ties to the land, as Thancoupie states "Comalco have known for years now, where we want to go we'll go!" (24/2/94).

⁸ As the local Aboriginal family groups do not legally have any interest in Comalco lease land, Geoff Wharton states that "any property constructed there is subject to Comalco". He finds that there is an awareness amongst local Aboriginal people that outstations must not be set up on Comalco land, but still cites problems with people not sure what title certain areas of land are (28/2/94). There is anger and resentment by local Aboriginal people who recognise the irony at having to get permission to do things on what they see at their own land: talking about possible tourism infrastructure at Willum Swamp, Mathawanh says in exasperation "still Comalco land, have to get permission" (9/2/94); "I have to ask permission from Comalco to stay overnight with elders on Comalco lease, I can't argue against them that's why I feel so hopeless" (Bella Savo, 14/2/94).

relations with mine management staff has allowed easier access and better understanding, and has increased Aboriginal utilization of some areas.



Plate 18b: Kaolin storage above the mangroves of Hornibrook.

Historically company policies have created conflict and tension. Some current policies continue to do so and actively limit Aboriginal actions. For example, Comalco does not formally recognise local Aboriginal families' prior ownership of the land. This restricts the company's understanding of Aboriginal views of its dependence on them and their land.⁹ This produces other policies which

⁹ There has been no legal recognition of the traditional Aboriginal landowners by Comalco, nor of the fact that Comalco is dependent on their land. Kaynayth asks: "Will they recognise us as Aboriginal people?" (2/2/94).

impact on Aboriginal people. For example the 'normalisation' of Weipa North¹⁰ and mine planning without consultation¹¹. Once again better communication is helping to overcome the consultation problems, while larger scale actions, such as the recognition of the existence of native title, may pressure Comalco to recognise prior Aboriginal ownership and its implications. Unfortunately the 'normalisation' of Weipa North is being implemented in ways which the local landowners at present seem helpless to counter.



Plate 19: A Comalco sign which speaks for itself.

Richard Howitt finds that from the 'Comalco side' WAS has been seen as part of a good neighbours policy rather than "a reciprocal obligation between interdependent neighbours" (12/1/94). However, as an important part of the transition of WAS to NAC, Richard identifies a recognition by Comalco of a "continuing obligation to the traditional Aboriginal owners of the lands upon which its business has been built as a priority" (12/1/94). Another indication of this recognition was the establishment in 1984 of the Iunthan Aborigines Community Association. Under Iunthan's Articles of Association its membership consists of traditional Aboriginal landowners, although it is not clear how these people are identified.

¹⁰ Aboriginal hopes and aspirations that lease land will be returned to them when the Comalco lease ends are being threatened as Comalco pursues a policy of 'normalisation' for Weipa North. Comalco plans to sell-off and convert to freehold title houses and lease land no longer needed for mining. This means that the only way traditional Aboriginal landowners will be able to get their land back is by buying it! The process has lacked consultation with both the NACC and ATSIC complaining that they have not been involved in the process and do not know what is happening (Dick Namai, 18/2/94; Bill White, 25/2/94).

¹¹ Marginalisation and dispossession have historically kept the local Aboriginal people outside of the decision making process of the mine. Despite increased involvement through both self-created opportunities and company initiatives, the Aboriginal people I spoke with still expressed anger at the lack of involvement and recognition: "Wrecking Aboriginal land, even to the story places. Just go and do it, don't ask where the story places are"; "they don't give a mine plan to the traditional owners to get O.K." (Bella Savo, 9/2/94).

Vastly different worldviews remain a fundamental obstacle between Comalco and the local Aboriginal groups (appendix 13). Different priorities, agendas, readings of the landscape and cultural backgrounds all contribute to situations which severely curtail the ability of the landowners of the Weipa area to achieve their aspirations. Communication and education on both sides is central in addressing this, and initiatives from both the company and the local Aboriginal groups are being developed.

A final constraint on local Aboriginal resource management aspirations is the history of the relationship between Comalco and the local Aboriginal groups. Many of Weipa's traditional landowners still feel the hurt and pain from the manner in which they were dispossessed of their land. Cheryl Pitt says "the old people still have a lot of anger ... anger stops a lot of communication". She states that they "have to overcome that anger, get past that and focus on the issues, start working forward" (6/2/94). Despite their anger and hurt, the old ladies I spoke with are doing just that, working forward.

Opportunities

"Comalco ... lots of negative stuff, lots of good stuff too " Cheryl Pitt, 6/2/94

Comalco's presence in Weipa has also produced many opportunities. Some opportunities arise solely from Comalco, and others result from joint ventures or local Aboriginal initiatives.

Despite the mine's many negative impacts, and those of the mining settlement and its associated goods and values, positive aspects can also be identified. Infrastructure and services¹² as well as increased and easier access to country¹³ (plate 20) are examples of the 'good stuff' Comalco has brought. They have the potential to assist Aboriginal aspirations and many have already been utilized.

¹² Due to the presence of Comalco, the Napranum community has access to infrastructure and services including Woolworths, a primary and high school, a daily Ansett flight to Cairns and a hospital (Cheryl Pitt, 6/2/94). However, Kaynayth points out that many of these basic services are based in Weipa North (21/2/94).

¹³ The Comalco lease lands are crisscrossed with drill lines to get bauxite samples. Many local Aboriginal family groups have taken advantage of the clearances and use the drill lines for easier access into their country (plate 19). The drill lines are maintained through usage (Geoff Wharton, 28/2/94).

Comalco has also created opportunities through economic developments¹⁴ and joint ventures¹⁵. Although some of these initiatives are not solely directed at Aboriginal people, they do take advantage of opportunities presented to them. By taking advantage of ventures based on local resource use and management, local Aboriginal people are continuing ways of "surviving with cultural integrity and social quality" (Richard Howitt, 12/1/94).

A slow shift has been identified in the corporate culture of Comalco over the last ten years from one of exclusion and marginalisation to a more open and positive one in which people with expertise "should be involved" and Aboriginal aspirations supported (Richard Howitt, 12/1/94; Dennis Bourke, 1/3/94).¹⁶ This shift in attitude has led to increased respect for Aboriginal culture¹⁷, support of cultural maintenance programs¹⁸ and Aboriginal resource management strategies¹⁹, and the Aboriginalisation of WAS.

¹⁴ Noel Pearson describes economic development in remote Australia as "God's hardest task" and identifies mining as one of the few realistic opportunities for people to get started (22/2/94). Connell and Howitt (1991:6) find that:

"in many areas, mining represents ... the only avenue for people to secure any capital base for equitable participation in the broader economy on their own terms rather than as marginalised 'victims of progress'".

In Weipa joint initiatives between Comalco, NACC and NAC have resulted in a range of ventures which use local resources, such as a saw mill, block plant and presently being planned and implemented, one of regeneration's more successful trials, neem trees. These developments have the potential to benefit the community beyond the life of the mine.

Comalco also provides opportunities for local Aboriginal people to become involved in resources through trainee programs such as the ones offered by the regeneration department (appendix 14).

A vital opportunity Comalco directly offers local Aboriginal people is through their seed collecting program. Allowing people to get back to their country and recognising and putting value on their intimate knowledge of its resources, the regeneration department gets 60-70% of its "valuable seeds" from the local Aboriginal community. Comalco benefits from getting a local source of high quality seeds and the local Aboriginal people benefit as it provides an opportunity for them to get money, spend time on their land and teach their children about country and its resources.

¹⁵ Uningan Bicentennial Nature and Recreation Reserve is a result of work by the Weipa Bicentennial Community Committee, a joint committee between Napranum and Weipa North, which aimed to produce a positive legacy for future generations (Wharton, 1988:5)(map 4). Geoff Wharton identifies the committee as the only one in Australia with a majority of Aboriginal members (18/2/94). The reserve is a product of different cultures and aspects of both mainstream and the local Aboriginal culture are evident in the reserve and its handbook (Wharton, 1988). The reserve is an excellent example of how increased control and management of resources can be achieved by opportunities created and adapted by both the local Aboriginal groups and Comalco.

¹⁶ Dennis Bourke (1/3/94) and Richard Howitt (1992) both attribute close personal relations between Comalco and the Aboriginal community as being a significant cause of this shift.

¹⁷ Examples of respect shown by Comalco for Aboriginal culture include: the alteration of plans to establish a camping ground on Gonbung Point when the traditional owners brought it to their attention that it would be inappropriate, disrespectful and dangerous (Geoff Wharton, 18/2/94; Sandy Callope, 10/2/94); an agreement by Comalco and its employees that Gonbung Point, a popular fishing spot and part of the tribal land of the Algnith people, would be left alone for a month due to the death of their traditional leader (Sandy Callope, 10/2/94).

¹⁸ Comalco donated a relatively sizable sum to the workshops conducted at Bowchat in 1993 and helped sponsor the Ruchook Aboriginal Cultural Festival (Geoff Wharton, 28/2/94). Geoff Wharton does a lot of work collecting photographs and historic items on Weipa's contact history. He also plays a support role for NAC's Cultural Programs and proposes a "keeping place" as a permanent storage facility for traditional knowledge from the Weipa area (28/2/94).

¹⁹ Local Aboriginal people take advantage of the opportunities created by Comalco's control over its lease land. Appeals to Comalco about their employees use of their resources, for example a water ski club using Willum Swamp, and tourists camping on sub-lease land and DOGIT land have been acted upon by Comalco who use their power to alleviate the problems by dealing with the perpetrators, consulting with NACC or erecting signs (Geoff Wharton, 18/2/94).



Plate 20: A drill line, through utilised by the traditional owners as an access route to the old Peppan site, has become a road.

Perhaps the most exciting and dynamic opportunities becoming available to local Aboriginal groups is through their increased involvement in the industrial resource management system. Better communication and respect on both 'sides', together with empowerment of the local Aboriginal groups, has resulted in increased involvement by the local families in the mine's decision-making processes (plate 21).²⁰ This involvement, inclusion and increasing respect contributes towards the

²⁰ My last morning in Weipa was spent with a group of traditional Aboriginal landowners from the Weipa area as they went on a mine tour with Paul Warren from the regeneration department (21/2/94). The tour follows on from Paul Warren's statement:

I might say in all honesty that I don't think that we've done as well as we could have in the past. I think that there needs to be more effort to involve them [the local Aboriginal people] in what happens on an annual basis (17/2/94).

It was a wonderful exercise of learning and appreciation on both sides as knowledge was shared and opinions sought. The old ladies were intent and questioning as they were shown through the regeneration department and the active mining areas. Paul Warren was similarly enthusiastic, determined to listen to what the ladies had to say and open to their opinions and suggestions. It was an extremely constructive morning as the ladies got a better

foundations from which co-management structures can be built.²¹ This potential for joint management of resources in an environment dominated by a non-renewable resource development is not only rare in Australia, but is all the more important when one considers that local Aboriginal voices were excluded and silenced when exploration began forty years ago. This is just one illustration of the great strides Aboriginal people at Weipa have made by taking full advantage of the opportunities described above. The determination and creativity of the local people should ensure the effective pursuit of their resource management aspirations despite constraints caused by Comalco's presence.

understanding of the mine and where the active areas presently were (a very painful exercise for those people on whose traditional land it was), and had their opinions and aspirations heard:

*Kaynayth expressed her wish for the road to Andoom to be kept, but the railway regenerated when the mining operations in that area ended.

*The ladies told Paul that they were worried that their would not be any bush foods in the regenerated areas and suggested incorporating the seeds of plants such as arrowroot, wild hibiscus and yams in their seed collections.

*The ladies also expressed their wish for more of the bigger trees, such as bloodwood and messmate, to be returned to the mined areas.

*Kaynayth described how worried she was that the traditional names had been replaced in the mining areas. She stated that "we don't know where we are because the places are not the same ... we want the younger people to grow up knowing language names" (Kaynayth, 21/2/94). A workshop on Aboriginal involvement in the regeneration process has already occurred (Bella Savo, pers comm., 12/4/94)(appendix 15).

*Kaynayth and Atakani also said that it was alright for Comalco to use water from Botchet Swamp as it has "everlasting water".

*Kaynayth and Atakani showed and described their land for Paul Warren so he could get a better understanding of the different areas and their importance.

The increased standing of the local people and the attention now given to their 'voices' was illustrated a couple of years ago when Comalco wanted to build a refinery at Weipa. Following the desire of NACC to control any aspects of the impact assessment study that would involve Napranum, the Weipa Alumina Plant Project "actually anticipated and welcomed a high level of involvement from Council in the study, although they remained hesitant about relinquishing complete control to the community" (Howitt, 1993c:133).

²¹ For co-management precedents between indigenous peoples and national parks see Yapp, 1989; Baker and the Muŋitjulu Community, 1992; Birkhead et al, 1992; Reid, et al, 1992; Fenge, 1993. Works which also identify the potential for co-management structures in areas other than national parks come from north America and include Berkes et al, 1991 and Gedicks, 1993.



Plate 21a: Richard Barkley and Paul Warren 'share their knowledge' as they discuss Aboriginal and scientific names and uses for what the local Aboriginal people call Bu'uk, the crab flower.



Plate 21b: Consulting at Botchet Swamp, Bella Savo, Kaynayth, Atakani and Paul Warren talk about the swamp, the way the mine uses it and the way the local Aboriginal people see it.

RAAF Base Scherger

The RAAF's new Base Scherger also creates both constraints and opportunities on local Aboriginal resource management aspirations as a result of its location, policies and attitudes (figure 11).

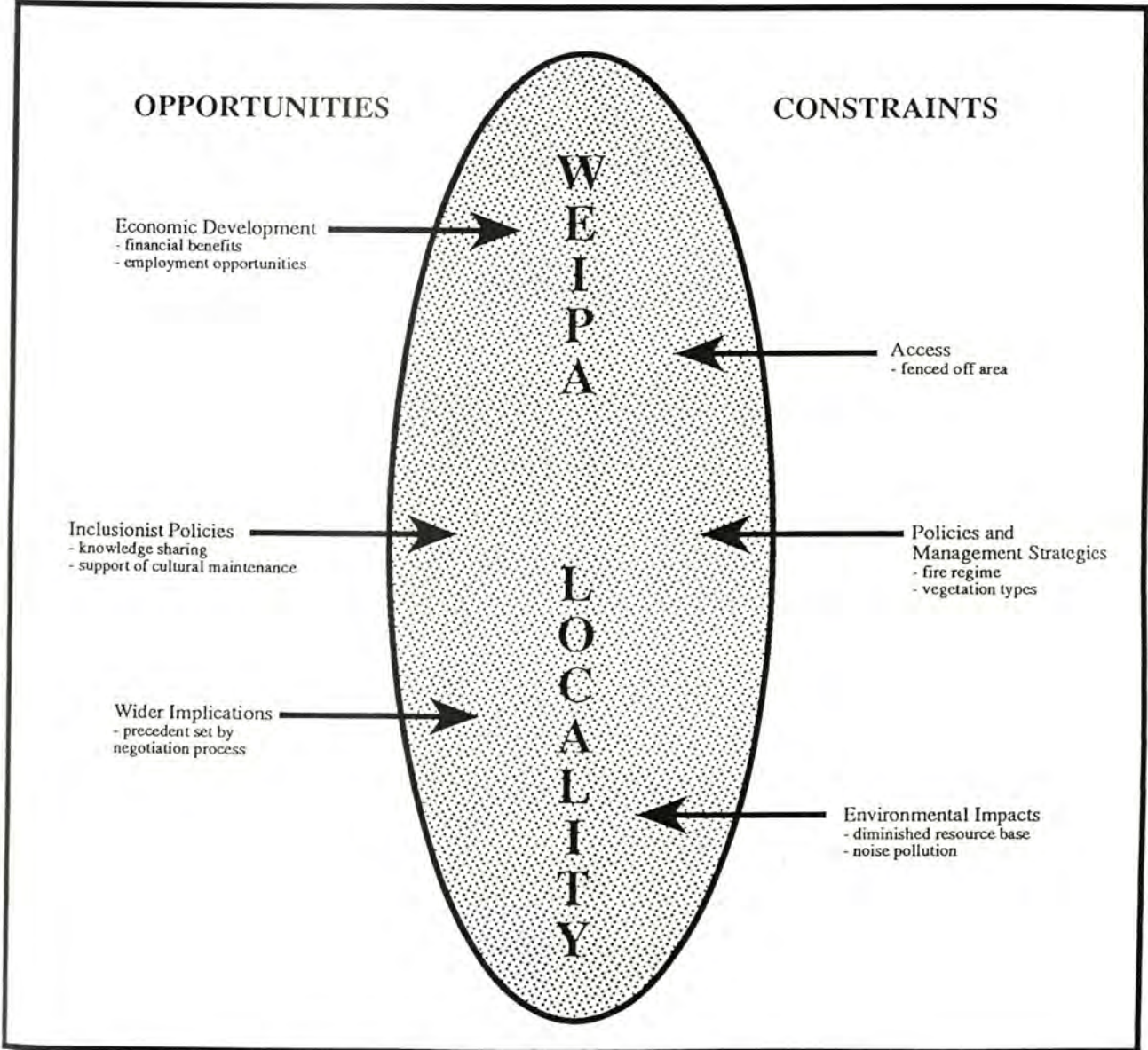


Figure 11: Opportunities and constraints from RAAF Base Scherger

Constraints

"We must go by the rules - mustn't burn, even though before we burnt the grass with matches" Mathawanh,

31/1/94

The large proportion of Peppan land leased to the Defence Department for the Base's buffer and core zones constrains the landowners' access to their land (map 8).²² The proximity of the Base to their outstation, and RAAF policies and management strategies, constrain Peppan management plans.²³ Environmental impacts from the construction and presence of the Base will also affect local resources.²⁴ The RAAF Base's presence has affected the aspirations of the Peppan people. However, the relatively small scale of direct impacts compared with those of the mine, and the available options, mean limitations are not insurmountable and many are presently being confronted and overcome.

²² Although access is not restricted to either the buffer or core zone (the site of the new Peppan is in the buffer zone) an area within the core zone is fenced off and access restricted (map 8). This restricted access has implications on resource use, especially as a number of spring sites occur within the fenced off zone.

A major access problem, and severe constraint on aspirations, has been the agreement that the site of the present Peppan outstation be moved due to its location at the edge of the core zone and thus proximity to an explosive ordinance storage facility (map 8). Buwith says with a pained expression on her face how they'll miss old Peppan "but we just can't help it" (16/2/94). The new location for the outstation is looked at with enthusiasm as it has a good waterhole and soil, plenty of food resources, and, because the road does not get boggy, year round access (31/1/94)(plate 13).

²³ The RAAF Base is implementing its own fire regime (Department of Defence, 1993:9-10). As a result Mathawanh and Buwith say that they were given books and told by the base that they "are not allowed to burn because ... it may damage the base" (31/1/94).

The aspiration by the Peppan landowners to plant trees at their new outstation site is also skewed by the RAAF Base as they are not allowed to plant trees which will attract birds or flying foxes as this could be dangerous for the aeroplanes (Mathawanh and Buwith, 31/1/94).

²⁴ Apart from the loss of resources the Peppan people will suffer in terms of land area and due to the construction of hangers, accommodation, the airfield and fences, their resource base is also likely to be effected by noise pollution from the aeroplanes. However the Base is very proud of its environmental management plan and its implementation. The inclusion of the PLT through committees and continual visits to the base has meant that the Peppan people do not seem too concerned about impacts the base may have on their resources: "They look after our spring sites ... [noise pollution] will be brief, only when the aeroplanes take off and land" (Mathawanh, 1/2/94).

Opportunities

"Really working good with us" Mathawanh, 1/2/94

Despite difficulties in the initial negotiations, relations between Peppan and Base staff have evolved in ways which can benefit the Peppan people. Through financial benefits²⁵ and employment opportunities²⁶, a source of income may partly assist the Peppan landowners to fund infrastructure and transport. Respectful and inclusionist policies²⁷ have resulted in situations of knowledge sharing²⁸ and the creation of circumstances which contribute towards cultural maintenance and recognition²⁹. Finally the actual negotiations, and their outcomes, could have implications for other Aboriginal groups throughout Australia.³⁰

²⁵ Although the lease money the PLT receives is sizable, problems of investment and usage need to be resolved before the funds can assist with resource management aspirations.

²⁶ Greg Thexton, liaison officer from the Base, states that the Base has a policy on contract work, whereby they first approach Napranum, but still make their decisions on an economic basis (16/2/94). Through this policy NACC won a contract to build and maintain the 23 kilometre perimeter fence. Good relations between the Base and Napranum are also reflected in the fact that the saw mill is able to come onto the base and remove any trees it can use from areas about to be cleared (Greg Thexton, 16/2/94). The Base is working with NAC and their block plant to make a tougher paver that aeroplanes and heavy equipment can park on (Greg Thexton, 16/2/94). Greg Thexton also says that the Base is "seeking ways to increase involvement here, for example through grass cutting, fence repair, stock eradication and any other relevant work and contracts" (16/2/94).

²⁷ Appendix 16 illustrates the inclusionist policy the Base has towards the Aboriginal community.

²⁸ Due to the multidimensional nature of Peppan country, Buwith and Mathawanh find that their country may be "a bit dangerous" for the Base and its inhabitants. Because of their respect for and trust in the Base and its people they say "they here to protect us, and we have to protect them from our sacred places". Buwith and Mathawanh describe how "whenever the base wants to go somewhere new and do something new they come and discuss it with Mavis [Mathawanh] first ... They listen to everyone and if the new area is sacred, they don't build there, they go somewhere else" (31/1/94).

Greg Thexton has great respect for the Aboriginal people he works with saying "it's just no so that Aborigines are primitive. They have an incredible wealth of knowledge, not just a written culture. The white community is slowly learning this" (16/2/94; Thexton, 1993:34-36). He is open to learning and sharing knowledge with the Peppan people, fascinated to discover that they also used kaolin for stomach ailments (16/2/94).

²⁹ Although the Peppan people wanted the base to be called Ndruilapayn meaning "Brolga taking off from swamp", the Defence Department named it after Chief Marshal Scherger (Mathawanh, 1/2/94). However the Base does recognise the cultural heritage of the area and with opportunities for respect, cultural maintenance and cultural transmission has, with much thought, named its streets with traditional names and words (appendix 16).

³⁰ Richard Howitt identifies larger implications of the lease agreement saying:

The airforce base clearly has a dramatic impact in all sorts of ways, not least because having secured title people were immediately forced into having to hand over control, and for the first time ever in Cape York received compensation payments, and in fact received compensation payments before anything had changed on the ground, before there had been any development of the site. That produced interesting expectations and a benchmark (12/1/94).

Government

Despite variations in the degree of influence, government policies and attitudes have had direct impacts on the people at Weipa since white settlement of Queensland. The current state and federal governments offer opportunities for and constraints on local Aboriginal resource management through their policy making processes, policies, programs and funding opportunities (or lack thereof), and initiatives aimed at providing a database and policy framework for the 'development' of the Peninsula such as the Cape York Peninsula Land Use Strategy (CYPLUS)(figure 12).

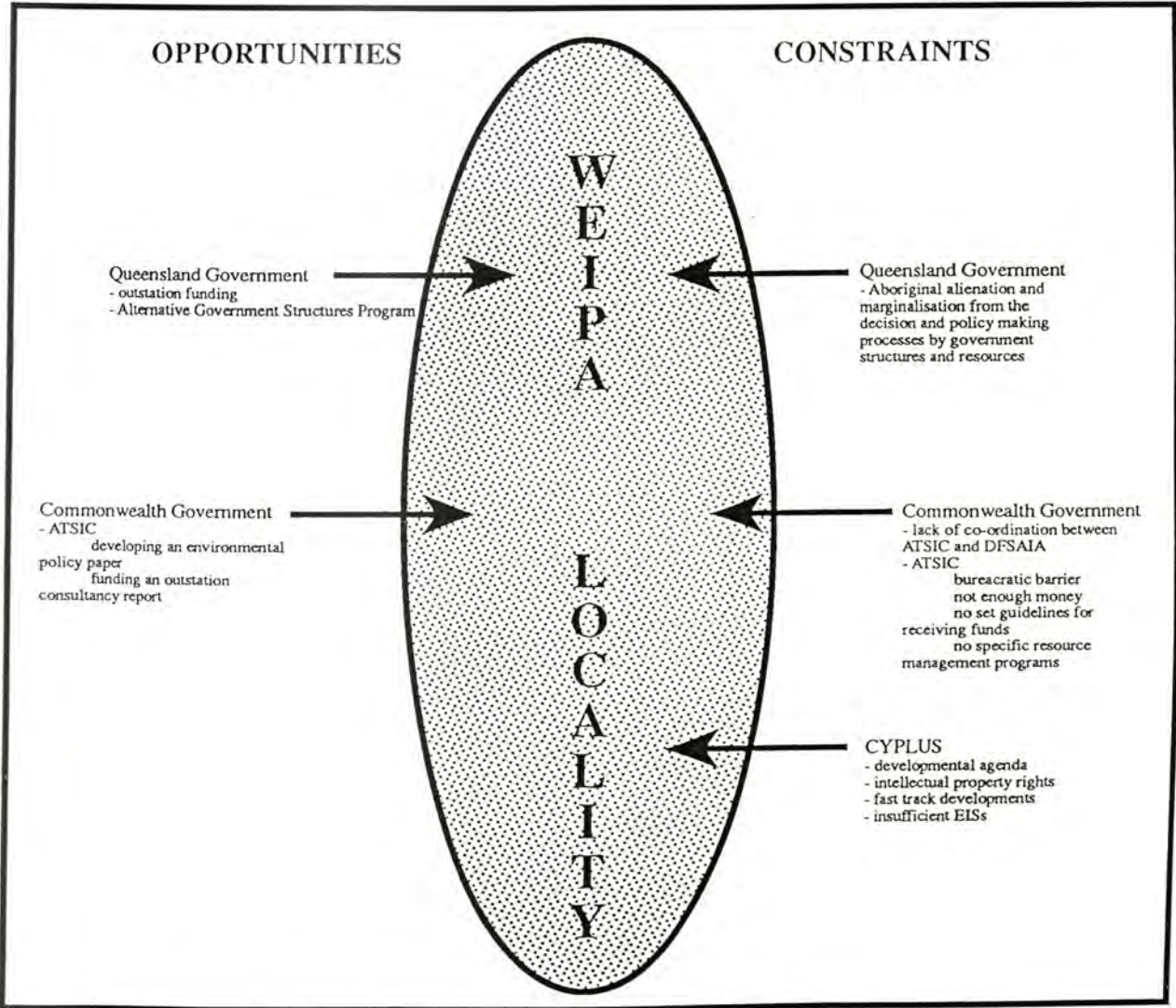


Figure 12: Opportunities and constraints from the government

Queensland government

"I can't understand why it is that my land has been mined and even after thirty years there is still no compensation" Gladys Claremont, Howitt: Fieldwork interview, Napranum, September, 1992.

Despite the ALP's commitment to full consultation with indigenous peoples on matters affecting them, Holden shows that the policy making processes of Labor in government have been "structured and resourced so as to covertly perpetuate Aboriginal and Islander powerlessness" (1993:75). She identifies a range of strategies which affect this marginalisation - a lack of opportunity to set the agenda or influence outcomes which she finds is a "modern-day version of dispossession" (Holden, 1993:75).³¹ These strategies include:

- *downgrading of the government department with prime responsibility for indigenous affairs by placing it within another department³²,
- *under-resourcing of the DFSAIA and
- *delay in implementing an organisational structure which has severely restricted the ability of the department to influence broad government policy (Holden, 1993:75-77).

Sympathetic bureaucrats are marginalised in their ability to influence the policy making agenda and outcomes by:

- *the dispersal of administrative and policy development responsibilities across a range of departments - creating a number of minority sections within alien environments,
- *the fragmentation of the advocacy role amongst other departments - some which have competing advocacy responsibilities³³,
- *the creation of statutory rights of influence for these other departments over indigenous issues³⁴,
- *the mainstreaming of service delivery³⁵,
- *the reinforcement of the role of the welfare state in the management of Aboriginal and Islander affairs³⁶ and

³¹ As Bella Savo says in regard to the lack of state government compensation and recognition; "Can't get anything because of the legislation" (14/2/94).

³² In 1990 the Department of Community Services was merged with the Department of Family Services to form the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (DFSIAIA).

³³ Departments such as the Attorney-General's Department, the Department of Lands and the Department of Environment and Heritage have all taken over areas of responsibility that used to lie with the division of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, marginalising the importance of the issues and the strength of their advocates (Holden, 1993:77).

³⁴ For example, there is no statutory obligation for the Departments of Land, Environment and Heritage and Resource Industries to respond to approaches by the division of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. However under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* the above departments have a statutory right to have an input on land matters which affect Aborigines (Holden, 1993:76).

³⁵ The responsibility for services such as housing is being removed from the DFSAIA and placed within non-Aboriginal departments - removing a group which is visible and dedicated to the special needs of indigenous people from the policy making process (Holden, 1993:77). The implications of this is recognised by the Aboriginal people at Weipa; as Thancoupie states in reference to the 'removal' of their houses in town if they live permanently on the outstations: "It'd be the government saying you don't need me and you can't have your house in the community" (24/2/94).

Warren Smith describes how the department is still in the process of restructuring with the aim of transferring the old department's "cradle to grave" functions to the responsible government departments. He finds that this takes time away from Aboriginal resource management issues (23/2/94).

³⁶ A Public Sector Management Commission (PSMC) report recommended the establishment of the DFSAIA as the government's 'lead agency' in the coordination of social justice and welfare (PSMC, 1992:3). Holden finds that the Goss government has yet to confirm the link between social justice

**the "ghettoising" of issues within government and cabinet³⁷ (Holden, 1993:77-81).*

Aboriginal and Islander people are further alienated from the decision and policy making process by a lack of statutory and resource support for non-government organisations and power bases. As examples of this disempowerment Holden cites the failure of the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* to establish or resource regional land councils³⁸, to provide for Aboriginal majorities on national parks' boards of management, or to establish an Aboriginal-controlled statutory land acquisition fund (1993:80-81).

The marginalised and powerless position of Aboriginal people in the policy making processes of the Goss government has produced a lack of policies, legislation, programs and funding opportunities for those areas which Aboriginal people identify as necessary for the achievement of self-determination and autonomy.³⁹ This acts as a major constraint on options available to Aboriginal groups at Weipa.

Despite the marginalisation, pressure from Aboriginal interests and sympathetic bureaucrats has resulted in limited support opportunities for Aboriginal resource management aspirations. State Government funding is becoming available for an outstation program⁴⁰, and a new program, aimed at more appropriate governing structures for Aboriginal communities⁴¹, has the potential to assist with self-determination aspirations.

A major issue which the Aboriginal landowners find constraining their plans is the state government's failure to compensate them for the loss of their land, and the absence of a legislative link to ensure that any of Comalco's royalty payments to the Queensland government flow to the

and issues to do with land, resource development and the environment. These issues will therefore continue to be dealt with elsewhere, whilst "the role of the welfare state as the primary mechanism for structuring the lives of Aboriginal and Islander people" is reinforced (1993:78-79).

³⁷ The policy making process and passing of the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* is a good example of this.

³⁸ The Cape York Land Council was created at the behest of landowners and does not have an enforceable statutory role. Noel Pearson states that the "Queensland government has an agenda against land councils" (22/2/94). A paper by Dalziel discusses the role of land councils and their positions in relation to the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* (1991).

³⁹ Sandy Callope states:

Comalco has the Comalco Act to protect its rights and interests. There should also be a Napranum Act, and a Mapoon Act and an Aurukun Act to protect our rights and interests (Howitt: Fieldwork interview, Napranum, July, 1992).

⁴⁰ In the last state government budget, outstations were considered for the first time by the Queensland government and over the next three years \$7.4 million is earmarked for outstation development and infrastructure, and a dam on Palm Island (Warren Smith, 23/2/94). Of the allocated money, \$0.9 million is to fund about 24 outstations across Cape York Peninsula before July 1994. Peppan outstation is the likely candidate to receive some of the money in the Weipa area (Warren Smith could not explain the guidelines used for funding allocations).

⁴¹ The Alternative Government Structures Program (AGSP) only started in late 1993 with the funding of a consultancy group in Aurukun. Through an inclusive and extensive study, the group aimed to ascertain the aspirations of every adult in Aurukun in terms of where they want to live, what sort of house, with whom etc. (Warren Smith, 23/2/94). Through this sort of research it is hoped that there will be "increased participation in community management activities by local indigenous peoples and [that there will be] the establishment of alternative structures and processes for self management" (DFSIA:1).

affected people at Weipa (Howitt, in prep).⁴² Howitt estimates that if Weipa was in the Northern Territory, due to the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976*, the local native title holders would have received an income of more than \$62 million since 1973 (Howitt, in prep). The denial of discretionary income at this level, and lack of recognition of land rights, continue to act as major moral and financial constraints on many of the local Aboriginal resource management aspirations.

Commonwealth government

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) is the federal body dealing directly with the Aboriginal people at Weipa. A lack of interaction and coordination of policy frameworks and support programs between the state and federal governments creates conflicts and tensions and acts as a constraint on Aboriginal aspirations.⁴³ Structural differences⁴⁴ are cited as one of the reasons for the lack of communication between bureaucratic bodies (Les Malezer, 27/2/94).

The policy making processes and bureaucratic structures of ATSIC are seen as creating their own constraints on Aboriginal self-determination. Aboriginal people expect support from governments in pursuing their aspirations, not shaping them. Yet ATSIC is seen as just another bureaucratic barrier for getting funds (Dick Namai, 18/2/94) - there is not enough money to go around⁴⁵, there are no set guide-lines for receiving funds⁴⁶ and there are no specific resource management programs (Bill White, 25/2/94). Until these problems are addressed, local Aboriginal people at Weipa will have to find alternative funding sources and programs to support their aspirations.

Although the federal government does not have specific programs to support Aboriginal resource management aspirations, it has acknowledged the need for support in this area. ATSIC is developing an environmental policy paper⁴⁷ and is funding a consultancy report looking at the practicalities of outstation support and resourcing⁴⁸. Through these initiatives, ATSIC may eventually offer Aboriginal people some support in the pursuit of their aspirations.

⁴² "They say we will get royalties, but only out of mouth, not on paper. Still get nothing ... The Government should look at the traditional owners and the land first - where people used camp and hunt for traditional food is now all ripped up" (Bella Savo, 14/2/94).

⁴³ Hayes, in prep., also identifies this problem.

⁴⁴ ATSIC is an elected body whereas DFSAIA has a departmental profile.

⁴⁵ Dick Namai says that NACC gets between \$25,000 and \$30,000 from ATSIC and they have to divide that between 5 and 6 outstations (18/2/94).

⁴⁶ Bill White states that at present the approach to funding is complex and needs rationalising. Dick Namai finds that there are problems with funding guide-lines (18/2/94).

⁴⁷ At the preliminary consultancy stage is an environmental policy paper being prepared by Dr. David Bennett in Canberra. Apart from cultural heritage and environmental issues, the paper will look at the problem of how to resource Aboriginal groups so that they can get into resource management areas (Bill White, 25/2/94).

CYPLUS

The Cape York Peninsula Land Use Strategy (CYPLUS) is a jointly funded project between the Queensland and Commonwealth governments. It aims to provide "a sound and rational basis on which land and resource management decisions can be made" for the Peninsula (Rick Andrew, 1/3/94). CYPLUS follows the recommendations of the a report commissioned by the Premier's Department of the Queensland government to "provide a basis for future planning of development and land use" (Connell Wagner, 1989:1). The study included "identification of features which may be, or should be, considered as constraints on further development of the area ... and an assessment of the resources of the area which may offer potential for further recognition or development" (Connell Wagner, 1989:3). The government clearly has a developmental agenda. The view that Cape York Peninsula is a final untapped area awaiting exploitation and frontier development is further illustrated in a report by the mining industry which explores the "mineral wealth and potential of Cape York Peninsula" (White, 1991:2).

CYPLUS is presently in its first stage of information gathering. The project's motives and data collection techniques have already faced resistance from Aboriginal people on Cape York Peninsula who identify possible constraints on their aspirations. They are concerned about issues of intellectual property rights⁴⁹: that the government has not given them any indication or assurances as to what the information they give to CYPLUS will be used for; who will control it; who has access to it; and what other methods will be used to gather it (eg. satellites) (Warren Smith, 23/2/94). Aboriginal people in Weipa need to be aware of the possible implications of CYPLUS as the information collected can be used to further the developmental agenda of the Goss government. For example, information can be used and manipulated to help fast track development proposals and influence environmental impact statements. CYPLUS has the potential to create a whole new round of development which excludes and marginalises Aboriginal interests and aspirations on Cape York Peninsula.

⁴⁸ Funded through ATSIC and overviewed by Cape York Land Council is a consultancy report looking at outstations. Peter Cook is investigating outstation support and needs across Cape York Peninsula with a view to providing an outline to ATSIC on how they can best service and resource outstations (Noel Pearson, 22/2/94). The potential and practicality of establishing small resource centres within each community is being examined (Bill White, 25/2/94). In Weipa, facilities such as the NWTC and other NAC programs are ideal for this. The problem is that Napranum's success at securing funds from Comalco will probably reduce their access to government funds. As a result, NAC is investigating ways of providing some regional as well as local services (eg. TAFE programs).

⁴⁹ Most of those people interviewed who are involved with CYPLUS emphasised this dilemma (Noel Pearson, 22/2/94; Warren Smith, 23/2/94; Kath Shurcliff, 23/2/94; Lez Malezer, 27/2/94). The issue of intellectual property rights has been taken up by indigenous people the world over (Brush, 1993)(appendix 17).

Conclusion

As has been shown, the main forces which impact on local Aboriginal resource management options come from Comalco, the RAAF Base Scherger and the state and federal governments. Although other forces, such as the local 'community' and its organisations, environmental groups, the recognition of native title, and the Wik and other claims, construct their own set of constraints and opportunities, their influence is not as great or direct.⁵⁰

The opportunities and constraints from Comalco and the governments have seen a shift over time. Historically, constraints constructed in Comalco's corporate domain have been the dominant limitation on Aboriginal actions (eg. Kaynayth's tour to confront RTZ in London). However, this chapter has shown that currently, constraints constructed in the government domain are more important. The most dramatic shift is not only that constraints from Comalco have lessened, but active opportunities are now available. The fact that opportunities now exist in both the Comalco and RAAF domains means that there is a very real potential for progress towards grassroot goals for resource management and self-determination.

⁵⁰ Each of these others factors are complex and dynamic in their internal politics and interconnections. They could each be the subject of their own separate study. As such, introductory discussions only are offered in appendix 18.

6: Conclusions - or just the beginning?

After our mine tour group had visited the bauxite beneficiation plant, seen the stockpiles, passed some areas mined for kaolin, and stared at the 2 million dollar topsoil-removing scrapers, the bus finally turned around to head back to Napranum. A sense of peace and fulfillment at a morning in which much had been achieved filled the bus. The ladies started singing in language; Kaynayth leading and different voices contributing with perfect harmonies. As we rolled past the airport grounds, and through regenerating areas in which seeds are collected, the emotion was tangible. A song about going home, and one about a fish hawk diving for a snake, were accompanied by hand movements which translated the songs better than English words ever could. I reflected on these incredible, courageous and determined women - on the amazing weeks I had spent in Napranum - all I had learnt and the new things I had experienced. I knew that when I was to say goodbye at the airport in a few hours, I would say "apo", goodbye in language, knowing I would return.

Conclusion

This thesis has shown that Aboriginal groups at Weipa are rekindling their cultures through tenacious resource management strategies and aspirations. They are doing this despite historical and contemporary conflicts resulting from the presence of an industrial resource management system and hostile political structures in the locality. The establishment of outstations, increased control and use of resources, transmission and maintenance of cultural knowledge and the creation of resource management bodies, have all been identified as indicators of this re-affirmation of cultural identities.

The thesis identified many of the wider forces which impact on the local resource management options. Comalco, the RAAF Base Scherger and the state and federal governments were shown to have the most direct influence. An historical shift was recognised: Comalco's constraining influences have decreased, whilst opportunities from both Comalco and the RAAF base have been created. At the same time, the state and federal governments are shown to be the major current constraint on aspirations. The local groups are pursuing their aspirations more effectively by countering these constraints, and creating and taking advantage of the opportunities.

Despite the preliminary nature of this work, it has value and political relevance. The focus has been the voices and agendas of the local Aboriginal people. Their concerns, agendas and actions have been central. Thus, within the thesis, the Aboriginal voices have been empowered and the importance of their position and concerns given attention. This has consequences for their position in Napranum, and in regard to Comalco and the government. The traditional landowners have historically been marginalised, and their voices swamped by that of governments, missionaries and developmental agencies. This thesis does what it can to redress this imbalance.

Limitations and significance

This thesis is a preliminary study. The brief fieldwork period, the time of year experienced and the small group of people I spoke with meant that complex and involved issues, processes and factors are only touched upon. However, the identification of these issues is valuable in itself. By entering the contested terrains of the Weipa locality, and adopting a perspective and methods not previously employed for research there, aspects historically ignored and marginalised have been identified and opened up for further research.

Further research

Limitations have been identified. It is, however, these limitations which provide directions to areas where future research is required. There is a need for further research on the Weipa-specific situation and the themes explored in this thesis. For a more complete and involved study, more time needs to be spent in Weipa (at least a seasonal year), and more people engaged with. By doing this a better sense of place and what is happening can be gained. The influencing framework, including forces such as the Napranum 'community', environmental groups, native title, and the Wik claim, can also be explored in more detail.

This is one of very few works which examines the interactions of industrial and Aboriginal resource management systems from the Aboriginal perspectives. It therefore goes somewhat towards closing a significant gap in the literature. However similar research, in other locations throughout Australia and the world, is needed to continue to redress the deficiency in the literature.

This thesis not only identifies as an area for further study the situation in Weipa and the forces which influence it. It also goes beyond the Weipa-specific situation to identify the relevance of what is happening there for other people and locations in Australia and throughout the world.

As Massey states,
'Geography matters' does not just mean 'locality matters' - it has much wider implications, greater claims to make than this (Massey, 1991:272).

Figure 13 illustrates some of the implications that the situation at Weipa has for wider scale processes.

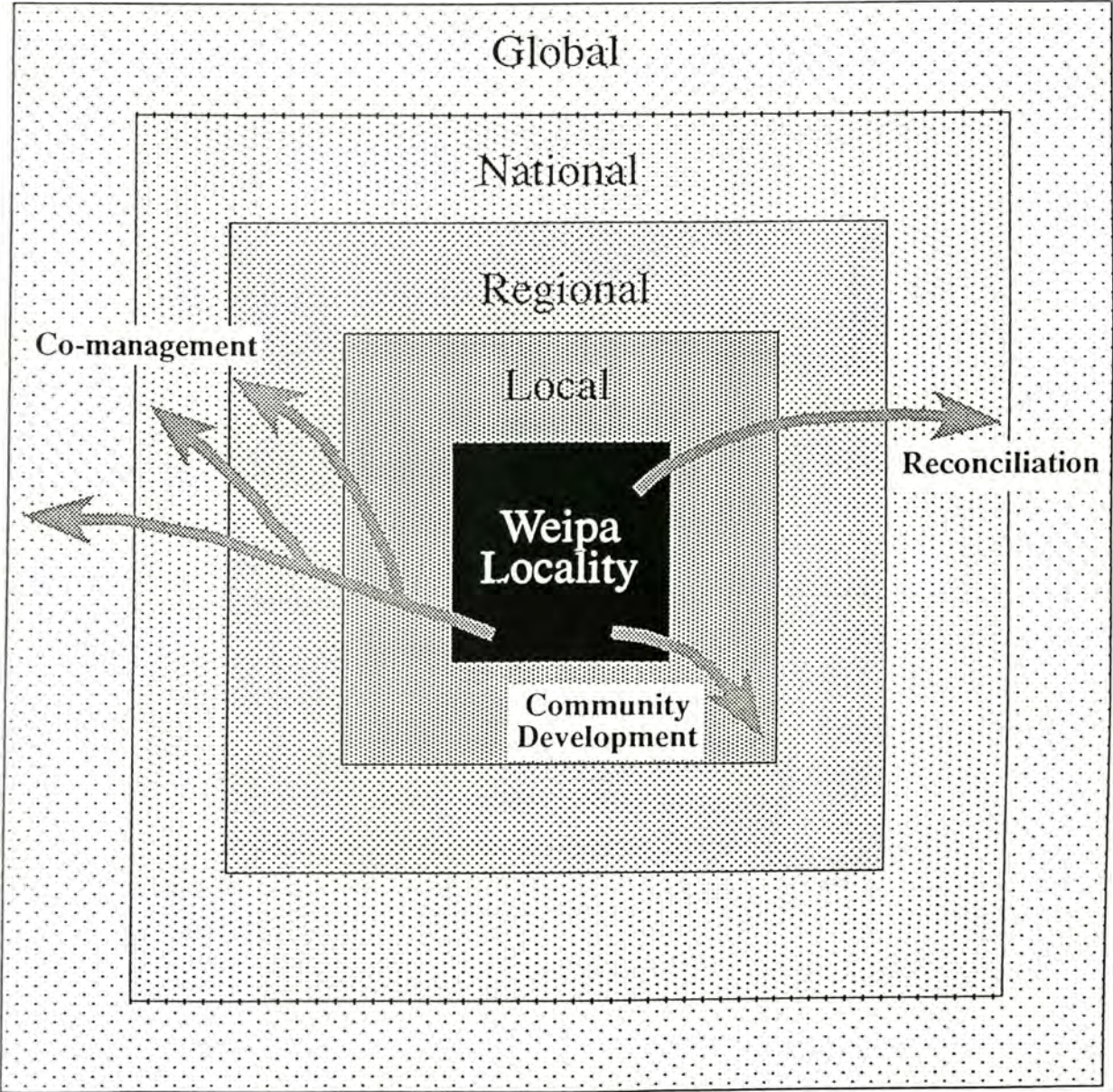
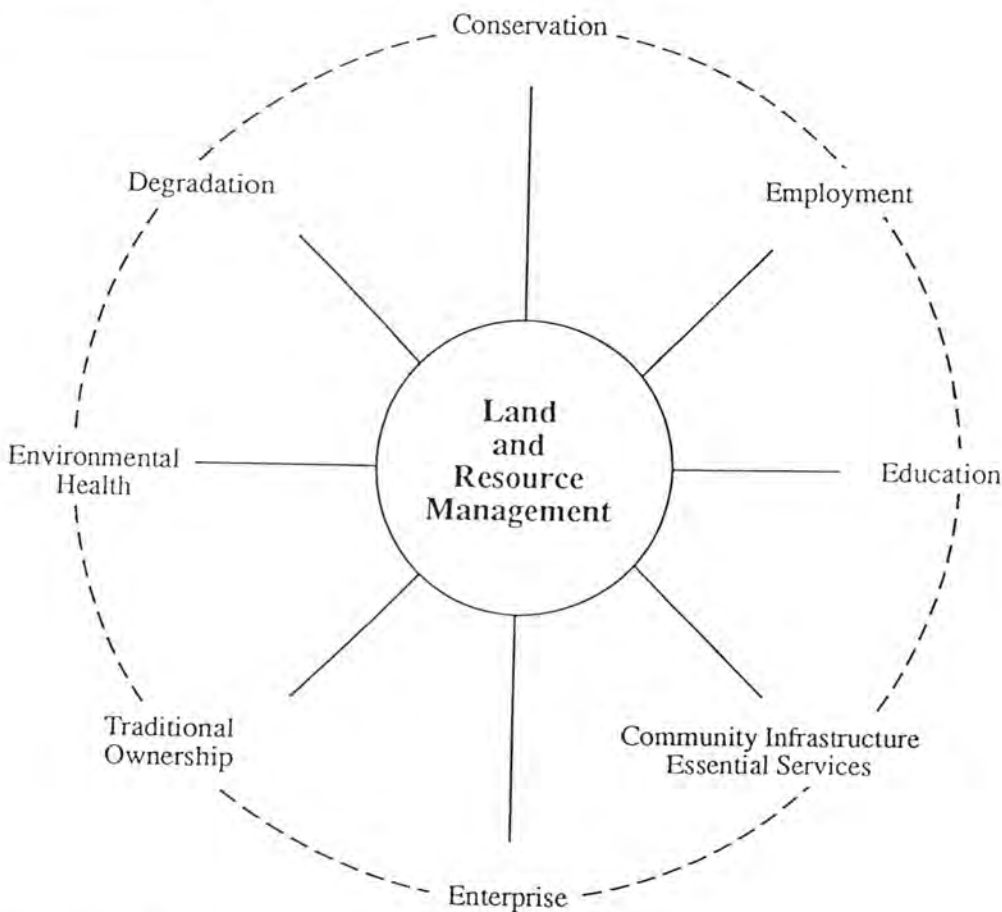


Figure 13: Wider scale processes influenced by the actions of the Aboriginal landowners at Weipa

Community development

At the local scale it would be valuable to explore the implications of local Aboriginal resource management for community development. Young identifies country, and its use and management, as fundamental to Aboriginal culture (Young, 1988a, 1988b, 1993). She builds on this to show how land and resource management "can form the foundation to the whole structure" of community development - including social well-being and maintenance of cultural integrity (Young, 1993:227). Figure 14 illustrates how land and resource management can form the basis for pulling together and integrating the diverse elements which are needed for community development. This thesis has already laid the foundation for this study in Weipa. It has explored the implications of, and relationships between, resource management and enterprise development, employment, education, community infrastructure and essential services, conservation and environmental health. All of these are fundamental components of integrated community development.



Based on Young, 1993:227

Figure 14: Elements of integrated land and resource management.

Co-management

The potential for co-management structures in non-renewable resource management arenas (which incorporate local through to global scales) is an exciting development which needs further exploration. This work can build on the precedents already set for the joint management of national parks in both Australia and Canada (Yapp, 1989; CYLC, 1991b; Berkes et al, 1991; Birckhead et al, 1992, Fenge, 1993, Dearden and Berg, 1993; Gedicks, 1993; Woenne-Green et al, 1994). It should also follow through on the value and benefits of sharing knowledge highlighted by these precedents (Christie, 1990, 1992; Baker and the Mutitjulu Community, 1992; Reid et al, 1992). Gedicks explores the mechanisms through which co-management structures are preventing non-renewable resource developments on indigenous landscapes in North America (1993:193-205). The potential for co-management in Weipa is important because a non-renewable resource development is already present and well established. The exciting potential that exists should be explored and broadened to include other situations, throughout Australia and the world, in which indigenous resource management systems occupy the same landscapes as those of non-renewable industrial resource developments.

Reconciliation

Another area where further research would be useful is at the social and cultural interface between the local landowners and Comalco employees. The Comalco mine is a major contributor to the Australian economy, its products - from aluminium window frames to aluminum foil - touches everyone's lives. Allied to the multinational RTZ, Comalco is a company that does not need to give any concessions to indigenous peoples on whose land its mine is located (and indeed has not for much of its life). However, as this thesis has shown, over the last ten years, communication, accommodation and respect has developed on both 'sides'. This has allowed for the transformation of an historically antagonistic situation to one in which opportunities for both parties exist. This has important lessons for relations elsewhere in Australia and sets vital precedents for the national goal of reconciliation. As Richard Howitt states:

In a sense these people are amongst the heroes of the reconciliation process ... because they have reconciled and changed and produced that sort of change in one of the most dramatically antagonistic settings that you can find anywhere in Australia (12/1/94).

Why have you read this thesis?

This thesis has examined the situation at Weipa. Focusing on the traditional Aboriginal landowners it has explored the local resource management strategies and options. It has shown how the local people are working within a dynamic framework of influences. This situation, and this unique study, is not only relevant to Weipa. By concentrating on the Aboriginal agendas and identifying the outcomes of their moves to rekindle their cultures and interact with the industrial resource management system, this thesis is also relevant to Aboriginal groups throughout Australia who presently seek to clarify and assert their rights and aspirations with regard to local resource management on their terms.

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Appendix 1

Interviews conducted during fieldwork: 25/1/94 - 1/3/94

Interviewee:	Date	Location
Kaynayth:	25 January	Training Centre
	26 January	Bowchat; Red Beach
	2 February	Under Joyce's mango tree
	10 February	Under Ernest's mango tree
	12 February	Bowchat
	14 February	Uningan Reserve; Cool Pool
	21 February	Mine Tour
Buwith:	29 January	Church
	31 January	Church
	1 February	Church; Jessica Point
	7 February	Church
	8 February	Church
	9 February	Willum Swamp; Callope's Well; Peppan
	16 February	Peppan; RAAF Base Scherger
	21 February	Mine Tour
Mathawanh, Chairperson, Peppan Land Trust:	31 January	Church
	1 February	Church
	9 February	Willum Swamp; Callope's Well; Peppan
	16 February	Peppan; RAAF Base Scherger
	21 February	Mine tour

Interviewee:	Date	Location
Irene Jankai:	29 January	Church
	1 February	Jessica Point
	8 February	Church
Alice Mark:	7 February	Church
	8 February	Church
	21 February	Mine Tour
Thancoupie, Chairperson, Quintigan Land Management Committee:	26 January	Red Beach
	28 January	Walkabout Takeaway
	24 February	Trinity Beach, Cairns
Florence Hector:	8 February	Church
Atakani:	21 February	Mine Tour
Thelma Coconut, Deputy Chairperson, Peppan Land Trust:	21 February	Mine Tour
Ernest Hall:	10 February	Under Ernest's mango tree
Bella Savo, Director of Cultural Programs, NAC:	26 January	Bowchat
	9 February	Willum Swamp
		Callope's Well
		Peppan
	14 February	Uningan Reserve
		Cool Pool
		Nanum Wungthin
		Training Centre
	21 February	Mine Tour

Interviewee:	Date	Location
Richard Barkley, <i>Community Ranger:</i>	17 February	Cultural Centre
	21 February	Mine Tour
Sandy Callope, <i>Chairperson, NAC:</i>	25 January	Youth Centre
	10 February	Nanum Wungthin Training Centre
Cheryl Pitt, <i>Youth Officer:</i>	25 January	Youth Centre
	6 February	Napranum
Jimmy Legend:	20 February	Church
Dick Namai, <i>Council Clerk:</i>	18 February	Napranum Council Chambers
Dr. Richard Howitt, <i>Senior Lecturer, Human Geography, Macquarie University:</i>	12 January	Macquarie University
	26 January	Bowchat
Dinny Smith, <i>Manager, Cross-Cultural Department, Comalco:</i>	27 January	Nanum Wungthin Training Centre
	7 February	Comalco, Weipa
Paul Warren, <i>Regeneration Department, Comalco:</i>	17 February	Regeneration, Weipa
	21 February	Mine Tour
Greg Thexton, <i>Liason Officer, RAAF Base Scherger:</i>	16 February	Peppan; RAAF Base Scherger

Interviewee:	Date	Location
Geoff Wharton , <i>Public Affairs & Administration Manager, Comalco:</i>	18 February	Nanum Wungthin Training Centre
	28 February	Comalco Brisbane
Noel Pearson , <i>CYLC:</i>	22 February	Cape York Land Council, Cairns
Richard Jenkins , <i>CYLC:</i>	22 February	Cape York Land Council, Cairns
Warren Smith , <i>Regional Manager, Division of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, DFSAIA:</i>	23 February	Cairns
Kath Shurcliff , <i>Director, Stage 1, CYPLUS:</i>	23 February	Cairns
Stewart Lloyd:	24 February	Trinity Beach, Cairns
Bill White , <i>ATSIC:</i>	25 February	Cairns
Jim Downey , <i>Conservation Co-ordinator, CYP, CAFNEC:</i>	25 February	Cairns
Les Malezer , <i>Head, Division of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, DFSAIA</i>	27 February	Cairns
Rick Andrew , <i>Queensland representative on the CYPLUS inter-governmental management committee:</i>	1 March	Office of the Co-ordinator General, Brisbane
Dennis Bourke , <i>Principal Advisor, Comalco:</i>	1 March	Comalco Place, Brisbane

Appendix 2

Songs by local Aboriginal people taped in Napranum Tape enclosed

- 1: Kaynayth's song about the destruction of her home, Anang (2/2/94)
- 2: Buwith sings her father's song about the fish hawk (8/2/94)
- 3: Alice Mark sings her brother's song about the stork talking to her grandparents (8/2/94)
- 4: Florence sings her father's song about a storm (8/2/94)
- 5: Buwith sings her mother's song about the wind (8/2/94)
- 6: Buwith sings the song of her uncle Ralph about the storm (8/2/94)
- 7: The children, Sandra Motton, Sandra Wilson and Benjamin Wilson, sing songs they have learnt at Bowchat, including the snake song (8/2/94)

Appendix 3

A sample of notes taken during the field period.

Monday 14-2-94

parking spot in Uningan { Uningan + Cool Pool
w/ Bella, Joyce + Mildred }
ATAKANI - means white water lily
(Auntie Eva York's name)

KAYATH^{NY} - "following after father's footsteps"

THANCOUPE - "wattle flowers"

BOWIT (ZOE) - "STORM BIRD" - Totem must, for

Geoff Wharton's idea - good man, then spoke w/ trad. owners

Uningan - Eddie John's land.

Crocs nest in wet, ^{in swamp} so dangerous

Crocs knock walkways over.

photo - arrowroot

- wild hibiscus - eat root

- dig it up when dry - cook it in

hot ashes - tastes like cassava

- plant - eat fruit (white fruit)

- root for holes in teeth & tooth ache

- plant - for baby's stomach ache

Tribes connected thru stories

People related to animals thru stories

Joyce - wants to learn to drive.

If pull out arrowroot when not ready you'll make it
rain.

when the grass has ^{red} tops it's time to harvest
arrowroot.

the arrowroot is yellow when ready to harvest

Joyce's Grandfather → Hang mail man.

Water - "Dead man looking for women"

- he had 6 wives

stole wives from all diff camps

Tribes all connected thru his wives!

From Mapoon, Hwy Pt etc.

Active mining on way to around Native Reserve.

On road to Unyagan - places to collect seeds in clay seeds.

J - "white people prosper everywhere"
mining everywhere

- ask council where can mine next trad owners -

then come ~~after~~ to trad owners

- "we never been consulted from the start"

B - they just rip it up.

Derang - fighting ground

Alaynith, Glynawith, Thanewith & Thanaquith -
diff tribes but form one big body - next to each other.

Area below Utingan - Joyce's land (secondary ownership)

"Eddie John made a song near here in his home:

That's my home

Where I been here walking around everywhere

That's my home"

Cool Pool - Bweering — Eddie John & Joyce's land
Primary owner secondary owner -
- Story of 2 porpoises started here - big lagoon -

where they were trapped.

* Get full story from Joyce

People come all around here for weed.

Regen right up here - but Joyce didn't even know
mining here.

Cherred here get good spear handles
Mine one side of rd not other

B - "at least they can ask trad owners"

- Never ask where to mine

- sometimes wreck story places, graves

J - "They ask them look proper v. bad" - the land.

B - Land they used to walk up to from Wpa 5th & camp
on - now "proper awful" (now mined)

B - makes you feel bad.

• feeling of despair w/ it all - the enormity of it.

- knows land intimately - where swamps are etc.
 - names
 - resources - ^{food} material
 - wilderness
 - stories

J "Oh my goodness, hey?" looking at railway etc.

J- "Let me go, no royalty, no compensation" - that's what I went to London for. + they were sympathetic but still nothing

J- "This is really bad"

- Thanks Bella for bringing her out - she's never seen this.

- asked them to look for a gas bag when knocking trees down - but no just burn them all.

- no echidnas come around anymore } since mining started.

- no possums either in trees

B - misses nice big "porcupine"

Trunding Creek - J - anyone can come here but we must keep the place tidy.

Swamp by Wochies - long necked turtle

- gabbies

• patchwork of mining & regen. surrounding everywhere.

J - "They've got every corner packed w/ rubbish" (driving past Humbly Grove)

- "For destroying, or what"

- with long points
- J = "We're making all white people rich, ¹ we black people have nothing, yebbos"
- Should put traditional trees back
 - "Children feeding on rubbish - sweets, people feeding on grog - everything is killing us. We need to stay out bush."
 - "I feel really hurt."
 - "You don't hear 'em cry; but we feel it" - the bushy the people.
- 2

Interview with Bella Savo - Director of Cultural Programs NWTC, Napranum.

New positⁿ - director - responsibilities → base w/ trad' l/owners, meetings w/ Quintigen; taking them out to trad areas; getting language & stories from them; looking at resources used; getting 'em to do cultural printings, etc

WAS - positⁿ w/ trad l/owners but not all l/owners
 → KAC - put traditional owners first ↓ & came last

- get more out of them ⇒ consulting w/ them & asking them ⇒ this their trad'l land.
- being trad owners they're very important - so must think of them

Appendix 4

Early history of the Weipa locality

The early history of the Weipa area consists of a series of layers which occurred prior to the experience of those people living today. My interpretation of the different readings of the 'beginning' and of first European contact are given here. They are important as what occurred prior to the mission days, and the different worldviews illustrated by the readings, give context to the thesis and form the basis for the current Aboriginal resource use, management and aspirations.

The 'beginning'

Different 'ways of seeing' are evident from the chronological 'beginning'. Mainstream archaeologists state that the Aboriginal people were immigrants to Australia, probably from Melanesia, during an ice age between 40,000 and 120,000 years ago (Hiscock & Kershaw, 1992:49-50). This is a view expounded by Comalco, as stated "The Aboriginal people have inhabited the Australian continent for a period estimated to be at least 40,000 years" (Comalco, 1993a:15).

At Weipa archaeological evidence for habitation is spectacularly illustrated by 500 shell mounds found along the banks of the Embley, Hey, Pine and Mission Rivers ranging in age from 400 to 2000 years before present (Comalco, 1993a:15)(map 6). They range in height from 1 metre to 13 metres, with the largest containing as much as 200,000 tonnes of shell, predominantly cockle shell (*Anadara granosa* or Kwambak) (Flood, 1983:221; Wharton, 1988:9).¹

Creation stories link story places throughout the Weipa region and are integral to the local Aboriginal culture. They illustrate that the ancestors of the local Aboriginal groups did not migrate to Australia, but were created by ancestral beings on their traditional land. As Bennett states:

The world ... was not created ex nihilo, but rather ancestral beings - entities much like humans today, but with superhuman powers such as the creativity capacity to transform and give definition to the world, and the ability to change their own shape - came to an already existing world by arising out of the ground and gave definition to the face of the earth (1983:20).

Bennett goes on to describe how this creation 'time' is concurrently a "fixed period" which sets down the morals and values for Aboriginal society and a "continuous present" which constantly reaffirms and redefines these morals and values (1983:20). Both these aspects of 'the Dreamtime' were apparent in the lives of the Aboriginal people I spent time with at Napranum and its outstations. The creation stories are still reference points for their moral system and this system is constantly re-evaluated with the continuous change and new experiences of the local family groups.

At Weipa, the older generation's links with the creation time and their ancestors comes through country and through their parents. The link through their parents is, inevitably, affected by the

¹ There is much debate about the origins of these mounds. Uniformity of shell content, general character and composition has led most archaeologists to the belief that the mounds are of human origin (Wright, 1971:134; Bailey, 1991:22). However, debate has been rekindled by the hypothesis put forward by Stone who contends that "mounds previously attributed to human agencies should be more properly attributed to generations of nesting scrub-fowl" (Stone, 1989:59, 1991; Bailey, 1991; Cribb, 1991).

way the local Aboriginal families experienced European contact and settlement. This experience, and the Aboriginal response to it, has many implications for the resource use, management and aspirations of the local Aboriginal landowners today.

European contact

The first contact the people of Western Cape York Peninsula had with Europeans, probably came with the voyage of the Dutch ship Duyfken captained by Willem Jansz in 1606. Accounts of this first sighting of Australia by a European differ. Cape Keerweer was named by Jansz and means 'Turn-around' (map 9). Western historical accounts find that this is where the Duyfken turned around to retrace its journey northwards (Mulvaney, 1989:9). Oral history of the Aboriginal people of the Cape Keerweer area tells of a city the people from the Dutch boat started to build. Everything was going well until the Europeans started taking Aboriginal women. Conflict and killing ensued until "eventually the Dutch broke and ran. Naming the headland nearby ... 'Turn-around', they fled north" (Karntin & Sutton, 1986:85). A few other European explorers ventured down the West coast, many following in Jansz's footsteps by killing and kidnapping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Mulvaney, 1989:8-14).

Contact with other peoples also occurred. Fitzgerald notes foreign contacts and influences from Chinese sandalwood traders in the seventh century. He also suggests possible visits from Moorish merchants, and trade with and visits from Maccassan fisherman, as occurred in Arnhem Land. Fitzgerald goes on to point out that these "'alien inputs' were absorbed and incorporated into Aboriginal culture without altering it in any fundamental way" (1982:29-31).

The first European exploitation of the natural resources of the region had more severe impacts. The establishment of the pastoral, pearling, fishing and beche-de-mer industries in the 1880s impacted directly on Aboriginal family life. The European presence in and around Cape York Peninsula altered population dynamics. A rapid population decline from 1870-1910 is attributed to direct competition for land and resources (the Aboriginal land owners viewing the situation as an invasion to be resisted by force, whilst the settler, regarding the Aborigines as "uncivilised heathens", saw an unoccupied and available land²). Other factors include epidemics, introduced diseases, lower standards of health, hygiene and nutrition, and sex ratio imbalances (Connell Wagner, 1989:14-15).

Pastoralism and mining also skewed family structures by removing people from their family groups in order to work. As in Central Australia, many of the pastoral stations on Cape York Peninsula would have failed if not for the Aboriginal labour force:

Soon it will be impossible to get a native stockman to work on the Peninsula stations.

An intelligent aborigine [sic] will not be satisfied with low wages and long hours on the cattle stations when he can go to Weipa ... (North Australian Monthly, 1958:3).

Aboriginal people were also recruited for lugger crews and on-shore work for the pearling and beche-de-mer industries (Connell Wagner, 1989:11-14). Eddie John (who was head of the Alngit people of the Weipa Peninsula), described how "when I was young, I worked as a stockman, then I worked on the pearl luggers for a time" (Taylor, 1988:255). Not only was much of this work unpaid, but;

for decades a marked feature of the beche-de-mer and pearling trade ... was the enslavement of groups of natives for both forced labour and sexual services. This recruitment ... was

² Aboriginal people in the Weipa region still talk about the killings and massacres carried out by cattlemen such as Lachlan Kennedy and Frank Jardine, the first white settlers in the area (Kaynayth, 2/2/94; Roberts et al, 1975a:6)

execrated by Protector Roth in 1898 as 'one long record of brutal cruelty, bestiality [sic] and debauchery' (Evans et al, 1993:105).

Responding to the kidnappings and work conditions of the beche-de-mer and pearling industries, the Queensland government encouraged the Presbyterian church to establish a chain of missions along the west coast of Cape York Peninsula (Comalco 1993b:2). This, together with the *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897* provided for the establishment of reserves and missions and led to the establishment of Presbyterian missions at Mapoon in 1891, Aurukun in 1904 (map 1) and Weipa (20 Mile) in 1898 (Evans et al, 1975:118)(map 5). The missionaries displayed little respect for or understanding of the diversity or richness of the local Aboriginal culture. Their aim was that the Aborigines should be "gradually, over two or three generations, assimilated into white society" (Isaacs, 1982:14). This included conversion not only to the Presbyterian version of Christianity but also its Protestant worldview, ethics, morals and values. Reverend Hey wrote in 1907 "The healthy competition so essential for the progress of any nation is conspicuous by its absence". Kay Evans comments in her honours thesis:

the missionaries conceived of creating ... a perfect community based on protestant principles of duty, godliness and moral salvation through work in industry, obedience to truth, chastity, monogamy and sobriety" (cited in Roberts et al, 1975b:24).

Appendix 5

Kaynayth's speech to RTZ in London, 1981.

Joyce Hall represents the Aboriginal people of Weipa, whose land was stolen by the Comalco company (now majority owned by RTZ's Australian subsidiary) to provide the world's single biggest source of bauxite. The following testimony was delivered at the 1981 International Tribunal on RTZ, held in London before representative shareholders in the parent company.

“What will I get from the dust?”

We're still having problems with Comalco . . . Probably you hear that they are co-operating with us: they are not! All the royalties are given to the State government, they make all the decisions. We are still *no-one*. They still have a lot of problems in Weipa . . . the white man came and destroyed our land, no agreements were made — only between the council, the Comalco bosses and the Manager.

This is a special day for me in Queensland today. It is Mother's Day. I feel I should have been with my mother, but I must go and fight for my people. Mother's Day is important, just as the earth our mother is important. The land was given to us, birds, creatures in the bush — but these things are all forgotten. Now we have mines, airplanes, trucks, the alcohol. The whiteman has brought shame and disgrace to us. He came to our land because he found riches in it — but nothing has been given back to us.

. . . Do you know what happened when I went back to Weipa [in 1978]? The Comalco bosses got TV blokes and reporters to come to Weipa and they invited me to an expensive lunch. The day after the next day, two people from Comalco came around in a truck and picked different people to make a film to cover my story. This is the dirtiest trick they ever did — making me out to be a liar. But I'm not speaking to you people because I come from far away. I'm speaking from my heart, and it is the truth.

. . . They have ripped our whole area, we can't shoot around it. They have planted false trees to make the bush come back — the kind we don't like . . . I think how much they have done to us . . . there is a story. It is of a man, Eddie John, who served Comalco all those years until last year when he finished off. He is the Chief of Weipa. No land was given back to him, no compensation, no house where he can stay. They just looked at him and said: that's it.

. . . One time I sat in our Church, I looked around. It was sunset after the rain. I saw the beautiful sea and the creeks rippling, and thought how wonderful God has created the earth. And I looked out over my land, ripped up by human hands and machines. I thought — what will I get out of that dust? What will I get out of that bauxite? *Nothing*.

Thank you for listening to me.

Joyce Hall

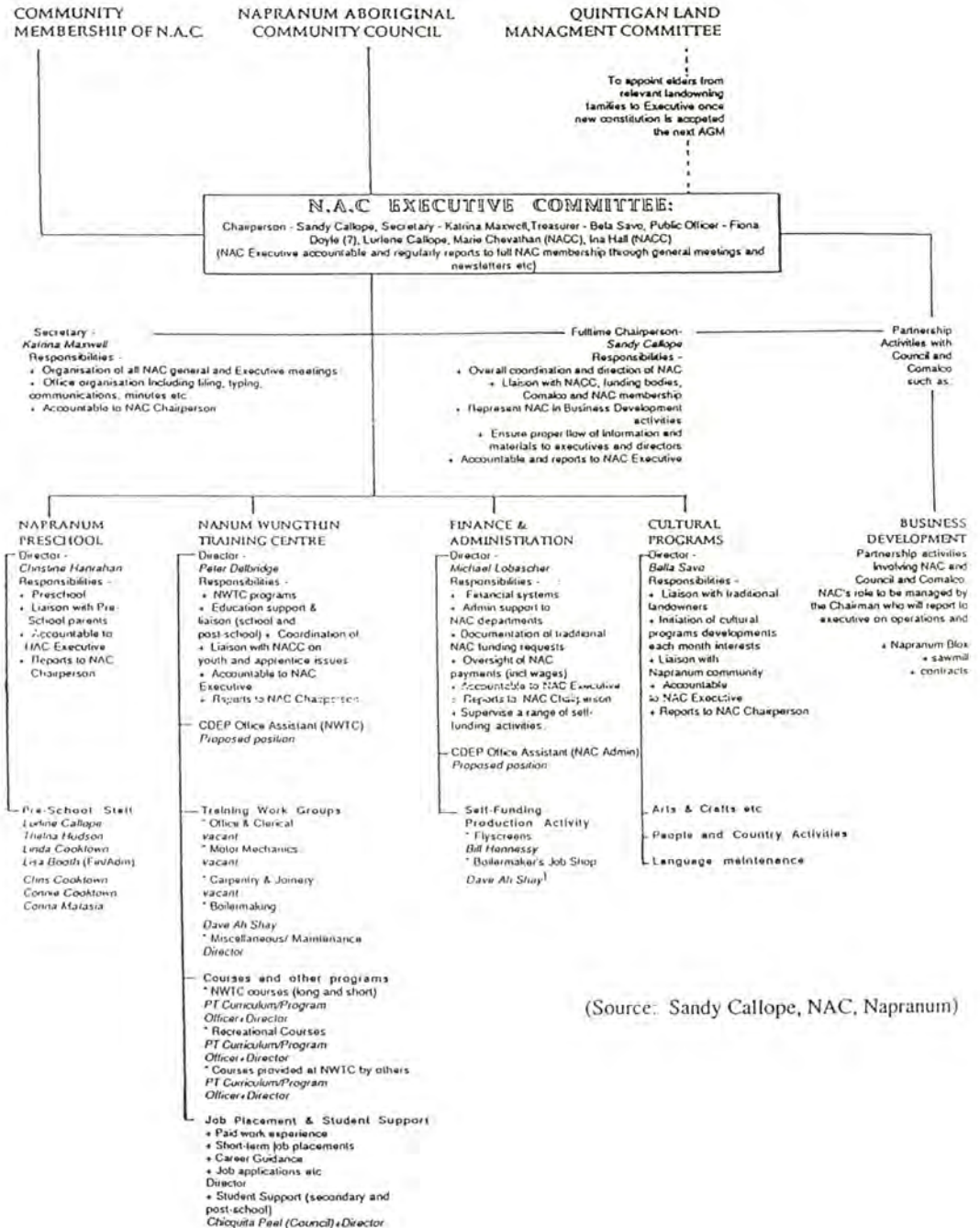
Source: RTZ Benefits the Community, Partizans, London, 1981.

(Source: Moody, 1988a:180)

Appendix 6

Proposed structure and responsibilities of the Napranum Aboriginal Corporation.

NAPRANUM ABORIGINAL CORPORATION, 1994



Appendix 7

7a: Comalco's 'way of seeing' Weipa resources.

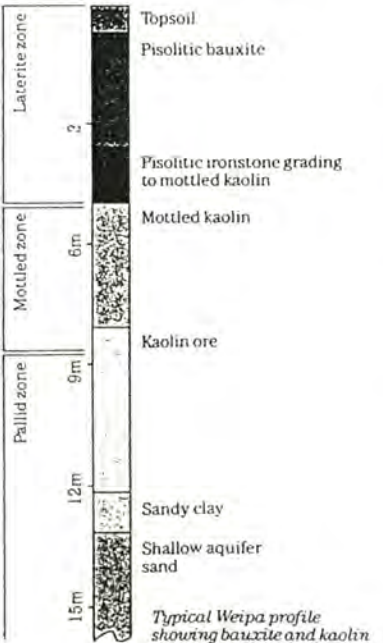
The weathering of sands derived from the rocks of the Great Dividing Range caused the formation of bauxite at Weipa. This happened millions of years ago during the early Tertiary and Pleistocene periods.

During weathering, the alumina and iron oxide contents of the sands are increased by the removal of other more soluble elements, particularly silica. Compositions of bauxites vary widely throughout the world. A material is commonly referred to as bauxite if it can be economically converted to alumina (aluminium oxide), taking into account the size of the deposit and the ease of mining the ore.

Weipa bauxite consists of the alumina bearing minerals of gibbsite and boehmite intermixed with kaolin and iron oxides. Silica as quartz is also present along with small quantities of heavy minerals such as zircon, rutile and ilmenite. Seams of commercial-grade ore range in thickness from 1 metre to 9 metres. A layer of ironstone (an enriched silica and iron zone) underlies the bauxite.

The bauxite ore is in the form of small, reddish pebbles or pisolites, varying in diameter from less than 1 millimetre to 25 millimetres. These small pebbles are seated in a loose soil-like matrix of the same elements as the pebbles, but lower in alumina.

The grade of the mined ore covers a wide range, both in chemistry and mineralogy, reflecting differences in the parent rock and in the weathering process because of differences in topography, permeability and other factors.



The Company's mining lease ML 7024 covers 2,560 square kilometres. In December 1992, bauxite reserves within this lease quoted in the 1992 Comalco Annual Report were:
Total reserves: 248 million tonnes
Total resources: 3,700 million tonnes
About four tonnes of Weipa bauxite are required to make two tonnes of alumina which, in turn, yield one tonne of aluminium.

The kaolin deposit on the Weipa Peninsula is of secondary origin and occurs in discontinuous irregular layers which overlie the shallow quartz sand aquifer. The kaolin ore itself is overlain by the bauxite / laterite profile.

The kaolin occurs in the pallid zone of the laterite profile. A detailed study of the mineralogy of the crude kaolin indicates that the major minerals in the crude kaolin ore are as follows:

kaolinite	80-90%
quartz sand	5 - 15%
hematite	0.1 - 0.3%
anatase	1 - 2%
muscovite	1 - 3%

The paper coating grade product kaolin is composed of kaolinite with a small amount of anatase.

The kaolinite mostly consists of pseudo-hexagonal crystals.

The suitability of Weipa kaolin ore for the production of high quality paper coating clay has been confirmed by its ready acceptance in the demanding high quality market place in Japan.

The 1992 Comalco Annual Report quotes kaolin ore reserves:
Total reserves: 9.4 million tonnes.
Total resource: 47 million tonnes.

Further drilling continues in areas adjacent to the known kaolin ore reserves and indicates that this resource would be enough to sustain a 500,000 tonnes per year of product plant for 50 years.

In addition kaolin ore has been intersected in reconnaissance drill holes in several areas up to 20km from the initial mining area thus indicating its widespread occurrence.

(Source: Comalco, 1993a:6)

7b: Comalco bauxite and kaolin mining procedures.

Most of the bauxite mined at Weipa is shipped to Gladstone in Central Queensland, where it is refined into alumina. The remainder is exported to Europe and Japan. Comalco, formed initially to develop the Weipa deposit, also participates in alumina refineries, operates aluminium smelters and makes semi-fabricated and finished aluminium products in Australia and elsewhere.

The recognition in 1955 of a large metal-grade bauxite deposit at Weipa on Queensland's Cape York Peninsula was the catalyst for development of an aluminium industry within Australia - an industry which now has international significance. Bringing this deposit into production has led to Weipa becoming one of the leading bauxite mining and shipping centres in the world.

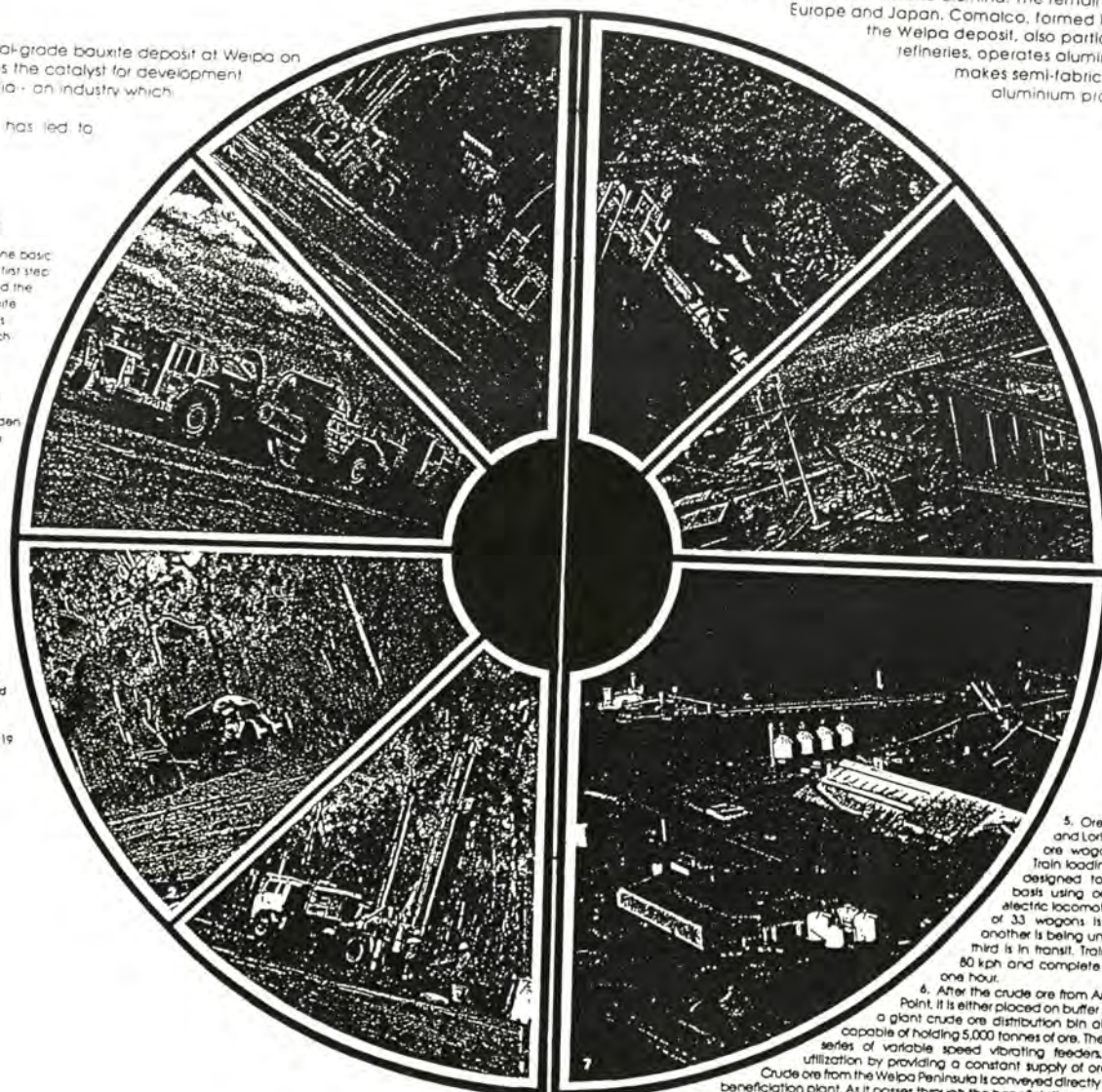
At Weipa, the bauxite is mined in the following way:

1. The bauxite mining process at Weipa hinges on one basic criterion - good grade control. Sample drilling is the first step in the mining process. Ore samples are analysed and the results used to prepare a mining plan. Areas of bauxite are mined so that, when blended, the bauxite meets customer requirements. The mine plan specifies which areas are to be mined and when.

2. Bulldozers clear the surface of the selected areas, and the vegetation is piled up and burnt.

3. Scrapers remove the top soil or overburden which varies in depth from half a metre to one metre. Every effort is made to take this soil immediately to areas awaiting regeneration. This ensures that minimal damage occurs to the seeds, plants, nutrients and micro-organisms contained in the soil. Bulldozers rip the top of the bauxite, seam to break up patches of cemented ore.

4. Bauxite is mined by huge rubber-tired front-end loaders with bucket capacities of 11 cubic metres. Bottom-dump trailers of 150 tonne capacity are used to haul bauxite from the mine pits to elevated dump stations located at Lorim Point (for Weipa Peninsula ore) and at Andoom (for ore from Andoom mine 19 kilometres north of Lorim Point).



5. Ore transport between Andoom and Lorim Point is provided by railway. Ore wagons of 100 tonne capacity. Train loading and dumping stations are designed to operate on a continuous basis using one 3,000 horsepower diesel electric locomotive. Under this system, a rake of 33 wagons is loaded at Andoom while another is being unloaded at Lorim Point and a third is in transit. Trains move at speeds of up to 80 kph and complete the return journey in about one hour.

6. After the crude ore from Andoom is unloaded at Lorim Point, it is either placed on buffer stockpiles, or fed directly into a giant crude ore distribution bin about 22 metres in diameter, capable of holding 5,000 tonnes of ore. The ore is discharged through a series of variable speed vibrating feeders. The bin maximises plant utilization by providing a constant supply of ore to the beneficiation plant. Crude ore from the Weipa Peninsula is conveyed directly from the dump station to the beneficiation plant. As it passes through the beneficiation process, the bauxite is sized and washed over triple and single deck screens. Bauxite is washed to remove fine particles of clay which cling to the pebbles of bauxite. These particles are piped to a tailings dam for storage. Not only does the beneficiation process improve the quality of the ore, but it also assists material handling, enabling direct gravity methods of reclaim from product stockpiles.

7. Beneficiated bauxite is recovered from the product stockpiles by means of gravity chutes feeding underground conveyors that are linked to one of two mobile shiploaders. The maximum loading rate is 6,000 tonnes per hour. Bauxite samples are taken while the ore is being stockpiled to ensure the correct grade is being supplied.

Kaolin mining takes place late in the year when the water table is low. The ore is stockpiled to provide feed to the plant for the following year's operation. In the areas to be mined for kaolin, the bauxite has already been mined. The balance of the overburden, consisting of mottled zone kaolin, is removed with mobile scrapers.

A dewatering trench is then cut into the orebody, with scrapers and hydraulic excavators. Scrapers will mine the crude ore from the pit after the kaolin horizons have been defined by sampling and testing.

The kaolin also provides excellent quality water for the kaolin process operations. The processing is in two parts – a classification plant, adjacent to the mining operations and a processing plant at Lorim Point close to the export wharf facilities. At the classification plant, crude kaolin ore is dispersed into a slurry, screened to remove impurities and then classified in hydrocyclones.

The product, a slurry containing particles smaller than 45 microns is pumped 5 kilometres to the processing plant.

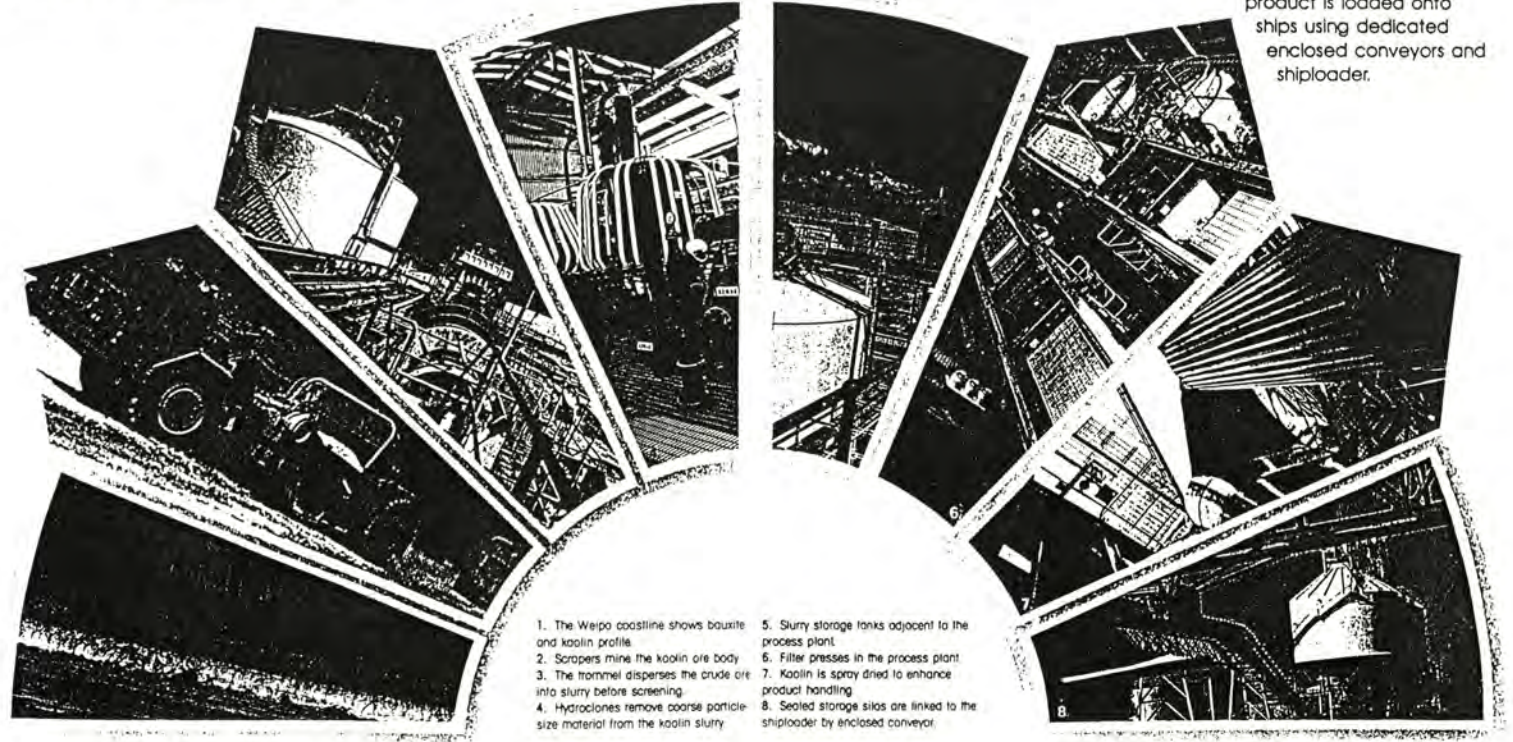
The slurry is first passed through a centrifuge to complete the kaolin size classification to eventually result in a plant product particle size distribution typically 92% less than 2 microns (1 micron is 10^{-6} m).

Next, a high gradient magnetic separator removes the weakly-magnetic minerals to improve the colour and brightness characteristics of the kaolin. The slurry is then chemically bleached to the specified brightness.

A filtration process follows to make a filter cake containing 67% solids. This cake is re-dispersed by powerful mixers and then spray dried to produce coarse kaolin beads that have ideal handling characteristics.

The spray dried kaolin is transported by totally enclosed conveyors to sealed kaolin storage silos. The product is loaded onto ships using dedicated enclosed conveyors and shiploader.

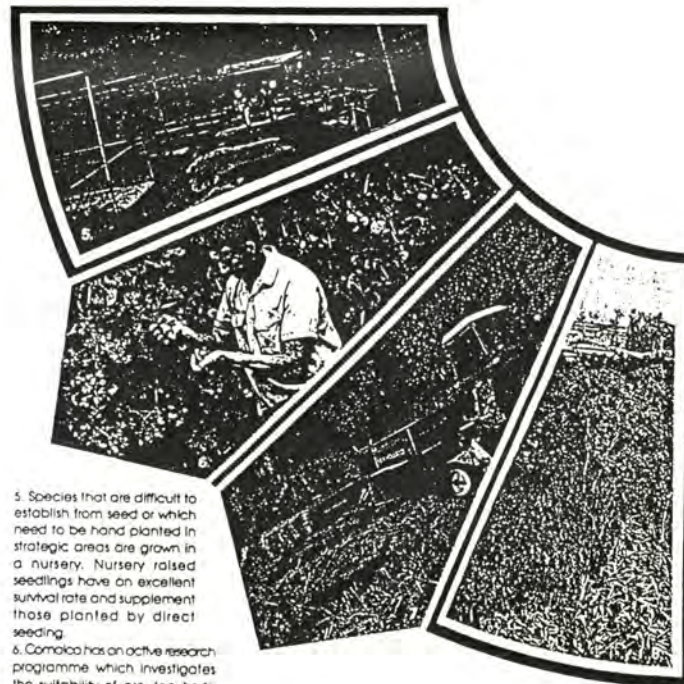
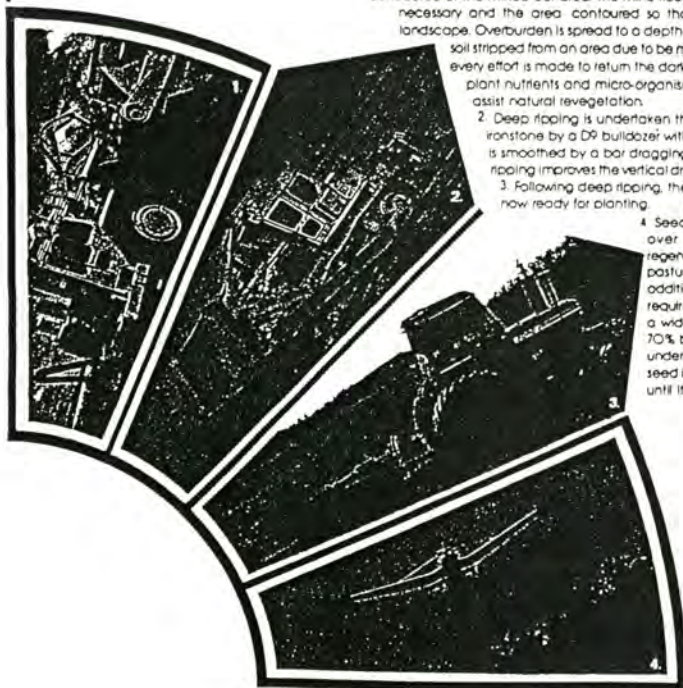
(Source: Comalco, 1993a:7-10)



1. The Weipa coastline shows bauxite and kaolin profile.
2. Scrapers mine the kaolin ore body.
3. The trommel disperses the crude ore into slurry before screening.
4. Hydroclones remove coarse particle-size material from the kaolin slurry.
5. Slurry storage tanks adjacent to the process plant.
6. Filter presses in the process plant.
7. Kaolin is spray dried to enhance product handling.
8. Sealed storage silos are linked to the shiploader by enclosed conveyor.

Environmental management of the mining operations includes mine regeneration as well as monitoring air and water quality, environmental auditing and tailings disposal management. An Environmental Management Overview Strategy (EMOS) was recently approved by the Queensland Department of Minerals and Energy. The EMOS sets criteria which describe how the company will rehabilitate the mine site. Comalco's lease agreement with the Queensland Government requires that land regeneration be carried out progressively with mining and that the topsoil and natural drainage systems be conserved.

1. Ground preparation is the first step in the regeneration process. To start, a survey is conducted of the mined-out area. The mine floor is then graded for drainage when necessary and the area contoured so that it merges with the surrounding landscape. Overburden is spread to a depth of 0.3 metres. The bulk of this is fresh soil stripped from an area due to be mined. When spreading overburden, every effort is made to return the darker topsoil to the surface. The seeds, plant nutrients and micro-organisms contained in this topsoil greatly assist natural revegetation.
2. Deep ripping is undertaken through the topsoil and into the ironstone by a D9 bulldozer with a 2 metre ripping tine. The furrow is smoothed by a bar dragging behind the tine on chains. Deep ripping improves the vertical drainage and assists root penetration.
3. Following deep ripping, the surface is cultivated. The area is now ready for planting.
4. Seed and fertilizer are mixed and spread over the majority of areas to be regenerated with native species or tropical pastures. An aircraft is also used to spread additional maintenance fertilizer when required. The seed is collected locally from a wide range of native trees and shrubs, 70% being collected by Aboriginal people under commercial contract. Collected seed is cleaned and stored in a cool room until it is required.



5. Species that are difficult to establish from seed or which need to be hand planted in strategic areas are grown in a nursery. Nursery raised seedlings have an excellent survival rate and supplement those planted by direct seeding.
6. Comalco has an active research programme which investigates the suitability of growing horticultural crops and commercial timber species.
7. Tropical pastures are being established in suitable areas. Grazing trials have shown that improved pastures can increase land productivity for beef production on Cape York Peninsula. Areas of these pastures are used for producing hay for dry season supplement by the Sudley Pastoral Company, a beef venture jointly owned by Comalco and the original Aboriginal families of Napranum.
8. The objective of the regeneration programme is to establish self-sustaining maintenance-free vegetation comprising up to 80% of native plants, which will in turn support local native fauna.

7c: Comalco's regeneration processes.

Appendix 8

8a: The Story of the Boys who Turned into Turtles

Buwith, 31/1/94

Two boys went out hunting with their Aunty and Uncle, Mum and Dad, to dig yams. They told the boys to stay home because its dangerous because of snakes etc. They told them to stay at the beach and spear fish. The boys got nothing so they were hungry. The youngest said to the oldest, "I'm hungry". The oldest said "you know what Mum and Dad said, we must stay here and not take any of the one lot of yams already collected and in the fire. We must stay hungry until they come back". The little boy said "I can't help my tummy, I must look in the bush for food". So he went looking in the bush and found arrowroot with red berries (the one used to keep cyclones away). He called and showed the oldest boy who said "Don't eat it, it might be poisonous". The little boy said "I'm hungry, I must eat it". So the oldest said "Then I must eat it too so we both have the same". So both boys ate the arrowroot, it had a bitter taste.

Aunty and Uncle came back and there were no boys. So they followed the tracks which led them to the boys. They told them not to eat the arrowroot but it was too late. The boys were already turning into turtles; their hands into flippers, their backs into shells and so on. Tears were running down their eyes, they couldn't talk. They decided to go down to the river, where they turned back and gave the 'hwoa' sound of a turtle, then dived down into the water, popped up in the middle of the river and made the sound again, then dived down and went away.

Aunty got stuck into the Mother for stopping the boys from eating the cooked yam that was under the fire. Also there was some sugar bag, bush honey, and she wouldn't let them eat that either.

Today the tough mothers are like the mother then.

8b: The Dog Story

Mathawanh, 31/2/94

People were camping, it was a big camp and they all decided to go hunting wallaby by burning the grass. Some people stand by the mangroves with spears, others go and burn the grass. The kangaroos run away from the fire towards the mangroves were they get speared. They got enough so they went to the camp and roasted the kangaroos over the fire. When cooked everyone was eating BUT no meat was given to the dogs.

Dogs just like people in early days, they could talk to each other. So they went home with their tails between their legs because they were sad because their bosses gave them no meat. They had helped them for nothing.

When the people settled down at night they heard hooves like horses. But it was the dogs running towards the camp. Dad says the dogs were with fires in their feet and they put the camp to fire. Burned it down.

That's the punishment for not giving the dogs meat after they went hunting with them.

8c: The Stork Story

Alice Mark, 8/2/94

Father and Mother went out hunting with their baby. They left their eldest boy behind with stork. (They were real humans and then they turned into a bird, the Crow).

Stork said to his cousin the Crow (Akah) "Let's go and get some white fruits (ooyam)". So they got a dilly bag (made from bush vine). Stork said to Crow "Keep that bag ready for me while I knock the fruit down from the tree".

Crow looked up at Stork and saw he had a red bottom. So Crow teased the Stork about the red bottom. Stork said "What did you say?" Crow said "No, nothing. I was telling you about the bush apple (ooyam)".

So the Stork kept knocking the fruit down and knocking the Crow on the head. So the naughty Crow kept being rude. And so the Stork kept stoning him.

They then decided to go and cross the river. The punishment for the Crow for being rude and laughing at the Stork was that he had to carry the dilly bag with the fruits. So he crossed the river, but he slipped in the mud when climbing up the bank and the fruit went everywhere.

So the Stork killed the Crow, he choked him. The Stork then made a bon fire. He cut the Crow in pieces and lay it in the fire and covered it. Then he left him and went to get sugar bag (wild honey - ityah) and hairy yam (poinap) for lunch.

Then he went to build a nest in three trees very close together. He built a big nest - cross ways - so his Auntie and Uncle (the Crows) couldn't get him. He then took the cooked meat from the crow to his nest. Then he cut a didgeridoo and he rested and ate his cousin while blowing the didgeridoo on top.

Stork then went with the Father, Mother and little boy to his camp to get his belongings. On the way they came back to the place where they picked the white fruit - the fruit was floating everywhere by the river side, which is where it grows today.

When getting the belongings the Father and Mother noticed something was wrong. They called out to the Crow "where are you?". The Stork slipped away to his nest.

Mr. and Mrs. Crow then cut a long stick and poked it through the Stork's nest until they found where he was sleeping. They poked him and knocked him down, pushed him from the nest. They hit him until they thought he was dead. But he was only half dead, not breathing. The Stork's the doctor, so he healed himself and lives forever more until today, when every time the sun goes down you see him there looking for fish. And that's the story of the Stork and Crow.

8d: The Flying Fox Story

Mathawanh, 31/12/94

Young, teenage boys (13-17 years old), are not allowed to eat flying fox.

One day they all went out to hunt flying fox. They hit them from the mangrove trees with a piece of wood, then made a big ground oven to cook it in. Two young boys were minding the oven. When the meat was cooked they took it out and when it cooled down they took it into the bush and ate it.

At nightfall they all sat around the fire place and saw, for the only time ever, the flying foxes come in a big, long line. They grabbed the two boys and took them up. Today they're in the sky.

That's for disobedient boys, they ate the flying fox before they were grown men.

Appendix 9

Ruchook Aboriginal Cultural Festival a forum in which local cultures can be acknowledged and respected.

Ruchook Festival



Centre opening revives Napranum pride and culture

The weekend's Ruchook Aboriginal Cultural Festival could be a turning point for Napranum people with local Aboriginals taking a renewed interest in their culture and traditions - particularly in art, craft, dance and theatre.

Festival chairperson, Thancoupie said the festival raised a refreshed interest and pride in Napranum Aboriginals, particularly the children.

"It's like the birth of a new change for Napranum," Thancoupie said.

"It's the start for the change of a lot of things in Napranum - learning, understanding, respecting and acknowledging their culture for Aboriginals, Islanders and Europeans - the whole of Weipa.

"It was good to see children starting to dance properly and join in.

"It was good to see the children watching and with pride."

Crowd numbers were less than expected.

However, Thancoupie said the overall success of the event was testament that the Ruchook Festival had the potential to become a national and international event.

"I'm optimistic that in the future not only Cape York, the whole of Queensland and Australia and international people will come," she said.

More time to organise the festival would result in a better event.

Thancoupie said organising the four-day festival was a massive task which was achieved in just six weeks.

"We had our ups and downs but I still have a good

feeling about it.

"Next year there'll be another one."

Napranum Community plans to stage the Ruchook Festival again in 1993 and 1994. Depending on the festival's success it may become an annual or biannual event.



Thancoupie

Thancoupie said rains in other areas of Cape York stopped more visitors and dance teams arriving at the festival.

"We heard (the dance team from) Lockhart got bogged," Thancoupie said.

"Hope Vale was definitely coming and didn't make it - I think it was the rains.

"Some people from Laura came, there was a dancing team from New Mapoon and Napranum Islanders entertained us too."

The Northern Territory's internationally famous contemporary Aboriginal band Yothu Yindi wanted to play at Napranum for the festival but was unable to break its national touring schedule.

"We will definitely book them for next year," Thancoupie said.

"We heard they'd like to, but they were sorry they couldn't make it this time."

The Aurukun adult and children dance teams won the dance trophies for the weekend.

Thancoupie said she was happy that Aurukun had supported the festival but her young team of dancers were determined to win the trophy next year.

The festival started with a street parade on Thursday which was followed by the official opening of the Ruchook Culture Centre.

Aboriginal arts, crafts and dancing displays were held on Friday and Saturday and the festival was closed with an ecumenical service on Sunday morning.

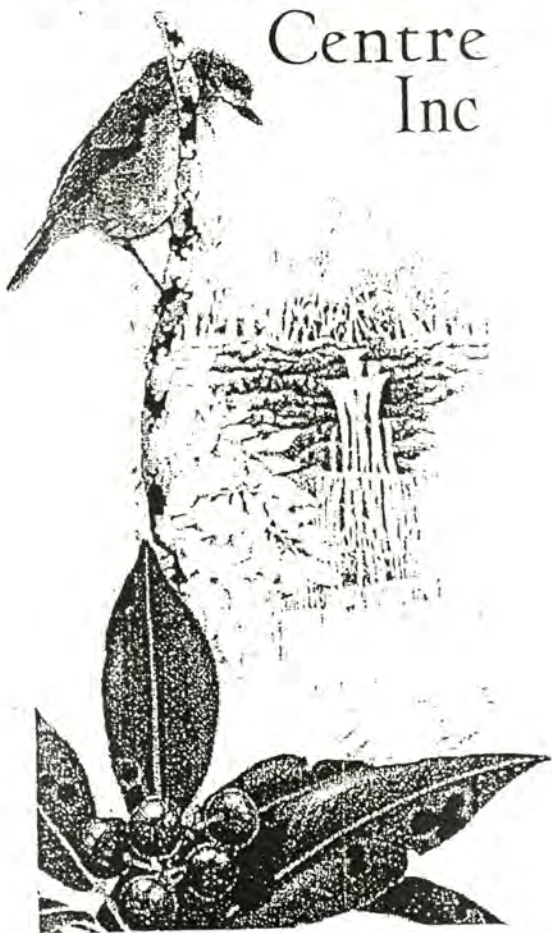
See two full pages of Ruchook Festival photos and stories on pages six and seven.

(Source: *Bauxite Bulletin*, September 25, 1992:5)

Appendix 10

Background to Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC) and its media release on Comalco's kaolin dumping.

Cairns & Far North Environment Centre Inc



Thinking globally
Acting locally

The Cairns and Far North Environment Centre Inc was formed in 1981 out of the desire by many concerned individuals and groups to work for environmental protection of Far North Queensland's natural treasures, including the wet tropical rainforests. On this issue CAFNEC played a crucial role in World Heritage Listing in 1988.

The Centre is a hub for a network of individuals and local groups from Cardwell in the south, to the northern limits of the Torres Straits and west to the Gulf of Carpentaria. We provide an environmental library, office space and facilities, two retail outlets, *The Green Possum* and *The Green House*, and are involved in a variety of issues working towards a more ecologically sustainable future here in the Far North.

With two World Heritage areas side by side – the Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park – it is no wonder that there is a rapidly increasing tourist trade looking to enjoy the natural wonders of our unique area. Along with this influx comes the management problems associated with exponential growth. The Centre has been involved in a number of consultative committees looking at specific planning issues for now and into the future.

Current Campaigns

- Appropriate energy use and production
- Cape York Peninsula
- World Heritage management
- Regional planning
- Trinity Inlet Management Plan
- Cairns/Mulgrave urban issues
- Green jobs
- Conservation and indigenous people
- Land clearing

Cairns And Far North Environment Centre Inc.

24 February 1994

*** Media release *** Media release *** Media release *** Media release

Comalco criticised on environment

Conservationists calling for wharf loading stoppage

Mining giant, Comalco, has come under criticism from conservationists about practices presently being carried at its wharf loading operation at Welpe.

Comalco mines kaolin, a clay used in the manufacture of high grade paper at its Welpe operation as well as bauxite. The kaolin is bulk loaded onto barges at the Welpe wharf.

Part of the loading operation includes dumping kaolin into the Embely River estuary, estimated at an average of five tonnes per dumping.

Comalco has admitted that dumping is presently being carried out.

"Advice to us is that this dumping is carried out approximately 150 to 200 times per year," said Mr Jim Downey, spokesperson for the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre.

"We have exercised considerable patience with Comalco over this issue and tried to find a satisfactory solution but to no avail. The Company claims it is having tests done and that these would be available last Christmas. Well, we have to ask three months later where are the test results and what do they show? Why haven't they been released?" said Mr Jim Downey.

"This practice should cease until environmental studies are completed that look at the effects this is having on the Embely estuary. Comalco gets away with it because it is Comalco," said Mr Downey.

P.O. Box 323, North Cairns, Qld, 4870; Phone: (070) 321 746
Fax: (070) 533 779 Email: pegasus:cafnec
OFFICE: COMINOS HOUSE, 27-29 GREENSLOES ST, NORTH CAIRNS

(Source: Jim Downey, CAFNEC, Cairns)

The Embely River is a popular recreational fishing area and contains a number of commercial fishing licences. It is a significant mangrove system. Kaolin is like talcum powder and dumping into this estuary could be having a detrimental effect on crustaceans and fish in the area. Increases in sedimentation and turbidity can have long term effects. We do not know what effects this may be having and neither does Comalco and yet they are still prepared to do it. It is reckless," said Mr Downey.

"The practice must cease until we know more about the effects it is having. We have taken it on ourselves to have the product tested and analysed to see what is in it. We are hoping those test results will be available in two weeks," said Mr Downey.

"This issue highlights the difference between the rhetoric on environmental protection from mining companies and what they are actually prepared to put in place. We are getting tired of this sort of thing. It seems mining companies have excellent public relations departments that are not matched by their actual performance in the field," said Mr Downey.

Contact: Jim Downey (070) 321 746 work.



Photograph of Comalco dumping kaolin into Embely River taken last week.

Appendix 11

Report about contaminated shellfish in the Weipa area.

Shellfish bacteria level prompts action

The discovery of contaminated prawns and oysters near two Weipa sewerage outfalls has prompted further testing and the planned erection of signs warning the public of a possible health risk.

The shellfish were tested as part of a preliminary survey of environmental conditions in the Mission and Embley Rivers.

A report, released this week, from consultants contracted by Comalco to undertake the environmental survey says that samples of oysters

and prawns taken near the effluent discharges at Lorim and Awonga Points had levels of intestinal bacteria which exceed National Health and Medical Research Council standards for edible shellfish.

Following discussions with public health officials, Town Administrator Ron Doherty has advised people to avoid collecting shellfish at these locations.

Shellfish which is eaten raw should not be taken from near the sewage outfalls. The health risk

posed by bacteria is much less for cooked fish and shellfish as most bacteria is killed when fish is thoroughly cleaned and cooked.

A statement issued by the Town Administrator says that the results in the report are based on a small number of samples and therefore offer only a preliminary assessment of the condition of shellfish in the outfall area. However Township Officers recommend that residents should "play safe" until the results of further testing are available early next year.

(Source: *Bauxite Bulletin*, December 24, 1992:1)

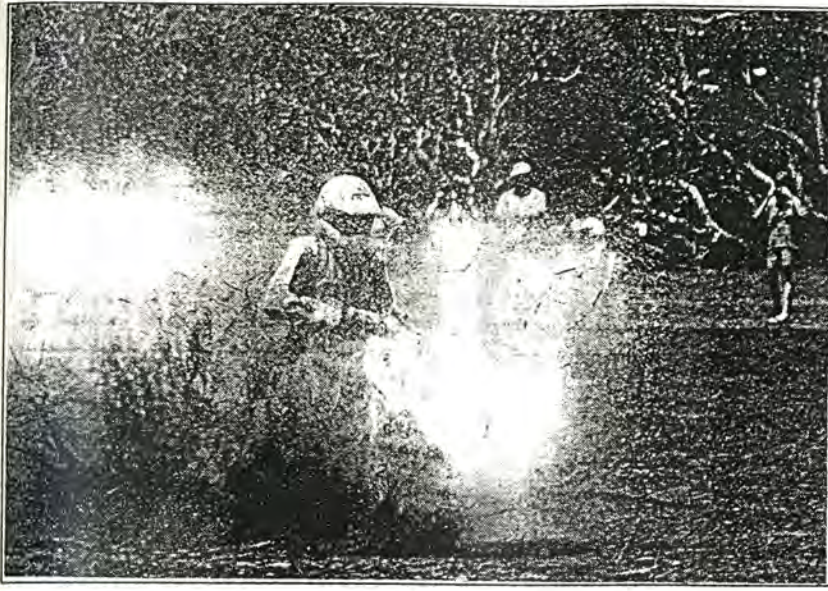
Appendix 12

Photographs which illustrate the damage that can be caused by local recreation events such as a dirt bike race.

Croc Run is still the toughest



Enduro action



(Source: *Bauxite Bulletin*, September 18, 1992:1-2)

Appendix 13

Comparisons of ways of seeing and doing.

Dinny Smith from Comalco has worked out this table of differences in ways of seeing, doing and acting between Napranum and Comalco.

BY COMPARISON	
NAPRANUM	COMALCO
Relationships/Spirituality	Individualism/Materialism
SYSTEMS	SYSTEMS
Destroyed/Not Recognised Now Redeveloping	Intact Operating & Continuous Change
DECISION MAKING POWER	DECISION MAKING POWER
Constrained	Active/Demanded
INFORMATION & UNDERSTANDING OF EXISTING SYSTEMS	INFORMATION & UNDERSTANDING OF EXISTING SYSTEMS
Alien & Difficult	Familiar & Easy
DECISION MAKING PROCESS	DECISION MAKING PROCESS
Group Decides Leader Accepts	Leader Decides Group Accepts

Appendix 14

One of the training and employment opportunities offered by Comalco.

Regen scheme provides work experience and training



Former trainee Charlie Williams shows current three month trainee Ronnie Bosuen the ropes at the Regeneration department last week.

A three month trainee scheme at Regeneration has led to one trainee gaining full time employment with Comalco.

The training scheme started in September when the Regeneration department had vacancies and hired two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for a three month fixed term contract as trainees.

Charlie Williams, above left, completed his traineeship and was subsequently offered permanent employment at Regeneration when a position was vacated.

However, the company does not guarantee full time employment at the completion of other traineeships.

If a trainee shows potential they may be offered full time employment at Regeneration or in

another area of the operation.

Regeneration Superintendent, Neal Dahl said the traineeship is not a formal training package.

"It is a fixed term period which provides the opportunity for those trainees to gain essential skills and experience that they would require if they were to enter the workforce anywhere."

The program also teaches trainees basic life skills of work experience

Regeneration trainees learn to operate tractors, agricultural machinery, drive trucks, and are exposed to basic regeneration techniques such as seed collection, aerial sowing and erosion control

Mr Dahl said the trainee scheme provides young people with an avenue to enter the workforce.

Appendix 15

Itinerary for the regeneration workshop with the local Aboriginal landowners.

PROGRAM ITENERARY
REGENERATION WORKSHOP
5.6 MAY 1994

VENUE- Nanum wungthln Training Centre

DAY 1

8.30 am	Introduction - NAC Chairman (Sandy Callope)
8.45am	Regeneration activities program (Neale Dahl) (Video)
9.30am	Annual seed Collection Program (Andrew Patterson)
10.00am	Break
10.15 am	Discussions
10.45 am	Bush Foods (Geoff Wharton)
11.30am	Discussions
12.00 noon	Lunch
1.00pm access to	Regeneration Seed Collection map (Andrew Paterson), mine areas.
1.45pm	Language name map (Bella Savo\Geoff Wharton)
2.15pm	Break
2.30pm	Mine Tour

DAY 2

8.30am	Introduction (Geoff Wharton)
8.45am	Projects In 1994 - Regeneration <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Neem- Lagoon Ecology Study- CSIRO Ecology Study- Fire Project- Others
12.noon	Lunch Finsh

(Source: Bella Savo, NAC, Napranum)

Appendix 16

16a: RAAF policy in regard to the local Aboriginal community.

Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs (DFSAlA) has overall supervision of the land claim process. This issue, although it does not directly affect the construction of the airfield, will be ongoing during the construction phase.

The Lease Agreement between the Peppan Land Trust and the Commonwealth contains provisions for access to the spring sites and other areas. A plain English version of these provisions is in Appendix 3.

Department of Defence have appointed an Aboriginal Liaison Officer who will be resident in Weipa during the construction phase.

2.2.2 Policy Commitments

The Department of Defence will ensure that consultation with the Aboriginal communities will be regular and frequent, and that as far as practicable, appropriate actions will be taken to minimise disruption to Aboriginal communities during construction.

2.2.3 Management

a) Objectives

- i) To ensure that Napranum community interests are taken into account during the construction of RAAF Base Scherger.
- ii) To ensure that the Napranum community is informed of plans and progress during the construction phase.

b) Strategies

- i) Information on local Aboriginal culture will be provided to the construction workforce.
- ii) Consultation with the Aboriginal community will be maintained through the Aboriginal Liaison Officer (Defence).
- iii) The Project Manager will cooperate with the Lessees in the exercising of their access rights.

c) Tasks

- i) Inform the construction workforce as part of the briefing sessions of:
 - The local Aboriginal culture
 - Requirements regarding contacts with local Aboriginal people

- Specific requirements regarding workforce relations with the Lessees.
- ii) Ensure that access rights to the airfield site are met as per the lease agreement.
- iii) Maintain regular and frequent consultation with the Aboriginal communities, in particular on the following issues:
 - Access to land under RAAF control
 - Aboriginal employment opportunities
 - Clarification of issues of concern to the community
 - Progress during the construction phase.

d) Responsible Personnel/Organisations

- Task i) Project Manager
 Task ii) Project Manager
 Task iii) Aboriginal Liaison Officer (Defence).

In addition to the Project Manager the Aboriginal Liaison Officer and Comalco will participate in the briefing sessions (Task i).

The Napranum community is represented on the SEAC and JCC.

e) Resource Implications

Actions by the Project Manager and consultation by the Aboriginal Liaison Officer (Defence) are part of their respective roles on the project. No additional resource implications are envisaged.

2.2.4 Monitoring

a) Requirements

The Aboriginal Liaison Officer (Defence) will monitor the following four elements:

- i) The impact of the construction workforce on the Napranum Community;
- ii) The number of Aboriginal people employed on the project.;
- iii) The general satisfaction of the Napranum community and in particular the lessees with the consultation process; and

iv) The exercising of access rights by the Lessees.

b) Verification Schedules

The Project Manager's verification schedules will include items for briefing the workforce on Aboriginal culture and the access rights of the Lessees as per the lease agreement.

c) Performance Indicators

- i) No adverse comment from the Aboriginal community on the consultation program or from the Lessees on their access rights.
- ii) The level of employment of local Aboriginal people on the project.

d) Site Monitoring

The Project Director will be responsible for monitoring the employment of Aboriginal people.

The Project Manager will be responsible for monitoring the number of access requests by the Lessees.

e) Reporting

Input from the consultation program, information on local Aboriginal employment and the record of the exercising of access rights will be included in the Project Manager's monthly progress reports.

(Source: Department of Defence, 1993:2.5-2.7)

16b: RAAF Base Scherger's road names and their meanings.

ROAD NAMES



<i>Language Name</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
NGGACHWAY	Always running water or perennial stream. Language name for Marmoss Creek which is nearby.
ODHWE	Word means rotten or soft. Selected because waste disposal is situated at the end of this road.
MATHAWANH	Bush track which people used on hunting trips. Mavis Wilson's language name.
NYANGGWANH	Word means the meat of any animal. Selected because accommodation is nearby.
PWA	Water.
WA	Dog. Selected because the police dog compound is at the end of this street.
WAKAMBIY	Big bushman, fighting man. Selected for the Headquarters, Commanding Officer.
CHWEMBITH	Spirit place of deceased.
ANAGHPUN	Signalling, waving to someone in the distance. Selected for radio transmitter.
TRAKAPAYN	Dog or dingo lifts up its head and looks around. Selected because the ATC tower is on this road.
MUTH	Fire sticks.
PAYNG	Cut-leaved palm (<i>Hydriastele wendlandia</i>). Name of a creek which passes through the Base.
NDHA	Spear barb. Selected for association with fighters.
TWITHERAN	Tribal leader. Named in honour of Ralph Coconut.
BUWITH	Stormbird. Zoë Boxer's language name.
MINDH	Woomera. Selected for the place where the fighters get ready to take off.
NDRUHLAPAYN	Brolgas flying up. Selected as this road is adjacent to the main runway.

(Source: RAAF ceremony to mark the commencement of construction activity on the development of RAAF Base Scherger at Peppan, Cape York Peninsula, 7 July, 1993)

Appendix 17

Statements and declarations on the issue of intellectual property rights.

STATEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS ARISING FROM THE JULAYINBUL CONFERENCE

- * The Julayinbul Statement.
- * A Declaration Reaffirming the Self Determination and Intellectual Property Rights of the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the Wet Tropics Rainforest Area.
- * A statement to Pope John Paul II regarding the Inter Cetera Bull.

PLEASE COPY THESE
DOCUMENTS AND
DISTRIBUTE WIDELY
TO ENCOURAGE
DISCUSSION !!!

Julayinbul Statement
on
Indigenous Intellectual
Property Rights

Jo Willmot
Elsie Go Sam
Ernie Raymond
Shirley Swindley
Lorraine Briggs
Aileen Moreton-Robinson
Moana Jackson
Steve Newcomb
Trevor Wone
Stephan Schnierer
Greg Singh
Darren Cassidy
Neil Löfgren
Dianne Stewart

Richard Jenkins
Libby Morgan
Emma Johnstone
Chris Morris
Les Malezer
Johanna Sutherland
Bill White
Gary Martin
Henrietta Fourmile
Montserrat Gorina
Gertrude Davis
Nola Joseph
William Joseph

On November 27 1993, Jingarrba, North-Eastern coastal region of the continent of Australia, it was agreed and declared that:

Indigenous Peoples and Nations share a unique spiritual and cultural relationship with Mother Earth which recognises the inter-dependence of the total environment and is governed by the natural laws which determine our perceptions of intellectual property.

Inherent in these laws and integral to that relationship is the right of Indigenous Peoples and Nations to continue to live within and protect, care for, and control the use of that environment and of their knowledge.

Within the context of this statement Indigenous Peoples and Nations to reaffirm their right to define for themselves their own intellectual property, acknowledging their own self-determination and the uniqueness of their own particular heritage.

Within the context of this statement Indigenous Peoples and Nations also declare that we are capable of managing our intellectual property ourselves, but are willing to share it with all humanity provided that our fundamental rights to define and control this property are recognised by the international community

Aboriginal Common Law and English/Australian Common Law are parallel and equal systems of law.

Aboriginal intellectual property, within Aboriginal Common Law, is an inherent inalienable right which cannot be terminated, extinguished, or taken.

Any use of the intellectual property of Aboriginal Nations and Peoples may only be done in accordance with Aboriginal Common Law, and any unauthorised use is strictly prohibited.

Just as Aboriginal Common Law has never sought to unilaterally extinguish English/Australian Common Law so we expect English/Australian Common Law to reciprocate.

We, the delegates assembled at this conference urge Indigenous Peoples and Nations to develop processes and strategies acceptable to them to facilitate the practical application of the above principles and to ensure the dialogue and negotiation which are envisaged by the principles.

We also call on governments to review legislation and non-statutory policies which currently impinge upon or do not recognise indigenous intellectual property rights. Where policies, legislation and international conventions currently recognise these rights, we require that they be implemented.

Declaration Reaffirming the Self Determination and Intellectual Property Rights of the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the Wet Tropics Rainforest Area.

- (1) Recognising that the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the Wet Tropics Rainforest Area have exercised their inherent right to self determination in regard to the care, protection and use-control of the forest since time immemorial, and
- (2) Acknowledging that in the exercise of that right of self determination the Indigenous Nations and Peoples continue to foster and develop a unique relationship with their total environment , and
- (3) Affirming that the values, processes, Law and Lore which the Indigenous Nations and Peoples have developed throughout that relationship are expressed in their intellectual property rights,

Delegates gathered at the Julayinbul Conference, (November 25, 26, 27, 1993) on the north-eastern coastal region of the Australian continent hereby affirm:

- (1) That the intellectual property rights of the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of their territories in the wet tropical forest areas have traditionally included the recognition of a cultural heritage inherent in their interdependent relationship with the natural environment, and that such cultural heritage remains an integral part of the Indigenous Peoples perception of their inherent rights in relation to their territories in the Wet Tropics region,
- (2) That inherent in the exercise of self determination is the prerogative of the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the Wet Tropics region to freely exercise the right to hunt and gather within the forests according to such rules and regulations as they deem appropriate,
- (3) That in the exercise of their self-determination the Indigenous Nations and Peoples have had and continue to have the inherent rights to restore and maintain their spiritual and ceremonial practices in relation to the forests and waters,
- (4) The right of self-determination is predicated upon the right of development by which Indigenous Nations and Peoples may make such adaptations and changes to their traditional methods of harvest as they deem appropriate,

- (5) That the intellectual property of the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the Wet Tropics region includes and has always included the ability to discover and make what they deem appropriate use of new knowledge derived from their total environment: such as the discovery of new genotypes and the right to control subsequent use of and access to the genetic make-up within the flora and fauna of the forests.
- (6) That in the exercise of their self-determination Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the Wet Tropics region are prepared to negotiate joint-management arrangements with appropriate non-indigenous agencies for the care, protection and controlled use of the Wet Tropics region.
- (7) That in the exercise of self-determination by the Indigenous Nations and Peoples no presumption should be inferred that such peoples acknowledge the prerogative of any non-indigenous government or agency to extinguish or otherwise delimit their inherent right, title and authority to their territories. Any unauthorised use of Indigenous Nations' and Peoples' intellectual property is strictly prohibited.

Without derogating in any way from the rights of Indigenous Nations and Peoples to self-determination, the delegates at the Julayinbul Conference hereby call on the Federal and State Governments to honour and fulfil the serious and important international and domestic commitments which they have made about the rights of Indigenous Nations and Peoples relating to the care, protection and use-control of their territories.

- (1) These commitments include relevant obligations under international conventions, declarations and other instruments such as the:
 - Convention on Biological Diversity
 - Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
 - Agenda 21, Chapter 26
 - UNCED Statement of Forest Principles
 - Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific
 - 1991 SPREP Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development
 - Charter of the United Nations
 - World Heritage Convention
 - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the
 - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

(2) Federal and State governments have also made serious and important undertakings in a range of negotiated government policy instruments, including the:

- National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development
- National Forest Policy Statement
- 1992 Inter-governmental Agreement on the Environment
- National Commitment to Improved Outcomes in the Delivery of Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples,

and in

- Government responses to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

(3) The above demands are justified further because of the Federal government's support for the development of the proposed U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

(4) These demands are also justified in the light of the recommendations of the Australian Law Reform Commission in its report on the Recognition of Customary Law, and in view of the national expectations of the process of reconciliation as being developed by the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.

(5) We also call on Federal and State Governments to review the world heritage management arrangements internationally, nationally and locally which impinge upon or do not recognise the intellectual property rights of Indigenous Nations and Peoples.

(6) In particular, the management of the Queensland Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is in need of review immediately, as agreed in the Federal-State agreement of 1990 on Wet Tropics World Heritage management.

AGREED AT JINGARRBA
27 NOVEMBER, 1993

Appendix 18

Other Forces which impact on Aboriginal resource management aspirations.

There are numerous factors which impact on the Weipa locality. The ones discussed below offer both opportunities for and constraints on local Aboriginal resource management aspirations. As each factor is complex and involved, an indepth examination is way beyond the scope of this discussion. Thus, brief introductions to each factor, are presented.

Napranum 'Community'³

The Napranum 'community' is not homogenous. Elements within the community can be read as constructing a range of locally specific opportunities for and constraints on the resource management aspirations of the local Aboriginal landowners. For example, groups such as the Napranum Aboriginal Community Council (NACC) and Napranum Aboriginal Corporation (NAC), as well as the multiple lines of personal identity and social position within the community (eg. church, business activities, employment, gender, age, ethnic identity⁴) all influence the ability and enthusiasm of the local landowners to pursue resource management issues at various times (appendix figure 1).

NACC

The Napranum Aboriginal Community Council (NACC) has a formidable task in trying to fulfill its functions as a council under the *Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984*. Conflicts have arisen between the NACC and traditional landowners due to poor communication and understanding, inadequate training of Council staff and the traditional owners' lack of standing within the institutional structure of the community. Conflicts and constraints on local resource management options arise from issues such as the provision of infrastructure⁵ and a perceived lack of support for certain cultural programs⁶.

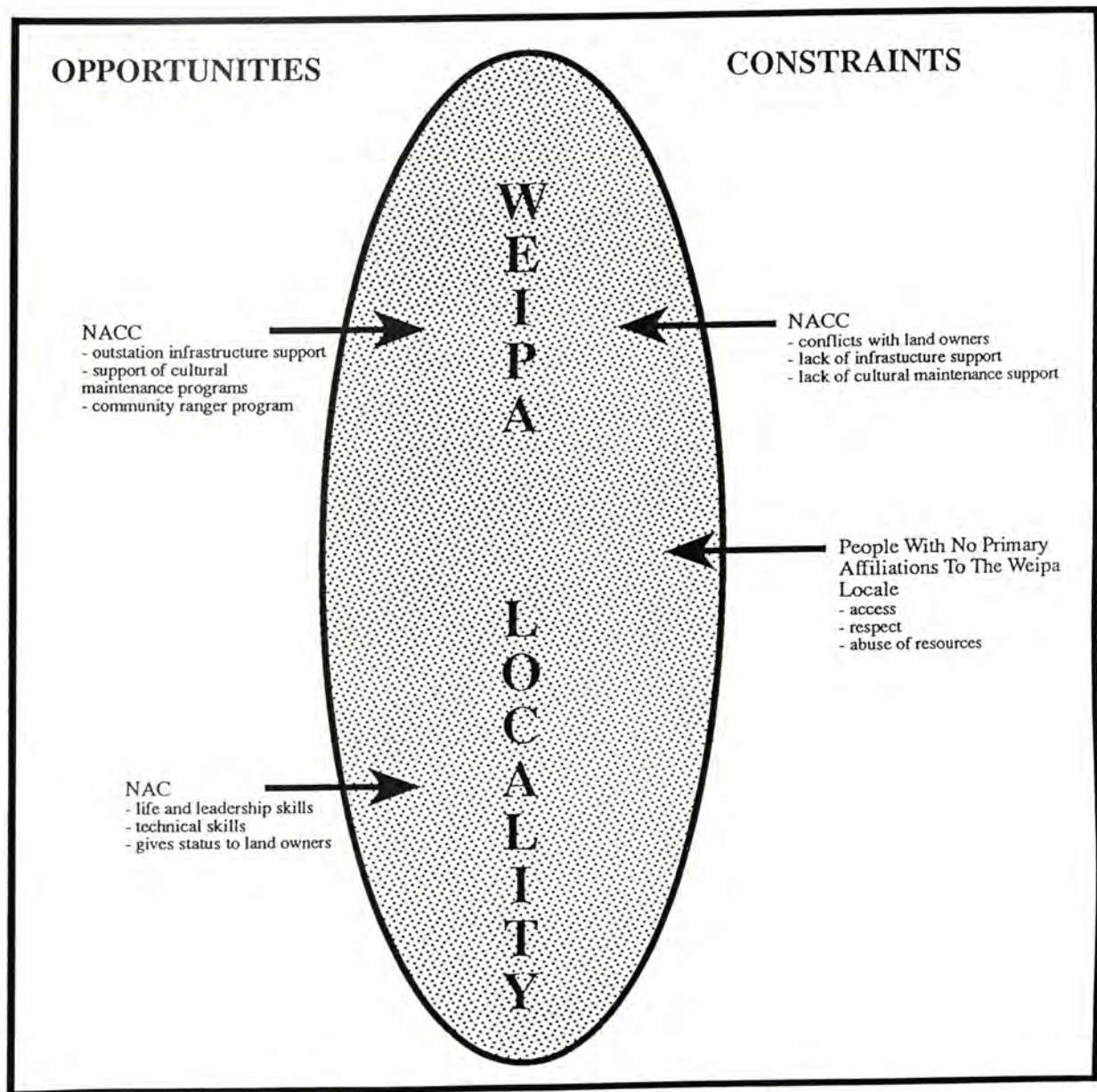
Although certain acts and policies of the NACC do constraint people's resource management aspirations, the Council also offers many opportunities. These include outstation infrastructure support, sponsorship of cultural maintenance programs such as the Ruchook Aboriginal Cultural Festival, and increased control of resource use through their community ranger program. All these opportunities have been used by the local Aboriginal family groups and they hope to utilize them further in future.

³ The micropolitics of the Napranum 'community' are involved and complex. Four weeks in the field allowed only an extremely brief glimpse into certain aspects of the interrelationships and workings of the community. The subject could easily be the topic of a doctoral thesis and being way beyond the scope of this work, illustrative examples only are given.

⁴ Apart from groups which have no primary affiliations with Weipa country, due to intermarriage, ethnic identities can be ambiguous. People can identify as being connected to local landowning groups, as well as to other Aboriginal groups, Torres Strait Islanders or even Islanders (Islander connections can be found as with people like Sandy Callope whose grandfather was Kanak).

⁵ The question of whether the traditional landowners of the Weipa area will be able to keep their houses in town if they move permanently to their outstations is still an area of conflict. The NACC view is that if the landowners decide that their outstations are permanent then they "have to give up houses in town" (Dick Namai, 18/2/94).

⁶ Organisers of the holiday workshops at Bowchat describe "negative vibes" and a lack of financial and logistical support from Council in previous years (Thancoupie & Stewart Lloyd, 24/2/94).



Appendix figure 1: Opportunities and constraints from the local 'community'

People whose primary affiliation is not to Weipa country

Elements within the multiple groups who do not see the Weipa area as their country have been identified by the traditional land owners of the Weipa area as an influencing force on their aspirations. They constraint resource management aspirations as a result of a lack of respect for and understanding of local culture. This results in conflicts over access to country, as Kaynayth states "other Napranum people come without permission [to Bowchat], leave their rubbish behind. All people should come and ask for permission" (26/1/94). Conflicts also arise over the abuse of resources, whereby practises antithetical to local beliefs anger traditional owners and diminish their ability to manage their resources⁷. An increased understanding of and respect for the local Aboriginal culture from programs such as the Bowchat holiday workshops and the Ruchook Aboriginal Culture Festival may help redress the problems.

NAC

Sandy Callope states that the role of Napranum Aboriginal Corporation is to support the traditional landowners with their resource management aspirations. One line of support is to equip people to move back to their land by giving them life and leadership skills as well as technical skills and confidence through the Nanum Wungthin training programs (10/2/94). Other support comes from the director of Cultural Programs who has the "role of pulling the traditional people together" (Sandy Callope, 10/2/94). These avenues assist the traditional owners themselves, but a broader arena of assistance comes with the status accorded to the traditional owners by the pivotal role they play on the executive committee of NAC. These are all vital opportunities which offer the traditional landowners some of the practical skills and support necessary to enable the successful re-occupation of their lands, as well as the standing needed to help reassert their position and power base in the Napranum community.

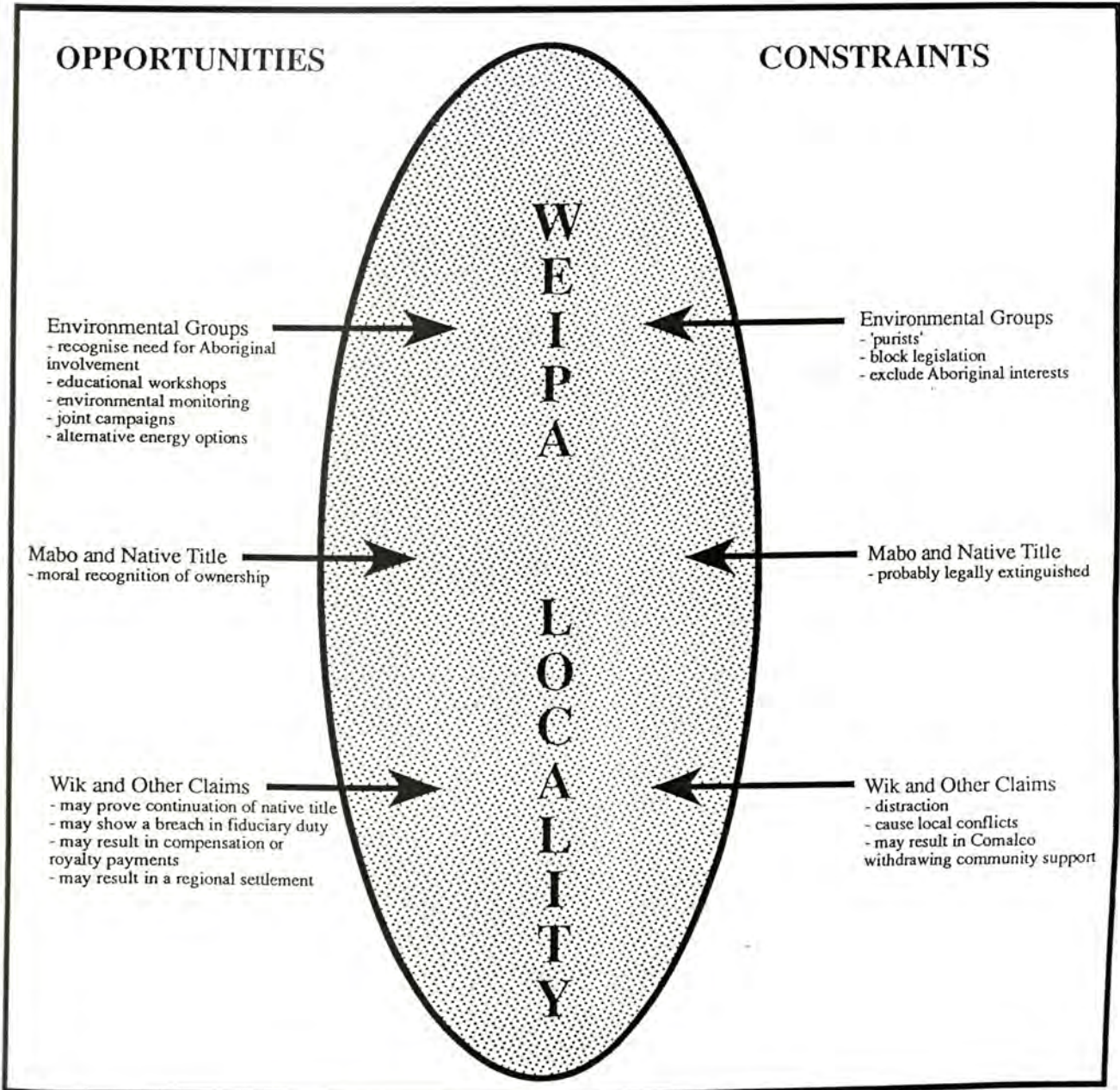
⁷ "When Torres Strait Islanders and other people from Napranum go fishing, they are greedy, they get the fridges and freezers all filled up and then they don't share, so it all goes to waste ... Before, when old people hunting turtle ... everyone gets some, they'd share of it";

"they have no respect for other people ... they just throw fish bones and heads away and they just stink ... they cut turtle up and leave bits at Ovoolum ... stink out the place" (Kaynayth, 12/2/94);

"a delicacy for the Torres Strait Islanders is the dugong, at one time it was said thirteen dugong killed for one party of Torres Strait Islanders" (Thancoupie, 24/2/94).

Other Forces

Some of the other forces which impact on the Weipa situation are shown in appendix figure 2.



Appendix figure 2: Opportunities and constraints from other influencing forces

Environmental groups

To date, the direct impact of environmental groups and their ideologies have not been felt in the Weipa area itself. However, there is the potential for both constraints and opportunities as environmental groups are very active on Cape York Peninsula.

An illustration of the way in which environmentalists can constrain local Aboriginal resource management aspirations came with the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. The Act, which allows hunting and gathering by Aboriginal people in national parks, came under attack by what Jim Downey, conservation co-ordinator for the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC) (appendix 11), describes as "purists"⁸ (25/2/94). The strength of voting numbers by the environmental 'purists' meant that the Act was passed but not proclaimed.

However, the conservation leadership recognises and understands that "land and sea management on Cape York Peninsula can't be sustainable unless it involves Aboriginal people both hands on and in decision-making" (Jim Downey, 25/2/94). As a result of this ideology, CAFNEC has a range of programs which can assist Aboriginal resource management plans. These include educational workshops⁹, environmental monitoring and joint campaigns¹⁰, and research into appropriate alternate energy sources¹¹.

Mabo and native title

The High Court's judgment on the *Mabo* case, which overturned the legal doctrine of *terra nullius* and recognised the existence of native title, gave hope to many indigenous Australians that the injustices of the past may eventually be redressed. For the people of the Weipa area it seems that legally it is unlikely that they retain their native title as the enactment of special legislation with the *Comalco Act* seems to be "a clear and plain intention" to extinguish native title.¹²

Apart from the legalities of the Mabo decision, the recognition of native title alters the moral context of the Weipa situation, a situation built on what has now been judged a legal lie. The recognition of the prior ownership by indigenous Australians of their land by the highest court of the land serves to confront and challenge Comalco and the Queensland government with the fact that the traditional land owners of the Weipa area can no longer be ignored or marginalised. They have the historical and legitimate right to involvement and inclusion in decision-making processes as equals players in the resource management field.

⁸ This community backlash separated environmental groups and people within the groups due to opposing ideologies on the role of indigenous people in conservation issues (Jim Downey, 25/2/94).

⁹ To counter the protests against Aboriginal hunting and gathering in national parks CAFNEC proposed and arranged with local Aboriginal groups a series of workshops aimed at doing something positive to educate people about the Aboriginal role in conservation. Due to a stalling of government funds as the backlash died down, the workshops have not yet been implemented (Jim Downey, 25/2/94).

¹⁰ CAFNEC and other environmental groups are increasingly working together with local Aboriginal groups on a range of campaigns to stop mining and ensure better environmental controls (Jim Downey, 25/2/94).

¹¹ CAFNEC is working with the CYLC on solar and wind power support for outstations. They have built an energy trailer, with wind, solar and hydro-electricity displays, and are seeking funding to take it around the Peninsula. They also have plans to build three solar display units around the Peninsula to show people its potential (Jim Downey, 25/2/94).

¹² Bartlett, 1992 gives an excellent discussion of how such Acts can extinguish native title. However, some doubt is thrown on this extinguishment by the Wik Claim presently in front of the Supreme Court. Similarly, there is the suggestion that continued occupation and the exercise of possessory title may provide an alternative path to giving Aboriginal groups an even stronger title than native title (O'Connor, 1992: 264-265).

Wik and other land claims

The land claims lodged after the recognition of native title in the Weipa region have the potential for both beneficial and destructive impacts on Aboriginal resource management aspirations in the Weipa locale. The claims have been identified as constraints as they cause a distraction from practical concerns¹³, create tensions and conflicts at the local scale¹⁴, and may have negative impacts on the Napranum community as a result of Comalco's attitudes¹⁵.

The Wik claim has much greater potential for the creation of many opportunities for the local Aboriginal aspirations at Weipa. If its claims for a breach of fiduciary duty and the existence of native title are accepted, the implications could be far-reaching: there is the possibility of a direct flow of funds into the community from compensation and royalty payments; the principles of the Mabo judgment could be extended beyond the 1975 period; and Noel Pearson states the hope that it could "precipitate a more general settlement of issues on Cape York Peninsula, a regional settlement" (22/2/94).

¹³ Comalco employees identify the claims as constraints as they become "a distraction from the people doing something constructive and useful" (Dennis Bourke, 1/3/94).

¹⁴ The Wik claim is lodged by the Wik peoples of Aurukun yet includes land which Napranum people have ties too. Conflicts and tensions have arisen from a lack of consultation, poor communication and a general lack of understanding. Similar problems have resulted from the other two claims.

¹⁵ Howitt finds that "... any substantial payments, particularly any linked to company revenues or royalty payments, is likely to produce a quick withdrawal of corporate funds from community projects" (1994, in prep).