

CHAPTER SIX

Case study of the Ngarrindjeri of South Australia

6.1 Introduction

This thesis presents the conceptual argument that corporatised tourism and capitalist globalisation bring about social and environmental problems that inspire the formation of alternative tourisms and perhaps even alternative globalisations. After exploring some of the issues arising at the interstices of Indigenous peoples, globalisation and tourism, this chapter explores the experience of the Ngarrindjeri community of South Australia which demonstrates some of the dynamics playing out in a local context. The Ngarrindjeri are the founders of a pioneering facility, Camp Coorong Race Relations and Cultural Education Centre, fostering reconciliation tourism which is dedicated to healing the divide between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians. The Ngarrindjeri have also experienced grave problems with capitalist development and tourism pressures. In response to these difficulties, the Ngarrindjeri have continued to operate Camp Coorong while simultaneously establishing a political agenda to assert their Indigenous rights. This analysis suggests that, for alternative tourism to be effective in humanising tourism and

globalisation, human rights agendas are required to shift existing power dynamics.

Before delving into these issues, it is necessary to first examine the impacts of globalisation and corporatised tourism on Indigenous peoples in the global community.

6.2 Impacts of globalisation and tourism on Indigenous communities

Globalisation from an Indigenous perspective brings issues of power and exploitation to the fore. As Stewart-Harawira asserts, Indigenous people view the origins of globalisation not as a natural progress from enlightenment ideals but rather as the offspring of imperialism and colonialism with its history of “...genocide and dispossession, of violence and loss” (2005b, p. 16). Indigenous peoples around the world are finding themselves being absorbed forcefully into the global economy. Indigenous peoples, their lands, their resources, their knowledges, their genetic material and their very way of being are increasingly treated as a product for commodification in our capitalistic world. Examples are numerous: the Tongan government nearly sold the rights to its entire population’s gene pool to a Melbourne biotech firm which hoped to use knowledge gained from this acquisition to profit from the treatment or prevention of diseases (Barkham, 2000); the traditional seed collection practices of communities in India are being undermined by the policies of multinationals such as Monsanto with its “terminator technology” (Shiva, 1998, 1999);¹ and the touristification of whole villages to serve as tour stops for cultural

¹ In an interview, Vandana Shiva stated: “What we are seeing right now is a situation in which the third world, which has been the main supplier of biodiversity, the main producer of food in the world, where the majority of people are engaged in food production, is being attempted to be converted into a consumer society. But you can’t have a consumer society with poor people and therefore what you will have is deprivation, destitution, disease, hunger, epidemics, malnutrition, famine and civil war.

tourists looking for “primitive” villages still “authentically” untouched (Cohen, 1996). Indigenous people have responded to such threatening circumstances in different ways. Perhaps an extreme case that illustrates just how dire the threat is perceived amongst some Indigenous groups is the pact of the U’wa people of Colombia in 1998 to commit mass suicide if Shell and Occidental Petroleum were allowed to proceed with plans for oil exploration on their territory (Harries-Jones, 2004, p. 287).² Another reaction has been to try to come to terms with international law, environmental science and biodiversity conventions in order to make a space for continuing Indigenous values and ways (Shiva, 1993; H. K. Trask, 1993; M. Trask, 1993).

There are increasing numbers of publications addressing Indigenous peoples’ interactions with the forces of capitalist globalisation. For example, in their edited volume, Blaser *et al.* have critiqued the development agenda under capitalist globalisation and assert that whereas previously Indigenous peoples have been subordinated and dispossessed by colonising states, they now are subject to similar dynamics emanating from the international system (2004, p. 4). Less measuredly, Seton’s work on theorising Fourth World³ nations’ place in the context of globalisation evocatively writes of globalising capitalism as “raping the world”

What is being sown is the greed of corporations of stealing the last resources of the poor. It really is seeds of uncontrollable violence and decay of societies on a very large scale” (1998).

² See the edited volume by Blaser *et al.* (2004) for a useful overview of some of the various reactions and strategies that Indigenous peoples have employed in their efforts to secure their “life projects” in the face of inappropriate and undesirable development on their lands and waters.

³ Seton’s article provides a very valuable literature review of the formation and evolution of the concept of the Fourth World. According to Seton, the most widely used definition is that of Manuel and Posluns (1974) which describes Fourth World peoples as “... ‘aboriginal peoples’ who have special non-technical, non-modern exploitative relations to the land in which they still live and are ‘disenfranchised’ by the States within which they live” (Manuel & Posluns cited in Seton, 1999). Ward Churchill points out that the Fourth World concept sprung from the Three Worlds’ formula (“industrial-capitalist ‘First World’, industrial-socialist ‘Second World’ and industrializing-nonaligned ‘Third World’”) and highlights Winona LaDuke’s assertion that the Fourth World should more properly be known as the “Host World...insofar as all of the other three are constructed squarely a top it” (1994, p. 161).

(1999). The World Council of Indigenous Peoples contrasts the incongruous perspectives of Indigenous communities and the neoliberal state clashing within globalisation:

The needs and interests of political states and indigenous groups are in many ways diametrically opposed to one another. Political states view uncontrolled growth and progress as the highest idea, while indigenous groups regard balance and limited growth essential to their livelihood. From all appearances these ideas cannot be reconciled. We must reconcile the differences or a great deal of humankind will not survive (World Council of Indigenous Peoples 1979, cited in Seton, 1999).

This statement indicates that many Indigenous peoples' worldviews tend to be incompatible with the pro-growth dynamics of capitalist globalisation with its "culture-ideology of consumerism" (Sklair, 2002). Seton (1999) states that, in the contemporary era of economic globalisation, the lands, cultures and peoples of the Indigenous world are now seen "in economic terms" as unutilized natural resources that can be harnessed as a national and global resource for greater economic growth and "development". Stewart-Harawira supports Seton's assertion but raises a deeper concern:

In the face of increasing globalization, indigenous cultures and identities are being increasingly threatened by the commodification of indigenous culture that is occurring at multiple levels. Beyond the homogenizing influence on material forms of culture is a more fundamental and profoundly significant issue, that of the homogenization of world views and constructions of reality and the loss and commodification of indigenous knowledge (2005b, p. 18).

Tourism is one of the important forces contributing to this process. De Chavez has characterised the impacts of tourism and globalisation on Indigenous peoples as "deadly" and argues that "tourism's impact on indigenous peoples' way of life and on their control and access to their resources and environment has been more

pronounced with globalisation of the world economy” (1999). While it has been argued earlier in this thesis that corporatised tourism under capitalist globalisation can impose itself to community detriment, Indigenous communities are particularly vulnerable to its imposition. This is derived from their often disadvantaged status which presents structural obstacles to asserting their rights and interests, a loss of control of their processes of self-determination and the chaotic nature of tourism which spreads through piecemeal, private initiatives.

Pera and McLaren state that tourism in the context of capitalist globalisation:

...threatens indigenous knowledge and intellectual property rights, our technologies, religions, sacred sites, social structures and relationships, wildlife, ecosystems, economies and basic rights to informed understanding; reducing indigenous peoples to simply another consumer product that is quickly becoming exhaustible (1999).

Elsewhere, McLaren has also accused tourism of being “... a pre-eminent salesperson for western development...” and in the process undermining Indigenous economies, Indigenous self-reliance and making Indigenous peoples dependent on a precarious globalised economy (2003, p. 5). Johnston (2006) has provided a recent analysis of the relationship between tourism and Indigenous peoples which thoroughly critiques the damages and exploitation wrought by corporatised tourism. Analysing Bodley’s work on “ethnocide” through anthropology, Ryan suggests Indigenous engagement with tourism can aid assimilation into the global economy and result in a loss of Indigeneity, in effect ethnocide:

... ethnocide is symptomatic of resource exploitation of indigenous peoples, and hence the paradox is generated whereby tourism, by economic gain through maintaining past culture equally aids assimilation into contemporary society, currently dominated by

Western norms, and thereby arguably creates a gentler form of ethnocide to that practised in the past (Ryan, 1997, p. 258).⁴

However, as Blaser *et al.* argue, the “wave of environmentalism” of the 1980s coincided with the development of the international Indigenous movement and the concern for the environment that developed from this environmentalism “provides [Indigenous peoples] a narrative anchor by which their concerns with survival can be articulated with non-Indigenous peoples’ concern for survival” (2004, p. 10). As a result, some are beginning to make the link between cultural diversity and biodiversity and wish to learn from Indigenous peoples in order to prevent environmental crises or secure sustainability.⁵ Many Indigenous peoples have inhabited their micro-environments for millennia and have complex and intimate knowledge of how to live sustainably in some very harsh and forbidding environments.⁶ Ecologists and others value and seek to obtain this knowledge in order to inform contemporary planning and environmental management. Therefore

⁴ MacCannell claims that the performances of primitive and exotic “Others” are required to give the illusion of diversity “... which is ideologically necessary in the promotion and development of global monoculture” (1992, p. 36). Thus Indigenous and cultural tourism gives the illusion of diversity all the while the homogenising forces of the “market”, the media, development aid, financial institutions and tourism itself are in fact establishing a uniform world. This is the “McWorld” of Benjamin Barber who describes its as: “...the onrush of economic and ecological forces that demand integration and uniformity and that mesmerize the world with fast music, fast computers and fast food – with MTV, Macintosh, and McDonald’s, pressing nations into one commercially homogenous global network; one McWorld tied together by technology, ecology, communications and commerce” (1992).

⁵ As a result of research that reveals the link between biodiversity and cultural and linguistic diversity, the UNEP and UNESCO raised the thorny issue of recognising and compensating Indigenous and local communities for their Indigenous knowledges (which are sought by governments in protecting biological diversity and by private enterprise for new products in pharmaceuticals and other industries) at recent forums such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Convention on Biological Diversity (see UNEP, 2002). Blench argues that there is a strong correlation between ethnolinguistic diversity and biological diversity. But whereas the latter has received considerable attention through the Convention on Biological Diversity, the former requires the creation of “a global system of rights of minority communities” if the consequences of globalisation’s homogenisation is to be curtailed before such diversity is lost (Blench, 2001).

⁶ In stark contrast, international tourists epitomise the transitory and ephemeral nature of modernity as they continuously move in search of new experiences in new places. De Burlo’s look at the Sa people’s view of the tourists who come to witness their tradition of *gol* or the land dive on Pentecost Island in Vanuatu illustrates an Indigenous peoples’ confidence in their traditional knowledge of their place and the ceremonies conducted to protect it and the resulting contempt this inspires for the uprooted tourists who they characterise as *salsaliri* or “floating ones” (1996, pp. 271-274).

threats to Indigenous communities and their knowledge systems are regarded very seriously in some quarters.

This has not escaped the attention of Indigenous leaders, some of whom believe that Indigenous knowledges and ways and their adoption by others is key to planetary survival. This is demonstrated in the citation above from the World Council of Indigenous Peoples which asserts that negotiating the competing worldviews of those supporting growth and Indigenous people is imperative to the future. It suggests that in doing so the promise of alternative globalisations might arise. Similarly Hawaiian academic Haunani-Kay Trask claims:

It may be there will come a time when this earth will have no native people at all. That will be a really bad time, not only for us but for the earth. The fate of the earth, as far as we are concerned, rests in the hands of the native people, because of their understanding of the world as a family, because of our genealogy as a relationship to the cosmos. The wisdom of this genealogy is a reciprocal obligation, and here I present what an alternative way of looking at the world might be. In our language the name of the relationship of reciprocal obligation is *m lama'na*, which means 'to take care of the land, which in turn will take care of you.'

That's a very simplistic way of reducing this cosmology, but it's very accurate. This kind of indigenous knowledge is not unique to my people. It's shared by native people all over the world...In our genealogies we are stewards of the earth, caretakers of the earth. The lesson of our cultures is crucial to global survival (1993).

Denzin argues that Indigenous viewpoints provide another perspective on current issues which move beyond a criticism of capitalism's impacts; "the central crisis, as defined by Native Canadian, Native Hawaiian, Maori, and American Indian pedagogy, is spiritual" and results from a violent relationship between humans and the rest of nature (2005 pp. 948-949). Johnston relates a Hopi and Lakota plea for non-Indigenous peoples to reform their lives as we are at a critical moment in the survival of our planet and "we must remember that all things on Mother Earth have

spirit and are intricately connected” (2006, p. 283). David Suzuki (1997) has written about Indigenous philosophies in order to get others to respect the “sacred balance” that humans must establish with nature. As stated previously, Stewart-Harawira offers Indigenous ontologies as a source of a more eco-humanistic perspective which could revise global order in much needed ways (2005a, 2005b).

However, such a strategy of transformation through the adoption of Indigenous ontologies is not without its problems. At one level is the issue that non-Indigenous people and organisations wish to tap Indigenous knowledges in an exploitative manner. The UNEP has pointed out that while the value of Indigenous knowledges is increasingly recognised and coveted, the willingness to financially compensate Indigenous peoples is too often lacking (UNEP, 2002). According to Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of the UNEP:

Genetic resources and indigenous knowledge are too often treated as a public good. They are available for everybody; nobody has to pay for them; there are no property rights. This has to be reconsidered and UNEP will do all it can in its power to see that happens (UNEP, 2002).⁷

Additionally there is the problem often noted that while at a superficial level, the concerns of environmentalists and Indigenous peoples appear to converge and make

⁷ Cunningham, writing for the Indigenous organisation Cultural Survival, has analysed the issue of Indigenous knowledges and biodiversity and highlighted the complexity and difficulties in this area (1991). He advocates assessing the legal parameters of Indigenous intellectual property rights to delineate native rights and then develop mechanisms such as technology transfer agreements, royalty regimes, licensing agreements, taxes on profits based on Indigenous knowledges and joint partnerships in order to ensure that Indigenous peoples secure benefits from the lucrative market in biotechnology that so far is largely passing their rights and interests by. One example he provides for inspiration is the Kuna of who demand that researchers working on their lands pay fees, employ a Kuna field representative and submit copies of their final reports to the community in order to gain research access (Cunningham, 1991). These provisions are now standard protocol in almost all research guidelines involving Indigenous people and/or knowledge.

them natural allies in the struggle for transformation, in reality their value systems on nature and human relationships to it are quite different (see Bayet, 1994; Blaser *et al.*, 2004; Wearing & Huyskens, 2001). Blaser *et al.* describe these diverging views as:

The dominant thrust of environmental movements and NGOs among relatively affluent urbanites has been the preservation of wilderness and protection and respect of other species. By contrast, the environmentalism of peasants and Indigenous peoples is often wrapped up in the problems of subsistence (2004, p. 11).

At a deeper level, the legacy of colonial exploitation and abuse of Indigenous peoples makes it highly problematic for non-Indigenous people to appropriate the beliefs and values of Indigenous peoples. Banerjee and Linstead (2004) provide an excellent critical analysis of a study by Whiteman and Cooper which suggested applying an Indigenous ethic of “ecological embeddedness” to organisational management practice in Western societies.⁸ Criticising these authors for their lack of attention to the historical context of exploitation and a lack of reflexivity in their work, Banerjee and Linstead state:

It is perhaps this limited ontological introspection that allows them [Whiteman and Cooper] to categorize indigenous knowledge, a knowledge with markedly different epistemological and ontological assumptions than western science, for subsequent packaging and transfer to western contexts without understanding the basis of indigenous knowledge production is intensely local, not global (2004, p. 237).

⁸ Also see Gunstone (2004) for an argument that one facet of the reconciliation movement has been concerned with appropriating Indigeneity in order to assuage the guilt of non-Indigenous Australians but to the detriment of Indigenous Australians’ rights and interests. Exemplary of this tendency is Germaine Greer’s statement “aboriginality is not a matter of blood or genes... it follows that whitefellas can achieve a measure of Aboriginality... if we think of Aboriginality as nationality, it suddenly becomes easier...acquiring Aboriginality is to a large extent the getting of knowledge...” (Greer cited in Gunstone, 2004, p. 10). Such a perspective undermines the Indigenous assertion that Indigenous rights derive from their unique status as the “First Peoples” of the land. Indigenous rights are discussed in Section 6.3.

Nonetheless, some Indigenous people are advocating non-Indigenous people can learn from Indigenous ontologies and transform our societies for the better (see Arquette, Cole & the Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment, 2004; Worby & Rigney, 2006). Banerjee and Linstead's (2004) analysis suggests that perhaps sharing can occur with ontological introspection, reflexivity and an awareness of the ways that Indigenous knowledges develop organically from the local terrain. Blaser (2004, p. 35) advises that Indigenous "life projects"⁹ can "trace a possible path towards the idea of unity in diversity" and oppose the "universalist pretensions of development". Stewart-Harawira offers:

Those teachings handed down by our ancestors, one of the most important being the interdependence of all existence... is articulated by indigenous scholars as the key to political and social transformations for indigenous peoples and, by extension, is postulated here as central to a globally transformative framework (2005b, p. 200).

She suggests that an understanding derived from Indigenous ontologies of the spiritual, material, human and ecological world must inform our social, political and economic structures but this is not proposed as a unilateral appropriation. Like Blaser she sees this in a context of diversity: "it requires the embedding of these principles as the cornerstone of a pluralistic social, political, economic and educational framework for justice and well-being" (2005b, p. 252).¹⁰ However, under the current systems of capitalist globalisation and corporatised tourism, such a

⁹ Blaser defines Indigenous life projects as: "embedded in local histories; they encompass visions of the world and the future that are distinct from those embodied by projects promoted by state and markets. Life projects diverge from development in their attention to the uniqueness of people's experiences of place and self and their rejection of visions that claim to be universal. Thus life projects are premised on densely and uniquely woven 'threads' of landscapes, memories, expectations and desires" (2004, p. 26).

¹⁰ Stewart-Harawira's vision of Indigenous ontologies is not to use them for a return to a romanticised past. She suggests that "the 'new humanism' required today and in the future is one that brings forth into the future the ancient values of our traditional past and rearticulates them in a contemporary context" (2005b, p. 251).

vision is not yet widely held. As a result, Indigenous peoples have had to employ other strategies to secure their life projects and protect Indigenous values in the face of capitalist globalisation and corporatised tourism.

6.3 Indigenous rights and tourism internationally

As globalisation and tourism continue to dominate societies with their pro-development and economic growth agendas, some tourism analysts are increasingly asserting a human rights agenda to restore balance and protect communities (see Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006b). A new development set to impact profoundly on the tourism industry is the establishment of an Indigenous rights regime. The concept of Indigenous rights as a related yet separate aspect of human rights is slowly being formulated and considered in international forums.¹¹ Its potential to circumscribe the way that the powerful forces of the tourism industry interact with often vulnerable Indigenous peoples is significant.

One of the important milestones in the enunciation of Indigenous rights is the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) 1989 Convention No. 169 entitled Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention. This document is viewed as the current minimum standard for the protection of Indigenous peoples around the world. The

¹¹ The formulation of Indigenous rights can be seen as arising in the context of greater respect for and encoding of, a deep and comprehensive human rights regime during the course of the twentieth century. Because Indigenous rights have grown from a human rights movement, their initial foundation is in the human rights protocols including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, amongst numerous others.

However one significant distinction between human rights and Indigenous rights is that the former applies to individuals whereas the latter focus on communal rights. Indigenous peoples would hold both sets of rights; they have a right to respect for their individual human rights and the right to recognition of the rights that they hold collectively under the Indigenous rights regime.

focus of this important document is delineating the steps required for addressing Indigenous disadvantage and progressing towards parity with other citizens of the states in which they reside. It demands that Indigenous "...social, cultural, religious and spiritual values and practices... shall be recognised and protected" (ILO, 1989). Further, this document declares such Indigenous rights as the right to chart their own path to development, the right for their environments to be protected, the right to maintain their own customs and institutions and the right to access services such as health and education which are provided in culturally appropriate ways, for example, education in Indigenous language. Considerable attention is given to the issue of Indigenous lands and resources, including ownership of and/or access to their traditional lands, the right to ownership of and/or benefits from their natural resources, required measures of consultation and redress if these rights are infringed. Because of the strength of the pronouncements made within this convention, only seventeen states have ratified it and have thus bound themselves to its provisions.¹²

Surpassing the ILO's No. 169 Convention and presenting a potential future pinnacle of Indigenous rights is the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (hence forth called the Draft Declaration). It has been described as:

...perhaps the most representative document that the United Nations has ever produced, representative in the sense that its normative statements reflect in a more than token way, the experience, perspectives and contributions of indigenous peoples. In a word, it is a document that was produced in a decade long spirit of equal dialogue and mutual recognition (Representative of the Grand Council of Crees cited in Community Aid Abroad (CAA), 1999).

¹² As of 2005, the ratifying states included: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominica, Ecuador, Fiji, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela. See: <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/ratifce.pl?C169>.

The Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) was the catalyst to the Draft Declaration. It was formed following a study within the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1971 that focused on discrimination against Indigenous peoples. The WGIP held its first meeting in Geneva in 1982 and was charged with two duties:

- Review developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous populations and
- Give special attention to the evolution of standards concerning rights of such populations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), no date).

The WGIP stands out amongst the multitude of international organisations operating at the global level because of the access it gives to Indigenous peoples.¹³ The WGIP's task of overseeing the "evolution of standards" has been partially fulfilled by the effort it has made since 1985 in creating and fostering the implementation of the Draft Declaration.

The Draft Declaration is an evolving document that is being shaped by numerous discussions and amendments within the WGIP forum. The WGIP submitted its finalised text in 1994 which went to the Commission on Human Rights for its consideration. This marked the opening up of the text to comment and debate particularly on behalf of concerned governments whose support would be needed to get it adopted by the UN General Assembly by the target date of 2005 which marked

¹³ Former Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in Australia, Robert Tickner described it thus: "The drafting process for the Declaration and the WGIP forum are very informal and are designed for maximum participation by indigenous people, many of whom attend the occasion in their traditional dress and speak their own indigenous language" (2001, p. 303).

the close of the UN's International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

Complex and difficult meetings followed in subsequent years as the Indigenous representatives called for acceptance of the Draft Declaration without amendment while various government representatives demanded significant changes.¹⁴ To date, attempts to secure the adoption of the Draft Declaration have not yet succeeded but the WGIP renewed its operating mandate in 2005 in order to continue the struggle to achieve its adoption.¹⁵

One of the most important principles of the Draft Declaration is the right to self-determination (Article Three),¹⁶ which serves as the foundation of all of the other principles advocated within the document. This key principle has also been the most opposed, particularly by the United States and Australia¹⁷ who see it providing Indigenous peoples with the right of secession from the territorial states in which they reside (CAA, 1999). It is difficult to see how compromise can be secured on this issue because the right to control their present and future circumstances in all aspects (social, cultural, environmental, economic and political) is seen by Indigenous people as the only path to rectify past injustices, dispossession and

¹⁴ These developments are well described on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission's (ATSIC) website where extensive materials are available under the title "An analysis of the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples" (ATSIC, no date).

¹⁵ There is also now the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples which is an advisory body to the UN's Economic and Social Council with a mandate to discuss indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights. See http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/about_us.html.

¹⁶ Article Three states "Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development" (Draft Declaration, 1999).

¹⁷ Prior to 1995, the Australian government supported the use of the term "self-determination" within the Draft Declaration arguing that "...the principle of the territorial integrity of states is sufficiently enshrined internationally that a reference to self-determination in the Draft Declaration would not imply a right to secession" (Butler, 2000). With the change to the Howard-led Liberal coalition government in 1995, the use of this term was opposed because of a stated concern with the problem of secession; this government expressed a preference for the term "self-management". Community Aid Abroad (CAA) became so concerned about Australia's obstructionist role in these discussions that it used its advocacy network called "Polliewatch" to ask its supporters to lobby the Australian government to support Indigenous rights (see CAA, 1999).

violation of their rights as the “First Peoples” of their lands.¹⁸ Unless governments such as the United States and Australia can be persuaded that honouring the rights of Indigenous peoples and remedying the past will not lead to secession and fragmentation, it is difficult to see how the Draft Declaration can be made meaningful.¹⁹ In the discussions on the Draft Declaration, many Indigenous representatives have repeatedly stated that few Indigenous peoples advocate secession; rather, they wish to negotiate an agreed settlement with the peoples with whom they co-exist which acknowledges Indigenous peoples’ right to govern themselves in the areas vital to their future as Indigenous peoples.²⁰ To prematurely cut off avenues for such a settlement defeats the entire purpose behind the Draft Declaration.²¹

Nonetheless, the Draft Declaration is important for the recognition it gives to the concerns of Indigenous peoples. It recognises both the collective and individual rights of Indigenous peoples, as many of these peoples come from communal

¹⁸ It is a more fundamental argument presented by Indigenous groups that the right to self-determination is a fundamental right of all peoples and thus cannot be denied to Indigenous peoples without being discriminatory and in breach of their human rights under international law (see Hansen, 2000).

¹⁹ The powerful example of embracing the demand for self-determination set by Canada, which shares similar circumstances to the United States and Australia, offers hope that such states can be persuaded. In 1999, Canada accepted a federal relationship with the Inuit nation of Nunavut marking the “latest development in Canada’s nation building” and “a profound shift in how Canada relates to Aboriginal people” (see:

<http://www.educationcanada.com/facts/index.phtml?sid=nu&a=5&lang=eng>). The full position of Canada on the issue of self-determination in the Draft Declaration is provided at http://www.usask.ca/nativelaw/iadir_canada.html.

²⁰ I am grateful for Vesper Tjukonai for pointing out that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) leaders are already asserting their rights to self-determination through such activities as creating the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra without any concern that official recognition has not followed. This discussion of ATSI contributions to the WGIP does not reflect the diversity of opinions of ATSI leaders nor the multitude of efforts they undertake to secure their Indigenous rights.

²¹ In addition to the thorny issue of self-determination, some states may have difficulty in signing the document because some of its provisions imply substantial financial costs linked to compliance. Such financial costs include proper compensation for compulsory acquisition of land or resources, loss of revenues due to protection of Indigenous rights to culture, knowledge and resources, compensation for previous violation of Indigenous property rights and substantial commitment of government revenues and resources to fund Indigenous peoples adequately to enable them to realise their right to self-determination to its fullest extent.

traditions but have adapted to the more individualistic cultures that have come to dominate them. It demands respect for Indigenous customs, laws, traditions, institutions and cultures. It delineates the special relationship that Indigenous people hold with their lands and waters and the “resources” that pertain to these. Within its many articles and statements are clear guidelines for the non-Indigenous communities around the globe to understand Indigenous aims and negotiate a shared future both globally and within the nation-states that they share.

The Draft Declaration stands to have substantial impact on the interests and the operations of the tourism industry. Its provisions could have significant effects on the financial rewards that accrue to non-Indigenous tourism operators and the wider tourism industry. Some of the provisions of the Draft Declaration that could have relevance include:

- it cordons off Indigenous culture from economic exploitation by outsiders without permission,²²
- it demands restitution for improper usurpation of Indigenous culture and knowledge,
- it blocks access to and affords protection of Indigenous sacred sites from non-Indigenous people and conversely,
- it demands Indigenous access to sacred sites that are under the ownership of others,
- it potentially could ban or restrict the use of Indigenous words and names by non-Indigenous people,
- it advocates the provision of public education and information to non-Indigenous people which teaches them of the “dignity and diversity of their (Indigenous peoples’) cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations” (Article 16),

²² This is very important in Australia for example where ATSI cultural tours frequently include a “bush tucker and bush medicine” component and provide a prime opportunity for representatives of pharmaceutical companies to act as tourists and seize this knowledge which can reap profits if patentable.

- it calls for Indigenous participation in decision-making at all levels in decisions that affect them,
- it advocates for the Indigenous right to maintain and manage their own development and subsistence and calls for compensation when this right is impinged upon,
- it provides a strong statement of the right to ownership and control of their total environments,²³
- it provides the right to conservation, restoration and protection of their total environment (and thus could limit development projects),
- it describes a right to “full ownership, control and protection of... cultural and intellectual property”,²⁴
- it asserts that Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their development strategies and that states must secure their consent²⁵ before approving development projects affecting their lands and resources (with requirements for fair compensation to address harmful environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impacts),²⁶ and lastly,
- it argues that Indigenous peoples have the right to exercise self-determination through their own institutions and structures equating to autonomy or self-government in all matters such as their culture, religion, society, economy and resources.

²³ The full wording of Article 26 is worthy of inclusion: “Indigenous peoples have the right to own, develop, control and use the lands and territories, including the total environment of the lands, air, waters, coastal seas, sea-ice, flora and fauna and other resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. This includes the right to the full recognition of their laws, traditions and customs, land-tenure systems and institutions for the development and management of resources, and the right to effective measures by States to prevent any interference with, alienation of or encroachment upon these rights” (Draft Declaration, 1999). Should this Article be accepted, it could mean for example that protected area managers who wish to keep their National Parks as “pristine wilderness” for ecotourism could not prevent the Indigenous peoples “owning” a land designated as a National Park from using it for their economic development. Similarly, traditional hunting and whaling practices that appal some sensitive ecotourists could no longer be banned by conservation legislation as is currently done.

²⁴ The full text of Article 29 reads: “Indigenous peoples are entitled to the recognition of the full ownership, control and protection of their cultural and intellectual property. They have the right to special measures to control, develop and protect their sciences, technologies and cultural manifestations, including human and other genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs and visual and performing arts” (Draft Declaration, 1999).

²⁵ The term “consent” here is very important. Previous government policies have utilised the term “consultation” which is too weak because it in practice can mean utilisation of processes which give a veneer of respect for Indigenous viewpoints while allowing the developers to conduct “business as usual”. Consent means that developers and governments have to negotiate a mutually agreed outcome which shifts power in the favour of the Indigenous peoples concerned with the outcomes of that development project.

²⁶ This broad and sensitive acknowledgement of the impacts relevant in an Indigenous cultural context is important in the Ngarrindjeri case study that follows in Section 6.4. Their experiences during the Hindmarsh Island bridge conflict illustrates the spiritual and cultural damage that an inappropriate development project can wreak on an Indigenous community.

From this brief outline of relevant provisions with potential impact on tourism, it is evident that the Draft Declaration is an important document with the potential to shift the balance of power in the tourism encounter in favour of Indigenous peoples. An outcome from the Draft Declaration might be the growing acceptance of self-determination in tourism or Indigenous rights in tourism. Such a phenomenon would include the right to choose whether and how to engage with tourism, the requirement of “prior informed consent” (Johnston, 2003, p. 122)²⁷ in negotiations with Indigenous people in the development process and the right of Indigenous people to protect their sacred sites, knowledges and spirituality by not sharing them. Johnston has provided considerable reflection on the implications of the development of an Indigenous rights regime for the processes and conduct of the tourism industry (2000, 2003).²⁸

However, it must be noted that the Draft Declaration is a “non-binding declaration” and so places no enforceable constraints upon its signatories who must legislate appropriate measures within national law to make the Draft Declaration’s provisions

²⁷ Johnston’s work suggests that “prior informed consent” would obligate non-Indigenous negotiators to ensure that an Indigenous community has a readiness to negotiate (that negotiations are not forced on them); that the Indigenous community is informed of both the pros and the cons of the proposal; that appropriate Indigenous protocols are followed when negotiations are planned; that relationships are built with the Indigenous people party to the negotiations; and that their concerns are not only heard but responded to with an understanding and respect for their rights.

²⁸ Johnston provides recommendations to bridge the gap between Indigenous peoples’ goals and those supporting the tourism industry that wish to work with Indigenous peoples. These include: building sustainable partnerships by learning and respecting Indigenous values, protocols and processes (2003, pp. 131-132) including the most important value, building relationships rather than relying on models and mechanisms of managerial consultation; setting a policy of “prior informed consent” as the industry standard secured by both legislation and impact assessment protocol (2000, p. 96); respect for Indigenous conservation knowledge and empowerment of Indigenous peoples to negotiate by provision of appropriate resources and information so that they are able to prepare themselves for the negotiations as well as the well-resourced people they will face from industry and government at the negotiating table. Johnston outlines three Indigenous demands for change in current negotiating practice: 1) the format, agenda and outputs of the negotiations process need to be agreed prior to the start of the process with Indigenous leaders (and not imposed upon them) 2) funding and resources need to be provided to Indigenous participants for them to prepare their own independent analyses and 3) government bodies and other organisations participating in the negotiations need to be required to abide by international Indigenous and human rights codes and standards (2003, pp. 127-128).

enforceable in their national contexts. As a part of “soft law”, the Draft Declaration’s power is largely in moral authority which would result in time in the development of “...a growing body of customary international law in the area of Indigenous peoples’ rights” (ATSIC, no date).²⁹ At another level, the effort to formulate the Draft Declaration and secure its passage has been an unqualified success. This has been in the formation of a network of communication and support among the world’s Indigenous peoples. In the words of Mick Dodson who attended meetings in the mid-1990s as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner:

What I found was that I was part of a world community of indigenous peoples spanning the planet: experiencing the same problems and suffering the same alienation, marginalisation and sense of powerlessness. We had gathered there united by our shared frustration with the dominant systems in our own countries and their consistent failure to deliver justice... We were looking to and demanding justice from a higher authority (quoted in CAA, 1999).

Johnston states that the Indigenous rights regime is transforming the Indigenous presence at the international level from one of obscurity to one of real effect. In particular, she cites the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as important:

Gradually, indigenous peoples are finding that they have a voice in international policy on tourism. The CBD, signed by 175 countries since 1993, has been pivotal in facilitating this breakthrough. It is legally binding and provides clear benchmarks for safeguarding the interests of indigenous peoples and other local communities. Most significant in this regard is Article 8(j), which obliges governments to protect and promote indigenous knowledge systems for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, while ensuring the equitable sharing of related benefits” (2003, p. 125).³⁰

²⁹ Should the Draft Declaration be adopted by the United Nations’ General Assembly, it would then become the minimum standard for the protection of Indigenous peoples around the world.

³⁰ The CBD’s Article 8(j) has the potential to give real meaning to ecotourism and sustainability in tourism as well as protecting the interest of Indigenous peoples.

The desire for recognition of Indigenous rights in tourism is evident. It can be seen in the demand for Hawaiian sovereignty in the face of an almost genocidal tourism impact on Kanaka Ma'oli (see Hawai'i Declaration, 1989; "Tourism in Independent Hawai'i", 1997, p. 24). It is evident in the actions of the Kuna General Congress which ratified a Statute on Tourism in Kuna Yala in 1996 which "...represents a carefully planned strategy to direct the tourism industry to the needs of the entire Kuna nation" (Snow, 2001, p. 1). It is demonstrated by the development of "beach fale tourism" in Samoa where Samoans have proactively shaped tourism to entrench Indigenous ownership and control (see Scheyvens, 2004).³¹ It is also evident in the Ngarrindjeri case study provided in this chapter.

At the global level, Indigenous peoples are still learning of the full implications of Indigenous rights and are networking to learn from and support each other in these efforts (as done via the non-governmental organisation Indigenous Tourism Rights International for example). Evidence of this comes from such statements as the Oaxaca Declaration from the International Forum on Indigenous Tourism in 2002, which asserts:

Indigenous Peoples are not mere 'stakeholders', but internationally-recognized holders of collective and human rights, including the rights of self-determination, informed consent, and effective participation. Tourism is beneficial for Indigenous communities only when it is based on and enhances our self-determination (McLaren, 2003, p. 3).

³¹ Beach fale tourism refers to the type of tourism development undertaken in the Pacific Island state of Samoa. Scheyvens describes it as "an indigenous, home-grown initiative" (2004). Fales are the traditional housing of Samoa; they are huts without walls built from local materials. Fales are built within villages, are run by local people, are geared to tourist-local interaction, educate visitors on Samoan cultural norms and are integrated into the local economy. They stand in stark contrast to the resort model of development. Scheyvens (2004) states "what makes beach fale tourism stand out from dominant forms of tourism around the Pacific is that this is a form of development which entrenches Indigenous ownership and control, while building upon local skills, knowledge and resources".

However, as Butler and Hinch's analysis of Indigenous tourism emphasises and this chapter will demonstrate, there is an important power differential as the tourism industry is dominated by non-Indigenous interests and this limits the ability for Indigenous communities to exert control over tourism to secure such goals as self-determination or mitigate harmful impacts on their communities (1996, pp. 11-12).

McLaren warns against the tendency to "lump" all Indigenous peoples into one homogenised group who share the same experiences and the same concerns (1998, p. 81). She recommends "each group should be viewed within its own set of circumstances, concepts about land use and development, and most important, according to its own right to self-determination" (1998, p. 81). In recognition of this diversity, this chapter provides a case study of the Ngarrindjeri community of South Australia in order to provide insights into the lived experiences of an Indigenous community interacting with the powerful forces of tourism and globalisation. This analysis will provide valuable insights that can be used to reflect on the conceptual discussion provided in chapters two through five.

6.4 The Ngarrindjeri of South Australia

The Ngarrindjeri are the Aboriginal people of the Lower Murray River, the Lower Lakes and the Coorong.³² The Ngarrindjeri have had a long engagement with the forces of tourism and capitalism since the advent of colonisation in South Australia.

Parsons notes how the Ngarrindjeri had been encouraged to provide "tourist

³² As Bell states, "the extent of Ngarrindjeri lands and the divisions within their territory are not beyond dispute..." (1998, p. 29). Ngarrindjeri are generally described as the people of the Murray River, the Lakes and the Coorong. Their lands and waters stretch from Swanport on the Murray River, to Kingston in the Southeast, to Cape Jervis in the west (see Figure 6.1).

corroborees” from the earliest part of the colonial era (1997). It was particularly their invaluable craft of mat and basket weaving that evolved from a cultural mainstay to a cottage industry and thence to a tourist attraction. Jenkin contends:

The only major aspect of Ngarrindjeri culture which had survived to flourish during these decades [1890s-1911] was mat and basket making. This was due to the fact that the people by this time had been incorporated into the capitalist system; and since the collapse of the fishing industry, mat and basket making was the only traditional occupation that was at all profitable (1979, p. 227).

Mattingley and Hampton record that Ngarrindjeri women made baskets and feather flowers to sell to visitors and that in 1910, sale of woven baskets and mats was successful in earning just under 100 pounds for what was then Point McLeay Mission (now called Raukkan) (1992, p.186). Jenkin describes how interest in Ngarrindjeri crafts quickly led to tours to the mission by the paddle steamers which took holidaymakers from Goolwa to buy handicrafts, hear the children sing and “gaze” at the Aboriginals. Jenkin takes a critical view of it: “...even in the 1940s tourists were treating Raukkan as a human zoo...” (1979, p. 228). It should be noted that the transition to selling “trinkets” to tourists was a vital necessity because the pattern of colonisation in South Australia deprived the Ngarrindjeri of access to their food and resources when they were removed from their lands and placed in missions such as Raukkan or fringe camps on the edges of towns like Meningie. Co-opted into the colonial economy through rations and handouts they found that selling weaving was one of the few options for earning money to purchase supplements to meagre rations (N. Gollan, pers. comm., 5 January 2002).³³

³³ See Appendix G for details of personal communications informing this thesis.

Today, contemporary tourism has spread right across Ngarrindjeri lands but for the purposes of this thesis, the focus is on the Coorong or Kurangk³⁴ area because of the intensity of tourism's pressure on this area and the heated politics it has seen. This area includes the "gateway" holiday town of Goolwa, Hindmarsh Island, the Murray Mouth and the Coorong National Park (CNP).³⁵ See Figure 6.1 for a map indicating the extent of Ngarrindjeri country.

The Coorong and surrounding areas are amongst South Australian tourism's prime offerings and provide South Australia with one of its few icons (Higgins-Desbiolles & Jones, 2002, p. 29). Attributes that contribute to its drawing power include: its short distance from the state capital, Adelaide; its location on the important route between Adelaide and Melbourne that includes the famous Great Ocean Road scenic drive; and its iconic status for South Australia as a rugged and wild coastal area that is easily conjured up in the Australian imagination as "Storm Boy country".³⁶ The Coorong National Park also attracts particular niche markets that the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) has designated as lucrative to pursue, including nature-based, ecotourism,³⁷ bird watching, water sports and adventure tourism.

³⁴ The Ngarrindjeri name for the Coorong is Kurangk and means "narrow neck" which refers to the narrow neck of waters trapped as lagoons between the Younghusband Peninsula's dune system facing the Southern Ocean and the mainland.

³⁵ The area selected involves: two tourism regions, the Fleurieu Peninsula and the Limestone Coast; two local government areas, Alexandrina Shire Council and Coorong District Council; one National Park subject to three international agreements, including the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.

³⁶ For example, see SATC's *Discover the Secrets of South Australia* Media Kit compiled to take advantage of the Sydney Olympic Games. Here in the section entitled "Aboriginal Dreaming in the Coorong", it starts "It's been more than 20 years since Colin Thiele's gripping short story was made into one of Australia's first feature films, *Storm Boy*, but fortunately the setting for this tale about a boy, his pet pelican and hermit father hasn't changed all that much" (SATC, 2000, p. 17).

³⁷ Nature-based tourism is a broader category that encompasses ecotourism.

In addition to the Coorong's many resources and attributes that serve as tourism drawcards, Ngarrindjeri culture, and evidence of their archaeological occupation of the area are also important attractors. Besides there being a small but lucrative niche market for Indigenous tourism products, these products also serve to "add value" to the Coorong tourism experience by contributing to the diverse range of tourism opportunities available to potential tourists and thus increasing the region's drawing power. This is apparent in such brochures as the *Secrets* brochure for the Limestone Coast/South East for 2002.³⁸ On the pages devoted to the Coorong, the brochure itemises what it designates as "must see and do". The list starts with "search for ancient middens along a series of captivating walking trails"³⁹ and "learn about Aboriginal heritage at the Coorong Wilderness Lodge or Camp Coorong". This is followed by other attractions such as nature tours, boating and bird watching.

It is also evident in many of the planning instruments that relate to the area, that the Ngarrindjeri potential to add value to tourism is recognised and designated for exploitation. For example, despite the damaging confrontation over Hindmarsh Island (discussed at 6.4.1.1), a management plan released for comment in 1999 freely recognised Ngarrindjeri association with the Island, claiming "their cultural values need to be recognised and protected" (Alexandrina Council, 1999, p. 8). However, a suspected ulterior motive is implied in the statement "there is potential for the Ngarrindjeri's association with the Island to attract additional visitation" (Alexandrina Council, 1999, p. 8). Similarly plans for the Coorong National Park

³⁸ Some Ngarrindjeri have expressed suspicion that the SATC's use of the concept "Discover the Secrets" marketing campaign is an attempt to capitalise on the notoriety of "Secret Women's Business" which became the popular and media cliché to describe the proponents assertion of women's sacred association with Hindmarsh Island which became much of the focus of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge conflict (discussed in Section 6.4.1.1).

³⁹ This is incompatible with Ngarrindjeri concerns to protect these significant midden and burial sites dotted throughout the Coorong.

(CNP) highlight the importance of Ngarrindjeri cultural values and relationships to the land, water, plant and animal life of the Coorong. The instrumental motivation is overtly asserted: “the presence of a continuous living indigenous culture provides a unique tourism opportunity within the Coorong National Park” (National Parks and Wildlife South Australia, 1999, p. 11).

As in many other places where Indigenous culture is exploited by the tourism industry, the Coorong has been subject to conflict as the development that tourism requires clashes with the values of the Ngarrindjeri who have obligations of custodianship and a need to ensure their lifeways can continue.

6.4.1 Conflicts

6.4.1.1 Hindmarsh Island Bridge conflict

The Hindmarsh Island Bridge conflict⁴⁰ played a pivotal role in Australian politics and has had momentous and continuing repercussions for the Ngarrindjeri. This conflict emerged in the early 1990s as a result of a plan to expand a marina and residential development on Hindmarsh Island/ Kumarangk.⁴¹ This development sought to capitalise on the island’s proximity to the South Australian state capital, Adelaide, and its tourism and recreational drawing potential, strengthened by its proximity to the Coorong National Park (CNP). In order to obtain planning approval, a bridge was required to replace the car ferry that provided access between the town of Goolwa and the island in order to accommodate the heightened traffic

⁴⁰ It is not possible to do justice to the full history and ramifications of this issue within the space of this chapter. Therefore only the relevant and most basic points will be made. For more in-depth insight, refer to Bell, 1998; Gelder & Jacobs, 1997; Kenny, 1996; Simons, 2003; Taubman, 2002; Tickner, 2001.

⁴¹ Kumarangk is the Ngarrindjeri name for Hindmarsh Island.

the development would attract. The marina development and the bridge that followed were the subject of a tripartite agreement between the developer's company, Binalong Pty Ltd, the South Australian Labor government and the local council at Goolwa, now called the Alexandrina Council (Simons, 2003, p. 60).⁴² Opposition to the bridge first emerged from environmentalists, community groups and trade unionists. However, when some of the Ngarrindjeri⁴³ voiced objections based on sacred sites and the spiritual significance of the island (and in particular, the so-called "secret women's business"),⁴⁴ the conflict escalated and drew national and international attention. Unable to get protection under the state government's Heritage Protection legislation (Kenny, 1998, p. 5), the Ngarrindjeri appealed to the federal government to use the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984. Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Robert Tickner placed a twenty-five year ban on bridge construction in July 1994 following investigation of Ngarrindjeri claims in an inquiry conducted by Cheryl Saunders.⁴⁵ However, an appeal by the Chapmans (the developers of the Hindmarsh Island marina) for a judicial review led to Tickner's ban being overturned.⁴⁶ In late 1994, when "a handful" of Ngarrindjeri "dissidents" (Brodie, 2002, p. 151) came forward claiming

⁴² It is too difficult to describe fully the complexity of the politics operating behind this issue throughout the 1990s (such as the state government facing collapse of its main financial institution, the State Bank, the rivalries between politicians on the left and right of politics and the dynamics operating in the media). The simplified point made here is that both the state government and the local council were firmly tied up through these agreements to building the bridge. For a more nuanced discussion of these events Simons (2003) is invaluable.

⁴³ The Ngarrindjeri community fragmented during this event, with the people advocating sacred sites and women's connections with the island being labelled "proponents" and those denying these attributes being labelled "dissidents". Kenny claimed that of the some 2,500 Ngarrindjeri, the "vast majority ... support the opposition to the Hindmarsh Island bridge" (1998, p. 3).

⁴⁴ The restricted and sacred knowledge that certain Ngarrindjeri women claimed to hold about Hindmarsh Island was referred to in the media as "Secret women's business" – a term which has since been picked up in popular discourse much to the offence of Ngarrindjeri proponents.

⁴⁵ The Saunders Inquiry was the only inquiry which was given the information on the confidential women's sacred knowledge because Tickner respected the restricted nature of this information and appointed Saunders (a woman) to be informed of its content on his behalf (Kenny, 1998, p. 6).

⁴⁶ The ban was overturned because the Notice of Inquiry for the Saunders Inquiry failed to precisely identify the area covered by the application for the protection and because Tickner did not consider the content of the women's knowledge himself but out of cultural respect had instead delegated that role to a woman – Cheryl Saunders (Kenny, 1998, p.6).

they had no knowledge of “women’s business” (or denied its current validity), and politicians and the media became involved in this split,⁴⁷ the state government called a Royal Commission.⁴⁸ In 1995, the Commission found that the Ngarrindjeri proponents of “secret women’s business” were “fabricators” of their stated cultural beliefs. The Ngarrindjeri returned to Tickner with another application under the federal Heritage Act but a change in federal government from Keating’s Labor to Howard’s Liberal-Coalition government in March 1996 saw the new Aboriginal Affairs Minister, John Herron, refuse to appoint a female Minister to analyse the women’s sacred knowledge and so the Ngarrindjeri proponents refused to cooperate. In order to prevent further Ngarrindjeri applications for protection and thus ongoing delays, the Hindmarsh Island Bridge Bill 1996 was introduced to parliament. This legislation overrode the provisions of the 1984 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act specifically for the Hindmarsh Island area and thus terminated avenues for Ngarrindjeri use of the heritage protection legislation to safeguard their culture (Simons, 2003, pp. 404–405). The Bill passed in May 1997⁴⁹ and bridge construction was under way by October 1999. The determination of the

⁴⁷ The roles of federal liberal politician Ian McLachlan and reporter Chris Kenny in these events was decisive (see Simons, 2003).

⁴⁸ Tellingly, the terms of reference set for this Royal Commission were to report on “whether the ‘women’s business’ or any aspect of the ‘women’s business’ was a fabrication and if so a) the circumstances relating to such a fabrication; b) the extent of the fabrication; and c) the purpose of such a fabrication” (Stevens, 1995, p. 3). Twenty-three women proponents signed a statement presented to the Commission which in part stated: “We are deeply offended that a Government in this day and age has the audacity to order an inquiry into our secret, sacred, spiritual beliefs. Never before have [sic] any group of people had their spiritual beliefs scrutinised in this way... Women’s business does exist, has existed since time immemorial and will continue to exist where there are Aboriginal women who are able to continue to practise their culture” (Brodie, 2002, p. 151).

⁴⁹ The Ngarrindjeri challenged the Hindmarsh Island Bridge (HIB) Act in the High Court on the basis of the amendment to the Australian Constitution of 1967 which gave the Federal government powers to make “special laws” for Aboriginal people (section 51 –xxvi – informally referred to as “race power” clause). It was this constitutional amendment which enabled the ATSI Heritage Protection regime to be established in the first place – it was in the spirit of the 1967 referendum which gave Aboriginal people equal rights and intended to rectify the wrongs of the past. The Ngarrindjeri’s legal team read the “race power” clause in section 51 (xxvi) as empowering the federal government to only make “special laws” *for the benefit* of Aboriginal people and argued that the HIB Act clearly damaged Ngarrindjeri interests. While the court was divided on this matter, the outcome is that the HIB Act and other actions detrimental to Aboriginal people were determined acceptable under the “race powers” clause of the Constitution. See Kenny, 1998 for full details.

SA Royal Commission was called into question by a Federal High Court decision in August 2001 (in a court case brought by the developers of the marina, the Chapmans, against Aboriginal Affairs Minister Tickner and others) in which Justice von Doussa concluded: “I am not satisfied that the restricted women’s knowledge was fabricated or that it was not part of genuine Aboriginal traditions” (Barker, 2001).⁵⁰

Unfortunately for the Ngarrindjeri proponents, this finding came too late to stop the bridge, which was officially opened on 4 March 2001.

The unfolding of this conflict took longer than a decade, five government inquiries and more than thirty legal cases. It had significant impact not only for the Ngarrindjeri and other locals, but also nationally in its effects on native title and reconciliation policies, as well as the international arena of Indigenous rights. The diversity and multitude of often contradictory conclusions that were drawn from these events result from the variety of perspectives and analytical lenses employed to comprehend this torturous and momentous episode.

One Ngarrindjeri Elder, Veronica Brodie,⁵¹ summed up the experience as an assault on Aboriginal people’s rights to limit development in their “country”:

Aboriginal people were part of a game of political football. We were being played against one another while the developers and politicians were making as many gains as they could. We now have a better understanding of the issues facing us. The land grab and destruction of Aboriginal sacred sites will continue and we must be sure that the Coorong is protected from the expanding development (Brodie, 2001, p. 4).

Elsewhere, Brodie writes:

⁵⁰ The Ngarrindjeri proponents hailed this as a vindication of their claims.

⁵¹ A Ngarrindjeri “proponent”.

So our fear is that because they've built the bridge to Hindmarsh Island they'll eventually build a bridge across to Mundoo Island. And then they'll want to make a freeway right through down the Kurrangk [Coorong] for all the tourists. That will destroy all that vegetation and everything environmentally. And that's where my sister's ashes lie as well as many other old Ngarrindjeri burial grounds. That whole ninety-mile stretch will be destroyed. So we can't allow that to happen. That land is all that the Ngarrindjeri people have got left, which isn't so much, and it's classified as a national park. The Ngarrindjeri have got nothing else but that bit of heritage there at Camp Coorong, near Meningie, and other spots along the Coorong (2002, p. 183).

This incident illustrates the politics and power of development played out in a local and regional context, but it also illustrates more. The catalyst to a marina and residential development on this rather unimposing island was a product of insatiable demands for new “playgrounds” to satisfy the “culture-ideology of consumerism” (Sklair, 2002). Australia is experiencing a property boom with soaring demand for coastal residences and increased popularity of recreational boating and water sports. Since its expansion following completion of the bridge, the Marina Hindmarsh Island has been named one of the top five seaside property “hotspots” in Australia (Dunlevy, 2002); was designated “Marina of the Year” in the 2003 Australian Marine Awards by the Australian Marine Industry Federation⁵² and featured in Club Marine boating magazine as a “boating playground” (Robinson, 2002). It appears that the marina developers have been very successful in tapping into national and global networks to promote their facility in a competitive market. The key feature that they have capitalised upon is the proximity to the Coorong National Park.⁵³ Neither the environmental nor Aboriginal heritage attributes of the area were allowed to obstruct the plans to build the bridge that was required in order to create “the largest marina complex in the southern hemisphere”.

⁵² See: <http://www.marina-hi.com.au/news/Awards.htm>

⁵³ One of the Marina Hindmarsh Island's ads entitled “Live Next Door to Mother Nature” features the Coorong as its selling point; it calls the Coorong “one of the world's great nature reserves”. See: <http://www.marina-hi.com.au/news/18586-MH000-1..otherNature1.pdf>

In fact, the Hindmarsh Island Bridge conflict can also be read as a backlash by the Australian members of the transnational capitalist class (TCC) against the ability of Aboriginal people and environmentalists to block development on ecological or cultural-spiritual grounds. As Simons (2003) reports, federal liberal politician Ian McLachlan and media representatives such as Chris Kenny and Christopher Pearson played pivotal roles in fomenting the conflict. These men's roles then and subsequently could be read as outstanding examples of the workings of the Australian contingent of the TCC. In light of the dynamics of capitalist globalisation, their actions can be interpreted not only as attempting to secure unimpeded development in the Australian national context but also projecting a "pro-business" image internationally that is required to entice global capital to invest in Australia.

Such a perspective is supported by events surrounding the development of a federal government green paper on tourism policy in 2003. A headline in *The Australian* newspaper read "Black law 'poses a threat' to tourism" (Emerson, 2003, p.5). According to the report, National Tourism Alliance chairman Col Hughes responded to the green paper by seeking to prevent environmentalists and "Aboriginals" from blocking access to culturally or environmentally sensitive areas: "what we don't want is more and more sites being put in a basket saying 'quarantine the bloody things from tourists'". In an interview Hughes referred to restrictions at Uluru and the Great Barrier Reef as examples of "creeping restrictions on tourism and a lack of certainty for the industry" (Emerson, 2003, p. 5). While such positions can be seen as evidence of power struggles in the drive for development in a national context, from a capitalist globalisation perspective it must also be recognised that positions

such as Hughes' also address TNC and TCC audiences. In fact, Simons' (2003) analysis of the pro-development role of governments, developers, financial institutions and facets of the media in the Hindmarsh Island Bridge conflict reveals these can be read as scripted according to the precepts, demands and imperatives of capitalist globalisation as described by Gill (1995) and Sklair (2002).

From an ecological perspective, the continuing expansion of resort developments, second-home sites, retirement villages in seaside locations and suburban sprawl (which Hindmarsh Island exemplifies) are symptomatic of the serious pressures that humans are exerting on sensitive environments such as the Coorong wetlands. Not surprisingly, the Marina Hindmarsh Island markets its residential sites by inviting potential buyers to "Live next door to Mother Nature". One of the promises the Marina marketers make is the ability to leave your home, get in your boat moored at your own jetty and be in the Coorong National Park in a matter of minutes. The Marina also offers boat charters and boat tours to the tourists who have not bought residences at the Marina.⁵⁴ As a sign of just how important its location next to the Coorong National Park is to the prosperity of the Marina, the Marina owners were key advocates of the dredging operation that has been required since the Murray Mouth closed up in 2002 and which is one of the key indicators of the poor environmental state of the ecology of the Murray River and Coorong.

⁵⁴ While originally planned as a residential development, the Marina Hindmarsh Island was also viewed as a catalyst to increase tourism visitation to the area through its development of resort facilities, holiday rental accommodation, boat rentals, shopping and hospitality facilities such as Rankine's Tavern; hosting tour operations such as the cruises run by Coorong Tours; and associated events such as its annual "On Water Boating Festival" (Higgins-Desbiolles & Jones, 2002). Since the opening of the bridge to Hindmarsh Island, the profile of Hindmarsh Island in Fleurieu regional tourism marketing has increased greatly.

It is important to remember that the Coorong National Park is a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. It hosts eighty-five species of birds many of which are migratory and it is subject to the Japanese-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement and the China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement which requires protection of habitat for such birds. It is obvious that the Coorong is ecologically important and requires protection. The additional pressures of tourism that the Marina and bridge developments have brought to a sensitive wetland of international importance demonstrate the power of the market imperative which demands free access of tourists to such environments and refuses pressures to ban or severely limit visitation.

The Hindmarsh Island Bridge episode has also highlighted important disjunctions between the values of non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people which demonstrate that nothing short of an Indigenous rights regime will protect their interests, and that rhetorical policies of “multiculturalism” or “reconciliation” are far too weak to resist the pressures of corporate interests and capital. Evidence of this disjunction can be gleaned from a frequently cited exchange within the Royal Commission during the cross-examination of Ngarrindjeri Elder George Trevorrow in which he was interrogated about “women’s business”.⁵⁵ Instead he attempted to share the cultural significance that was culturally appropriate for him to explain.⁵⁶

A ... [I]t is important to the Ngarrindjeri culture because of the meeting of the waters. I didn't really want to say this, but the place of the waters relates to what we call – the Ngarrindjeri people call Ngatji, which is each clan group's symbolic totem, so to

⁵⁵ That this question was even put to a man, indicates the lack of cultural respect in the conduct of the Royal Commission. Mr Trevorrow indicated he knew nothing about the content of women's knowledge but instead would speak only of the significance that was appropriate for him to explain.

⁵⁶ Mr Trevorrow's responses are designated with an “A” for answer and his interrogation by Mr Smith is designated with a “Q” for question in the transcript of the proceedings of the Royal Commission.

speak. Those places like that is where these things breed, where they live, where they feed, all those things.⁵⁷ You upset the totem area, you are upsetting everybody. But I don't expect you would understand that, the Ngarrindjeri Ngatji.

Q. Let me put a suggestion to you: what you are talking about is a disturbance of the environment. Is that right?

A. No, more than that. To what those Ngatji are to the people. They are not just animals and fish and snakes and things to us. They are real. They are more like people. Spiritual...

Q. ...so your objection to the bridge really comes down to an environmental objection, isn't it?

A. No, a spiritual...

Q. ...a question of protecting the environment from a lot of people coming to the island and ruining it? That's what it is, isn't it?

A. You interpret it as environment, I don't. We have different interpretations it seems. We cannot, as Aboriginal people, separate environment and culture. They go hand-in-hand.

Q. In this sense you are at one with the conservation movement, aren't you, who were interested in stopping the bridge to protect the birds, the wetlands, the natural habitat that's provided for bird life on the Island?

A. I doubt very much whether they would know much about Ngarrindjeri Ngatjis. They wouldn't know nothing.

Q. That's much the same sort of argument though, isn't it?

A. No, nowhere near it (G. Trevorrow, 1995, pp. 6423–6425).

What we see from this exchange is that the Ngarrindjeri hold an attachment to the area under development which cannot be explained in a language readily understandable to the mainstream establishment, represented in this case by the legal system but shared with the government, the media and others who support the development agenda. In particular, those who labelled the Ngarrindjeri “fabricators” of their culture revealed an inability to understand that groups such as the Ngarrindjeri who inhabit the more “settled” areas of Australia still retain cultural and

⁵⁷ The term “meeting of the waters” refers to the mingling of salt water from the Southern Ocean and the fresh water from the Murray River which occurs in the waters surrounding Hindmarsh Island and provides the ecology for proliferation of fish, waterbirds and other Ngarrindjeri *ngatjis*.

spiritual traditions and attachments to country. As Hemming observes, the line of interrogation above implies that the Ngarrindjeri do not retain cultural values and were thus being led by the environmentalist agenda; as a result the Commission believed that “Ngarrindjeri people had largely ‘lost’ their culture and associations with parts of their country such as Hindmarsh Island and the vicinity” (Hemming, 1996, pp. 27–29).

On the contrary, Mr Trevorrow’s comments above indicate that the Ngarrindjeri still retain their cultural and spiritual beliefs and that their concerns with the developments around Hindmarsh Island cannot be dismissed as merely “anti-developmental” sentiment, as they concern the very life force and future of Ngarrindjeri people and culture. Similarly, in a speech presented to Ngarrindjeri proponent supporters immediately after the opening ceremony for the bridge,⁵⁸ Ngarrindjeri Elder Tom Trevorrow said:

My Elders, My People, our friends, brothers and sisters, we are gathered here today in sadness and pain while they up there celebrate the opening of a Genocide Bridge. This bridge has been secured and built upon our land across our waters without our consent. It has been built in a place which is very spiritually and culturally important to our Heritage and Beliefs. It has been secured and built by people who can’t understand or don’t want to understand other people’s Heritage and Beliefs, especially if other people’s Heritage and Beliefs interfere with developments that could possibly make big money, or perhaps they fear that to recognize other people’s Heritage and Beliefs might mean to recognize their official rights ... We take time today to speak to the spirits of our old people, the spirits of all things upon these lands and under these waters: we are sorry, we tried and tried; we are sorry. (T. Trevorrow, 2003, p. 63)

⁵⁸ While the Alexandrina Council hosted an official opening celebration for the bridge on 4 March 2001, the supporters of the embattled Ngarrindjeri proponents gathered in sadness nearby for a silent protest. When the official ceremony closed, attendees were invited to walk across the bridge (a disturbing reminder of the reconciliation bridge walks of 2000 held around Australia for people to demonstrate their commitment to reconciliation). While this occurred, Ngarrindjeri proponents and their supporters gathered at Amelia Park, just left of the bridge, where Tom Trevorrow spoke.

The experiences that the Ngarrindjeri suffered during the unfolding of these events indicate very clearly that Ngarrindjeri people and culture could not be protected by the human rights accorded the Ngarrindjeri within the Australian legal process. As noted earlier in Section 6.3 and discussed later in 6.4.5, there is a clear need for entrenched Indigenous rights. Since the conflict, ironically, Ngarrindjeri attachment to the Island and the larger region has been promoted as a tourism asset. This suggests that while the Ngarrindjeri were defeated in their attempts to assert their cultural and spiritual traditions in the political realm, in the aftermath of their defeat they are encouraged to sustain and perform these very same cultural and spiritual traditions to promote tourism.⁵⁹

6.4.1.2 IYE 2002 Australian launch

Another incident that contributed to Ngarrindjeri determination to pursue an Indigenous rights agenda was their experiences relating to the International Year of Ecotourism 2002. The IYE 2002 was designated by the United Nations in order to highlight the potential of ecotourism to contribute to economic development and conservation of environments. Issues and activities for the IYE 2002 at the global level have already been discussed in Section 4.8.3. As Pleumarom asserts, those critical of corporatised tourism see ecotourism promotion as part of the strategy to appropriate the environments of others for the benefit of tourism business owners and elite tourists (1999a, 1999c, 2000).

⁵⁹ Local tour operators, regional tourism associations and the SATC benefit from the attraction of Ngarrindjeri culture and use their language, their culture and their history in their publicity and tourism interpretation for tourists. Following Altman's call to tourism operators to pay rent to ATSI communities (1989, p. 474) and the demands of advocates of Indigenous rights, users of culture could be required to remunerate the Ngarrindjeri for this benefit (provided permission for such use is given).

In Australia, the IYE 2002 initiative was led by the Ecotourism Association of Australia and the Department of Science, Industry, Resources, Sports and Tourism. Other supporting agencies included the South Australian Tourism Commission, Australian Tourist Commission, Aboriginal Tourism Australia and Tourism Task Force. The South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) won the right to conduct the Australian launch of the International Year of Ecotourism, one suspects because of their status as major sponsors of the project. In this era of globalising capitalism, South Australia, like many other locales, is trying to “sell” itself on the global tourism market to compensate for loss of competitiveness in its traditional industries.

The SATC chose the Coorong in Ngarrindjeri country as the venue in which to showcase the nature-based and ecotourism jewels of South Australia. Their committee⁶⁰ chose Godfrey’s Landing⁶¹ in the Coorong National Park as the site for the event and planned to transport one hundred VIPs from Adelaide to Hindmarsh Island where tour boats would take them past the Murray Mouth before landing at the event site. Although the Ngarrindjeri are recognised in most tourism brochures and planning documents as the traditional owners of this land and frequent mention is made of the need to consult and involve their community organisations in management, they were not consulted during the planning stages for this significant event. They were only invited along to give the traditional “welcome to country” and for one of their dance troupes to perform some traditional dances (M. Rigney, pers. comm., 29 January 2002). This is indicative of enduring colonial attitudes that linger in the minds of tourism industry players where Indigenous people are

⁶⁰ The organising committee included representatives of the SATC, National Parks and Wildlife SA, academics from a local university and tour operators.

⁶¹ This is a very sensitive site for the Ngarrindjeri. However, it is already a heavily used landing point for eco-cruises operating within the CNP.

participants to add colour and value, not Indigenous people with rights that must be respected much less owners or custodians who should be fully consulted. In particular, the committee supporting the event should have recognised that the Ngarrindjeri people have a right to have a say about what happens in their country and they should have been represented on the committee from the outset.

A few weeks before the launch, when the Ngarrindjeri received the request to dance at the event, they grew very angry about the lack of respect for proper protocol demonstrated by the SATC.⁶² After consulting with the leadership in the state office of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), the Ngarrindjeri put the SATC on notice that they were dissatisfied with these events. This resulted in a meeting with representatives of the SATC, including the CEO, Bill Spurr, at which Matt Rigney, Chairperson of the Ngarrindjeri Native Title Committee, said that the Ngarrindjeri were insulted by SATC's conduct and that they wanted to conclude a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with SATC with agreed protocols that would prevent such difficulties arising in the future and that SATC management should undergo cultural training at Camp Coorong (M. Rigney, pers. comm., 29 January 2004).

In light of the conciliatory meeting with SATC and reflecting their desires to use such events to communicate their cultural values, the Ngarrindjeri decided to participate in the launch and voice their desire for ecotourism on their lands (M. Rigney, pers. comm., 29 January 2004). The Ngarrindjeri delegation greeted the VIPs invited to the event with banners proclaiming "You're on Ngarrindjeri country"

⁶² This anger was caused not only by the lack of proper consultation, but also at the insensitive use of Hindmarsh Island as the transit point for the VIPs to board boats for the Coorong.

and “Treaty – Let’s get it right”. The *Rupelle* of the Ngarrindjeri *Tendi*,⁶³ George Trevorrow, gave the opening address. He first drew attention to the significance of the event for the Ngarrindjeri and revealed the serious nature of the occasion to the guests when he said:

...I would like to propose a moment’s silence in respect of the Ngarrindjeri people who have lived and lost their lives for the protection of this land. Close to here at Punmarung is the resting-place of one of our respected and much loved elders Auntie Leila Rankine.⁶⁴ She fought for the preservation of the *Kurangk* and the Ngarrindjeri culture and traditions.

He then shared the Ngarrindjeri view of ecotourism:

...we would like to welcome the idea of ecotourism to our area. We the Ngarrindjeri people have been practising eco-sustainability for thousands of years and we have a strong belief that ecotourism will have less impact on the fragile cultural sites and spiritual beliefs in the Kurangk region.

However, he shared some of the concerns of the Ngarrindjeri including:

Every living thing created for us has a right to survive upon the earth and in the waters. Every race of people has the right to survive, practise and protect their culture and heritage within the ecosystem. Our *Ngartji* (totems)⁶⁵ are at risk if it is not done correctly - we need to ensure their survival.

As the saying goes ‘lessons are learnt from the past’. And it is very clear that the Kurangk could not sustain another Kumarangk (Hindmarsh Island) development.

⁶³ The *Rupelle* is the head of the *tendi*. The *tendi* is a “unified system of governance” which preceded European invasion of South Australia in the 1830s (Bell, 1998, p. 137). At this time, the Ngarrindjeri nation comprised 18 clans called *lakalinyeri*, each headed by a *rupelle* or leader. In a unique system of governance for Aboriginal Australia, the *lakalinyeri* would periodically meet to form a *tendi* - a forum for discussion and resolving issues relevant to the clans. The *tendi* system was devastated by the European invasion and has only recently been reactivated.

However, it was noted by some Ngarrindjeri that George received his invitation to present the welcome to country in his personal name rather than through his official position, perhaps indicating a reluctance to acknowledge Ngarrindjeri governance structures by agencies such as the SATC.

⁶⁴ This was a subtle indication that the place chosen for the launch was inappropriate.

⁶⁵ Some of the *Njartji* include birds, fish, snakes and insects (Bell, 1998). The *Njartji* reveal how Ngarrindjeri culture and ecology are inseparable, and points to an important distinction from non-Indigenous perspectives on managing parks like the CNP. Note that some Ngarrindjeri words have multiple spellings in English translations, such as Ngatji and Ngartji.

Under normal circumstances the Ngarrindjeri people would take several days to properly welcome visitors to our land and visitors would come by formal invitation only and the traditional owners of the land would give this. Given time constraints today however, we now make the most of the time allocated.

He also referred to the discussion that was held with the SATC just before the launch and the proposal for a MOU on protocols. In his welcome speech, the Rupelle stated that “the Ngarrindjeri welcome this idea and look forward to furthering the idea into reality”.

Thus while the planners of the launch could feel pleased that they had pulled off the event to the desired effect,⁶⁶ the Ngarrindjeri were able in a diplomatic yet effective way to express their concerns, their hopes and their cultural protocols. The reaction of the guests was very warm and supportive, and the communications during the event breached some significant cultural barriers. SATC managers did participate in cross-cultural training at Camp Coorong which by all accounts was successful in heightening awareness that was clearly lacking prior to the IYE 2002 launch (T. Trevorrow, pers. comm., 9 November 2003; M. Rigney, pers. comm., 9 November 2003; C. Karpany of SATC, pers. comm., 15 July 2003). However, the MOU containing cultural protocols has yet to be developed. Carroll Karpany, product development manager responsible for Indigenous tourism with the SATC, explains that SATC has decided to develop a set of protocols for SATC relations with all Indigenous South Australians rather than form a MOU with an individual nation such as the Ngarrindjeri (C. Karpany, pers. comm., 15 July 2003). Steve Hemming, a

⁶⁶ Which seems to have paid off: the SATC secured the hosting rights for the annual Australian conference on ecotourism (supported by the Ecotourism Association of Australia) in 2003 (Ecotourism Coup, 2001). The SATC has also claimed that the media kit produced for the launch has generated more than \$300,000 worth of media exposure for South Australia (see: <http://www.ecotourism.org.au/IYE2002/pdfs/SA%20IYE%202002%20Report.pdf>).

frequent consultant for the Ngarrindjeri, has stated the Ngarrindjeri would not find that acceptable

... because they want the same sort of agreements as they've done with Alexandrina Council [details of this are provided below] which has more about recognising people as traditional owners, recognising their right to have a say about agreed on things and to recognise people as a nation and to actually start from there so that you're sitting at the table as at least equal partners. In terms of country issues, as more than equal partners and not just talking about watered down cultural tourism training for tourism people (Hemming, pers. comm., 5 February 2004).

This incident supports the assessment provided in Chapter five that even more responsible types of tourism such as ecotourism - touted as more respectful of communities and consultative in practice - can be just as exploitative and damaging as mass tourism. The planners of the Australian launch of the IYE 2002 felt free to designate an (Indigenous) South Australian region for the launch, confident that key stakeholders would support the plan as "good for business". However, as the foregoing discussion demonstrates, the Ngarrindjeri have much more at stake in such tourism encounters than mere business: their culture, traditions, environment and very survival as a nation hang in the balance.

Despite these difficulties, and as part of the effort to shape positive futures for their community and their children, the Ngarrindjeri have engaged with tourism and are well recognised tourism operators in South Australia. Their work has been characterised as fostering reconciliation and has been categorised as reconciliation tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003a, 2003b, 2004). The following section will provide the context of the reconciliation movement in Australia before detailing Camp Coorong's contribution to reconciliation tourism in Australia.

6.4.2 Crossing bridges: Reconciliation in Australia

Many states that have been founded on the dispossession and colonisation of Indigenous peoples have had to address the injustice that lies at the heart of the founding of their nation and consider appropriate measures to redress the situation. In North America this has led to an examination of sovereignty evidenced by the treaties that were made with some Native American groups during dispossession, and in New Zealand by considering reparations under the terms of the Treaty of Waitangi with the Maori. Australia made no such agreements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) peoples as they viewed the territory they took as “terra nullius” (or land belonging to no one). Yet Australia has been unable to avoid addressing the same issues of injustice towards the original inhabitants as New Zealand, the United States and Canada.⁶⁷ Australia’s approach has been through a process called “reconciliation”. While reconciliation’s meaning and content remain contentious, it is nonetheless a defining issue for the Australian nation. As Geoff Clark, former chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), has stated:

The future of Australia is meshed with the future for the First Peoples. We look back, to find a better way forward. Reconciliation is people being different but finding solutions together. It is about Healing, Justice and Truth. For the future, Australia’s heritage must embrace all its peoples and cultures (Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 2000).

Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians became an official aim of the Australian nation when the Federal Labor government led the

⁶⁷ Pitty has examined the Treaty of Waitangi as a model to consider for the Australian context and quotes Geoffrey Palmer (then Attorney General and later Prime Minister of New Zealand) who stated in 1985 that the Treaty made non-Indigenous New Zealanders not “conquerors or interlopers” but accepted rightful residents of the county (2000).

Australian Commonwealth parliament (with full bipartisan support) in establishing the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR) in 1991.⁶⁸ The then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Robert Tickner, described the key objectives of “the non-negotiable foundation of the reconciliation process” as: education of non-Indigenous Australians about ATSI culture and history, their state of disadvantage and the need to address their human rights; the need to place a treaty document or similar agreement/s on the public policy agenda; and the need to persuade the nation to address “indigenous aspirations, human rights and social justice” (2001, p. 29).⁶⁹ The vision that inspired the CAR was “A united Australia which respects this land of ours, values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, and provides justice and equity for all” (CAR, 1999). It was given a nine-year mandate in which to chart a path to reconciliation through consultations with communities, education campaigns and projects. However, much of its work has been undermined by the policies that the Howard Liberal government has pursued since taking office in 1996,

⁶⁸ It is important to note that it was a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody that “...all political leaders and parties recognise that reconciliation between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Australia must be achieved if community division, discord and injustice to Aboriginal people are to be avoided” that was the catalyst to the reconciliation process. See: <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/IndigLRes/car/1993/10/6.html>.

⁶⁹ Tickner’s description of these key components of the reconciliation process are worth detailing in his own words because they convey the vision and commitment that the political leadership at the time held for the reconciliation process:

“The first objective of the reconciliation process would therefore be to educate non-indigenous Australians about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture, the extent of disadvantages these people still experience, and the need to address indigenous human rights as a central objective of the reconciliation process. Above all, the educational and public awareness strategy would contribute to building a community-based movement for reconciliation and indigenous social justice.

A second objective was to put on the nation’s public policy agenda the issue of some formal document or agreement as one of the outcomes of the reconciliation process. On the indigenous side, though there had been repeated calls for a treaty, no serious discussion had taken place about what the terms of such a document might be or, an even tougher question, who would negotiate an agreement. The focus of the debate had to be shifted from a preoccupation with the word ‘treaty’ as the title of the agreement to its form and content. The strategy also had to include a consultation and reporting process on the desirability of some formal document of reconciliation (by whatever name), the possible terms of such a document, and how it might come about.

Third, the reconciliation process was intended to be the driving force for the nation to address indigenous aspirations, human rights and social justice. A political movement in support of these aspirations had to be built...From the beginning it was stressed that there can be no reconciliation without justice” (2001, p. 29).

encapsulated in the doctrine of “practical reconciliation” as opposed to Indigenous demands for an official apology for past governmental policies and self-determination as advocated in the Treaty campaign (an agenda that the Howard government labels as “symbolic reconciliation”). Thus, when the CAR released three major documents in 2000 (*Corroboree 2000 - towards reconciliation*, *Australian declaration towards reconciliation* and *Roadmap for reconciliation*) a wide rift became evident between the government’s vision for reconciliation and that of the CAR, supported by many Indigenous Australians and their supporters.

The Howard government’s practical reconciliation agenda entails a commitment to improve the physical manifestations of Indigenous disadvantage such as ill-health, premature death rates, poor education levels, substandard housing and substance abuse. The group Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) describes the government’s practical reconciliation as “... an assimilationist 'formal equality' standard ... disparage[ing] the recognition of cultural difference as counter-productive. Consequently, practical reconciliation has encouraged a polarisation in community attitudes” (ANTaR, 2002). Examined from another perspective, however, the abandonment of the Labor government’s reconciliation process for the Howard government’s practical reconciliation is equally damning of past policies and present conditions. A focus on education, housing and health serves to reveal how ATSI peoples are denied the basic services that other Australian citizens take for granted. As Tickner stated:

The demands of people in the remote communities for proper schools for their children, a decent water supply, sewerage systems and access to roads to their communities are not a call for welfare but for their rights to an equitable share of

government resources. Most non-indigenous Australians already enjoy these rights and they are not called 'welfare' (2001, p. 65).⁷⁰

Howard's position that one type of reconciliation must be chosen over the other (i.e. practical reconciliation versus symbolic), fails to recognise that each type of reconciliation supports and augments the other. Both are therefore indispensable to the process. More basically, for reconciliation to occur one party cannot unilaterally prescribe what the process should entail.

As a result of this disjunction, reconciliation has reverted to a people's movement in the absence of federal governmental leadership. This people's movement for reconciliation was potently symbolised by the quarter of a million people who crossed Sydney Harbour Bridge on 28 May 2000 and who were joined in other bridge walks around the nation by many thousands more Australians. While the national profile of reconciliation may have receded following the close of the decade of events for reconciliation, the hard work still continues in communities around the country as they undertake projects large and small to build more bridges to understanding.

It is in this vein also that reconciliation tourism operates at a low-key level, fostered by the daily efforts of people, chipping away at the barriers between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.⁷¹ The concern with reconciliation through tourism is

⁷⁰ A subsequent Senate inquiry into the reconciliation process found the government's program of "practical reconciliation" was failing to achieve benchmarks set by its own standards and recommended the government adopt all measures towards reconciliation that the CAR had recommended in 2000 as "people are becoming disheartened and reconciliation is slipping off the national agenda" (Shaw, 2003).

⁷¹ Tourism Minister Joe Hockey claimed in a presentation to the National Press Club "...some ninety percent of metropolitan Australians haven't even met, let alone sat down and had a meaningful

evident across the spectrum of ATSI tourism, including the vastly successful Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park,⁷² the intense experiences offered by the Bush University⁷³ and Anangu tours, commemoration through historical markers such as that for the Myall Creek Massacre in New South Wales and such hallmark events as the 2002 Adelaide Festival featuring a key theme of Indigenous presence and invoking Kaurna spirituality (see Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b). The “Respecting Our Cultures” program of Aboriginal Tourism Australia (ATA) claims as a guiding principle the acceptance of “...the capacity of cultural education [through tourism] to contribute to the Reconciliation process” (ATA, 2002, p. 6).

Reconciliation tourism is a new concept that requires thorough analysis and definition.⁷⁴ In fact, many definitions that are provided for reconciliation, including the vision for reconciliation declared by the CAR mentioned earlier are ambiguous and therefore open to conflicting interpretation.⁷⁵ Contrast, for example the following statements on reconciliation from a non-Indigenous and an Indigenous Australian leader:

conversation with an indigenous person. Without this happening how can we hope to understand and connect with indigenous Australians” (Hockey, 2003).

⁷² See the Tjapukai website at <http://www.tjapukai.com.au/guideinfo.html>. This section closes with “thank you for supporting the reconciliation of all cultures”.

⁷³ One of the key benefits attributed to Bush University is fostering reconciliation: “Participation at Bush University has made a very positive step towards the reconciliation process. A number of people have returned two or three times, and for some the week at Bush University has been a life changing experience, where they have reassessed their values and made huge changes in their lives” (Judy & Graeme Carbury, Wedgetails Tours, joint venture partners with the Ngarinyin people in Bush University, pers. comm., 27 November 1999).

⁷⁴ Emmel (2000) provides a preliminary analysis connecting Indigenous tourism with the reconciliation process through the analysis of the proposals of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.

⁷⁵ Tackling the meaning of reconciliation is actually very difficult as a firm definition is automatically divisive and alienating because of the conflicting positions of its stakeholders. This may be the reason that a section on the website of Reconciliation Australia (the current embodiment of CAR) entitled “What is Reconciliation?” actually provides no definition whatsoever; see <http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/textonly/info/whatis.html>.

Reconciliation between Australia's indigenous people and the migrants and their descendants requires personal commitment and changes to laws and policies which have driven a wedge between us for so long. We need to become more comfortable with the differences which enhance our lives and cultures, while overcoming the differences which separate us and do violence to our lives and cultures. Reconciliation is both a national task and a personal commitment (Father Frank Brennan in CAR, 1999, Module 2.10).

And:

There can be no reconciliation without justice. Both the Torres Strait Islander people and the Aboriginal people will continue to judge the process of reconciliation against the extent to which justice is delivered (George Mye, former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Commission Commissioner for the Torres Strait in CAR, 1999, Module 2.8).⁷⁶

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody gave a clear indication of reconciliation's meaning when it claimed:

The process of reconciliation will have as a principal focus the education of non-Aboriginal Australians about the cultures of Australia's indigenous peoples and the causes of division, discord and continuing injustice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (CAR, 1993b).

Utilising the CAR's eight key issues in reconciliation, reconciliation tourism might address such concerns as "understanding country" (recognising the importance of

⁷⁶ Reconciliation is not without its opposition from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders as the following quotes demonstrate. Aboriginal lawyer and academic Watson argues: "The term reconciliation is meaningless. How can we as nations of people reconcile ourselves, our sovereign position to a relationship with the Australian government that is vague and ambiguous? Are we to reconcile with our own cultural genocide?" (Irene Watson in CAR, 1999, Module 2.12). The Aboriginal Provisional Government states: "The Council for Reconciliation admits that it can only hope to change attitudes. Attitude change is always an escapable target. The real problem is that Aboriginal needs are totally dominated by white people's needs, ... Aborigines are growing impatient with having to await the outcomes of yet another well-meaning but ill-considered plan of whites before getting back to the only things of importance to them: land, improved conditions and self-government" (Aboriginal Provisional Government in CAR, 1994). Gunstone (2004) has provided a cogent analysis of an argument that reconciliation could be seen as a nation-building exercise and appropriation of Indigenous cultures, histories and identities geared to creating "one nation" and denying Indigenous Australian demands for sovereignty and meaningful self-determination.

land and sea to ATSI peoples), “improving relationships”, “valuing cultures”, “addressing disadvantage”, and “sharing history” (CAR, 1993a). The remaining key issues are arguably less amenable to address through reconciliation tourism.⁷⁷

Perhaps reconciliation tourism can best be envisioned as a continuum from “shallow” to “deep”(or “low” to “high”) reconciliation tourism, much as ecotourism has previously been characterised as light to deep green (Orams, 1995). Therefore this thesis argues that reconciliation tourism might contain some or all of the following attributes listed according to increased complexity:

- contact between ATSI and non-Indigenous Australians;
- experiences that educate and foster understanding;
- experiences contributing to healing relationships;
- experiences that lead non-Indigenous Australians to reconcile the illegitimacy of their settlement in Australia and make peace with the land;⁷⁸
- experiences that develop “bridges” between the ATSI and non-Indigenous communities;
- experiences that foster justice for ATSI peoples.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ These include: “addressing custody levels”, “controlling destiny” (self-determination) and “agreeing on a document” (document/s of reconciliation).

⁷⁸ Making peace with the land and its laws is the principle teaching behind Desert Tracks tours, run by the Pitjantjatjara community in Central Australia. One of the Elders who acts as a “tour guide” or cultural instructor, Nganyinytja has invited “Come and see my country. This land is sacred! This has been my grandmother’s and grandfather’s country from a long time ago. Come with open ears, open eyes and an open heart” (James, 1994, p. 330). Desert Tracks invites visitors for three to five-day tours of intensive learning at their “bush college” where people are instructed in the strict discipline of the *Tjukurpa* or laws that issue from the Dreaming and live in the bush according to traditional ways. See also Selling Australia, 2001.

⁷⁹ In light of Gunstone’s (2004) critical examination of the reconciliation movement, reconciliation tourism should be subjected to critical interrogation. A series of questions arise as to what we are reconciling:

- Are we reconciling our different histories?
- Are we reconciling non-Indigenous Australians to the illegitimacy of their arrival and founding of the nation?
- Are we reconciling Indigenous Australians to living in our “One Nation”?
- Are we reconciling ourselves to the law (*Tjukurpa*) of living in an “unforgiving land”?
- Are we reconciling ourselves to negotiate a new social compact?
- Are we reconciling non-Indigenous Australians to give something up, including some privileges, assumptions and certainties?

This continuum of reconciliation tourism is sufficiently broad to encompass the many aims and needs of both the “tourist” and the “host” in the reconciliation tourism encounter. Thus, at the “shallow” end of the continuum, and recalling former Tourism Minister Joe Hockey’s claim that some ninety percent of metropolitan Australians have never met an Aboriginal person (2003), mere contact between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is enough to initiate change for people who have not interacted at all and who might hold misperceptions of each other as a result. This superficial form of reconciliation tourism is distinguishable from the more general phenomenon of ATSI tourism which may include experiences involving no ATSI people whatsoever (a non-Indigenous guide telling a Dreaming story) or experiences that do not provide opportunities for active contact with ATSI peoples (observing a cultural performance).

ATSI tourism experiences that educate about Australia’s historical treatment of ATSI peoples, provide insights into their contemporary lives and/or attempt to provide cross-cultural interpretation, work towards the goals identified by the CAR and obviously constitute reconciliation tourism experiences. Fewer are the number of reconciliation tourism experiences which intentionally foster healing relationships between ATSI and non-Indigenous peoples, but Desert Tracks and Camp Coorong have been described by tour participants in just that way (see James (1994) and *Selling Australia* (2001) for the former and Appendix B for the latter). Both of these agencies have also been described by non-Indigenous Australians as helping them to overcome their feelings of guilt or discomfort at the unjust settlement of Australia and acquire a better appreciation of the Australian environment through their connection with local people and their Dreaming stories. ATSI tourism experiences

can also be used as bridges between ATSI and non-Indigenous communities when they seek to foster a shared, just and mutually respectful future. An outstanding example of this was Peter Sellar's 2002 Adelaide Festival which sought to create a community compact amongst South Australians through its themes of inclusivity, community, social justice and Indigenous presence, featuring an innovative and empowering Indigenous component in the festival program (see Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b, p. 41). The final point on the continuum, fostering justice through reconciliation tourism, is more abstract and difficult to attain. Nonetheless, it is vital to include on such a list not only because the achievement of social justice is the ultimate aim of the broader reconciliation process but also because groups like the Ngarrindjeri at Camp Coorong set this as their goal.

It is to Camp Coorong that the discussion now turns to develop an understanding of reconciliation tourism by examining the work of the Ngarrindjeri who use this facility as part of their efforts to improve relations between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians and secure social justice.⁸⁰

6.4.3 Camp Coorong: Reconciliation tourism in action

The Ngarrindjeri are successful Aboriginal tourism operators who run Camp Coorong as well as a new commercial enterprise called the Coorong Wilderness Lodge.⁸¹ Camp Coorong has grown to serve many purposes which are not amenable

⁸⁰ However, from a critical perspective, reconciliation tourism run on a commercial basis in this era of corporatised tourism may also be a vehicle to reconciling ATSI people to a fate of assimilating into the market economy.

⁸¹ The Coorong Wilderness Lodge (CWL) is a commercial facility that caters for ecotour groups, travellers along the Adelaide to Melbourne route such as the Wayward Bus backpacker tours and individual motorists. It has a restaurant, small accommodation units, campsites and a walking trail. Its offerings range from a three-day extended eco- and cultural tour, to catering to passing motorists to providing a brief stop for the Wayward Bus providing lunch and an optional walking trail experience with Ngarrindjeri cultural interpretation. It was started in 1999 as a facility to cater to growing

to simple reduction to one category such as reconciliation tourism. It is a Ngarrindjeri place for Ngarrindjeri people to come together and share culture. It is also a training and employment facility for Ngarrindjeri people. It is a place where cultural education is conducted and race relations are improved. It is an educational facility used for Aboriginal Education through the South Australian Department of Education for both professional development of teachers and education of school groups. It is a place to work towards reconciliation. It is a place where land restoration is conducted. It is a place for environmental education. It is also a place where tourists visit.

The Ngarrindjeri founded Camp Coorong in 1985 as a cultural camp for Ngarrindjeri and other Aboriginal youth. However, it quickly evolved to become a place for South Australia's school children to come and learn about Ngarrindjeri culture and history. The long-term aim was that this experience would contribute to reconciliation between black and white Australians. In particular, the Ngarrindjeri experience of racism and disadvantage that is shared with much of Indigenous Australia, inspired the work of the Camp to foster contact and learning so that a better future could be secured. Camp Coorong is now managed by Tom and Ellen Trevorrow on behalf of the Ngarrindjeri Lands and Progress Association (NLPA); it is a community-based enterprise. Its aim is stated by Tom Trevorrow:

tourism demand for Ngarrindjeri tourism experiences and thus take pressure off Camp Coorong so the latter could continue its focus on cultural education. It has been very successful since its establishment and has a prominent profile in South Australian ATSI tourism. Its location is twenty-five kilometres southeast of Camp Coorong on a beautiful (but ecologically degraded) peninsula jutting into the Coorong's lagoon. It was purchased with Aboriginal Lands Trust funds for the Ngarrindjeri community. George Trevorrow and his family lease the land from the community and run the CWL as a family enterprise.

We don't put a value on the dollar - we put education and love and understanding first... We're not doing this to get rich - we're doing it to help solve a problem (Office of National Tourism, 1996).

According to Harkin, the idea of establishing Camp Coorong came from a community vision to establish a cultural education centre (1994, p. 58). Gollan recalls how she used to organise fieldtrips to a cultural camp in Victoria as part of her work with Aboriginal youth in South Australia. She later initiated the move to form Camp Coorong so that Ngarrindjeri could reconnect to culture on Ngarrindjeri land rather than go so far afield to other people's country (S. Gollan, pers. comm., 25 August 2003). As well, George Trevorrow was working as a regional adviser in Aboriginal education for the Department of Education and he had held school camps on the land that was to become the site of Camp Coorong. Harkin tells the story of the difficulty of obtaining funding to support the community's vision of a cultural centre, but with the conjunction of the availability of a degraded farm site and the support of the Aboriginal Lands Trust (ALT), Camp Coorong was under way by 1986 (1994, pp. 58-60). Harkin identifies the main sources of funding or support for the Camp between 1986 and 1994 as being the ALT, Community Employment Program, Office of Aboriginal Affairs, Bicentennial Authority, Aboriginal Development Commission and ATSIC (1994, p. 65).⁸² In addition, Camp Coorong charges fees for its services and also benefits from voluntary labour from Ngarrindjeri people and others. Harkin contends that "Camp Coorong's variety of financial sources enables 'success' to be measured in other than purely economic

⁸² The ALT purchased the degraded farm site comprising 200 acres which it then leased to the NLPA. The Community Employment Program provided a grant to employ five people for six months to establish the Camp. The Office of Aboriginal Affairs paid for toilet/shower block and renovation of a shearing shed to make a kitchen in 1986. The Bicentennial Authority provided funds to erect the cultural museum in 1988. In 1989 the Department of Aboriginal Affairs provided funds for wages, allowing a manager to be paid. The dormitories were built in 1990 with funds from the Aboriginal Development Commission. In 1992 ATSIC provided funding for a new administration building, kitchen and dining facility as well as three two-bedroom guest cabins (Harkin, 1994, p. 65).

terms... it is measured more by the popularity and effectiveness of the cultural camps and by the training programs for younger people” (1994, p. 64).

Camp Coorong’s main work is with student groups from primary to tertiary levels, including university students in such specialised programs as medicine, environmental management and cultural studies. However, it has expanded to serve a variety of clients to include environmental groups; reconciliation groups such as Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation; staff and volunteers of non-governmental organisations concerned with social justice; motoring tourists on the Melbourne to Adelaide route; tour groups on privately run tours such as eco-tours and four-wheel drive adventure tours; and Indigenous groups. Of the tourists who come, there are many local, state and national visitors who comprise the domestic market, as well as international visitors recorded from some 45 nations from around the globe. However, as Camp Coorong is designed to cater to groups, individual or small groups of tourists who drop in at the Camp are unable to participate in the activities offered at the Camp unless a larger group is being catered to; if not, tourists generally are limited to the experience of the Cultural Museum. Since 2000, however, the Coorong Wilderness Lodge has been specifically set up to cater to the drive-by tourist market and other small groups and thereby take this tourism pressure off of Camp Coorong (G. Trevorrow, pers. comm., 8 November 2003).

Perhaps the most exciting tours for the Ngarrindjeri are the visits by Indigenous groups which include members of the Ngarrindjeri community who come to reconnect with culture and country; visits by other ATSI groups from around South Australia and interstate who come to network and learn from Camp Coorong’s

experience; and Indigenous people from around the world who come to learn and share their experiences thereby forging global networks.

Camp Coorong's success has been recognised through its receipt of a number of tourism awards and it has been cited as one of a handful of successful ATSI tourism ventures (Schmiechen, 1993, p. 3). Its record of achievement is acknowledged through its incorporation as a case study in important tourism documents and training kits that were pilot projects under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy, including *A talent for tourism* (Office of National Tourism, 1996), *On our own terms* (ATSIC, 1996) and *Strong business, strong culture, strong country* (ATSIC & Northern Territory, 1996).

While Camp Coorong provides many of the economic benefits such as jobs, income and skills development commonly sought in the tourism industry, its main motivations are to promote reconciliation, cultural maintenance and revival, and positive futures for Ngarrindjeri youth. To do this, Camp Coorong offers a variety of services and experiences. The facility provides dormitory style accommodation, three family-size cabins with self-catering facilities and en-suite bathrooms; an ablutions block; conference facility; and a large kitchen and dining room. The experiences on offer include a walking trail highlighting bush tucker and bush medicine at a site known as Bonney Reserve, a rare part of the Coorong with remnant vegetation; a basket-weaving workshop; a field trip to the Southern Ocean via Parnka Point where a large midden is viewed; and a tour of the Cultural Museum or Keeping Place located at the facility. Each of the experiences offered contributes to the effort at fostering reconciliation:

- The walking trail demonstrates Ngarrindjeri bush tucker (foods) and bush medicine and is conducted at Bonney Reserve, a site where a fringe camp⁸³ existed as late as the 1980s. During the walk, tourists are told about how the Ngarrindjeri ancestors once lived, how European invasion has impacted on their lifestyle, how the natural environment has been severely damaged by non-Indigenous water and land use practices, and how the Ngarrindjeri community lives today, retains traditional knowledge and uses local bush tucker and bush medicine. This experience fosters reconciliation by raising awareness of Ngarrindjeri historical experience; it demonstrates how the Ngarrindjeri meld tradition and modernity into their contemporary lives and how important reconciliation with the environment is to their (and our) future.

- In the basket-weaving workshops offered at the Camp, the art is taught in the context of its place in weaving cultural ties in the Ngarrindjeri community and connecting the people to their environment. The story of how the art of basket-weaving was revived and restored to the larger community reveals how the Ngarrindjeri have had to negotiate the demands of contemporary living with maintaining traditions. It also sheds light on how Aboriginal traditions and culture are measured against external non-Indigenous yardsticks of authenticity, a situation that played out with tragic consequences in the Hindmarsh Island Bridge controversy. During this session, the video made by the South Australian Museum entitled *Ngurunderi: A Ngarrindjeri dreaming* (1987) is shown, describing how their Dreaming hero moulded the

⁸³ Fringe camps existed on the outskirts of non-Indigenous settlements and were places where Indigenous people gathered due to displacement from traditional lands. The fringe camps are important in the argument on Native Title because they show that the Ngarrindjeri have an unbroken relationship to their lands and waters. This can be more difficult to prove for nations that were more comprehensively removed to missions.

Ngarrindjeri landscape through his journeys and actions.⁸⁴ The basket-weaving workshop contributes to the process of reconciliation by involving participants in Ngarrindjeri cultural practice and moving them to interact with the Ngarrindjeri and with each other in Ngarrindjeri ways (e.g. simply *yunnan*, or talking, to each other while basket weaving). It also draws attention to the need for environmental protection in order to ensure that rushes remain available for weaving in the future.

- The trip to the Southern Ocean via Parkna Point provides an opportunity to visit a very large midden that is one of many located in the dunes of the Coorong National Park. A talk is held here explaining how the Ngarrindjeri moved camps methodically through the seasons; how burial grounds were located adjacent to the campsites (identifiable by middens); and how the science of archaeology has corroborated the information passed down in Ngarrindjeri oral traditions. This is also the place where issues of contemporary import are raised, notably the fear that tourists and recreational-users of the National Park will violate these places; and the problematic relationship with the South Australian Museum and other museums around the world that hold Ngarrindjeri remains or artefacts in their collections which the Ngarrindjeri would like returned for proper burial or keeping.⁸⁵ This fieldtrip fosters reconciliation as the tour participants gain

⁸⁴ Ngurunderi's Dreaming is a significant creation story of the Ngarrindjeri but Bell argues that the Museum's film has served to make viewers come to see it as "**the** creation story" and has thus displaced and overshadowed other creation stories such as the Seven Sisters Dreaming with important repercussions (1998, pp. 98-99). This is a valuable warning for tourism officials that even well-intentioned interpretation can have significant, unexpected outcomes.

⁸⁵ A significant precedent for the return of ancestral remains occurred in April 2003 when Edinburgh University, the Australian Museum and the Royal College of Surgeons in London organised for the return of 300 Ngarrindjeri ancestors to the community at a ceremony held at Camp Coorong (Rehn, 2003, p. 8). This positive event nevertheless places a heavy emotional and organisational burden

insights into Ngarrindjeri culture, knowledge and organisations which foster understanding and respect. It also highlights contemporary injustices which need redress.

- The visit to the Camp Coorong Museum or Keeping Place provides an opportunity to learn about the laws that governed Ngarrindjeri lives in the past. On display are Aboriginal exemption papers which made certain Aboriginal people “honorary members of the White race”; accounts of life on the mission at Raukkan (formerly Point McLeay mission); and evidence of Ngarrindjeri contributions to Australian society such as serving as soldiers in Australian forces in the Boer War and World Wars I and II.⁸⁶ This experience is probably the most powerful in fostering awareness of historical injustice which is a pre-requisite to reconciliation.
- The four to five-day tour that covers the entirety of Ngarrindjeri lands provides an opportunity to discuss all of the issues above and a good deal more. On this tour, visitors can experience the breadth of Ngarrindjeri lands, the variety of environments, the diverse groups that make up the Ngarrindjeri *lakalinyeri* or clans, as well as be reminded that ATSI Australia is made up of a diversity of peoples, cultures, traditions and societies. It is during this tour that one can learn about the political/social structures that governed the Ngarrindjeri prior to European invasion including the highly democratic, representative governmental structure of the *tendi* that has been revived in

upon Ngarrindjeri elders and the community who are committed to re-burying each individual in their original resting place.

⁸⁶ The story is also told of the injustice that was meted out when returned Ngarrindjeri servicemen were denied access to services that other war veterans received.

recent times to serve contemporary Ngarrindjeri purposes. This tour includes some of the stories from the Dreaming as it stops at sites where the acts of Dreaming ancestors such as Ngurunderi left their marks upon the land at places like the Bluff at Victor Harbor and the Granites near Kingston. This more comprehensive experience provides an in-depth insight into the Ngarrindjeri community's experiences which few tourists ever obtain. It provides the rare opportunity to gain access to an ATSI community and thus engenders respect and understanding that can provide a foundation for reconciliation.

A review of the visitor books placed in the Museum of Camp Coorong between 1990 and 2002 gives some insight into how the experiences at Camp Coorong have affected participants and achieved the objective of promoting reconciliation.

Although five visitor books and numerous "sign-in" sheets have been kept at the Camp (comprising over 7000 entries), only a small number of entries yield insights into the visitors' experience. There are a number of reasons why this is the case.

Firstly, almost one-half of the comment recording devices (visitor sign-in sheets and one visitor book) provided very little space for comments. Secondly, because many of the visitors to the Museum are school children due to the focus of Camp Coorong's work on school groups, many of the comments are of a more frivolous albeit positive nature such as "wicked" or "cool". There were also a number of entries with simple exclamations such as "fantastic", "interesting" and "good".

However, as Appendix B demonstrates, some visitors have expressed meaningful transformations from their experiences at Camp Coorong. One theme that stood out was an indication that some visitors had been very affected by their experiences at

the Camp, indicated by phrases such as “I am never going to forget this” and “it touched my heart”. Both education and reconciliation were key themes in many of the articulate entries as visitors acknowledged that the Camp taught them aspects of Australian history with which they were unfamiliar and that this was a step towards reconciliation. Some entries indicated forward looking views as some visitors expressed a hopeful attitude from their experiences and a desire to share their learning and recommend the Camp to others. Finally, one interesting comment which supports the suggestion of Stewart-Harawira (2005a, 2005b) that Indigenous ontologies can guide societies to an eco-humanism states “extremely impressive, this is so important for the survival of all people and our Mother Earth”.

While the comments provided in Appendix B are all positive, there are a few clearly negative comments inscribed in the visitor books. Out of the books and sheets analysed here, a total of eleven comments were identified as clearly negative. The type of comments included: “should be more artefacts”, “bad showers”, “boring”, “more information about pieces would be good”, “nothing for sales [sic]”- 30/3/1993, “too little things here [sic]” – 30/3/1993, “need postcards to buy” – 19/11/1995 and “interesting but more background information would have been great for us foreigners” – 19/2/1996. There are perhaps many reasons for the paucity of negative comments. The fact that the majority of visitors to Camp Coorong are predisposed to enjoy the experience because they are part of groups seeking ATSI cultural experiences might limit negative comments. As well, those that fail to enjoy their experiences at the Camp might be disinclined to write negative commentary in the visitors’ books because of the close and personal nature of the contact with the Ngarrindjeri tour guides. It should also be noted that the visitors’ books are located

at the entrance to the Cultural Museum or Keeping Place and so some of the comments above are primarily critical of the presentation of the exhibits and the lack of typical tourism souvenirs available for purchase.

During the conduct of this thesis research, I have been a participant observer of interactions at Camp Coorong and have accumulated much anecdotal evidence of its profound impacts on visitors. The first case starts with myself as I had a very different focus to my research on “responsible tourism” before visiting the Camp with a group of teachers receiving professional development in Aboriginal Education. After spending five days with the Ngarrindjeri at the Camp, I realised that their work illustrated the potential transformative power of tourism.⁸⁷

Similarly, Steve Hemming has written about how he was moved by their work and how he shared his learning in his workplace, the South Australian Museum:

My own relationship with the Ngarrindjeri people at Camp Coorong provides an insight into how their approach to combating racism actually functions: not only on an individual level; but also on an institutional level. Camp Coorong’s overall message firstly influences a receptive visitor’s thinking and then, depending on the individual’s position in society, it can have a critical impact in an important area of Aboriginal affairs. Until recently I was a curator in the South Australian Museum’s Division of Anthropology and to a significant extent my contacts with the staff at Camp Coorong led me to become an advocate for Ngarrindjeri interests in the Museum and for Aboriginal interests more generally (1993, p, 39).⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Interestingly, I had visited the Cultural Museum two years earlier on a one-day eco-tour of the Coorong led by a non-Indigenous guide. Because, I assume, the tour company made no pre-arrangements with Camp Coorong for our visit, we received no Ngarrindjeri interpretation of the exhibits. As a result, my tour group had little understanding or appreciation of the experience. This suggests that superficial ATSI cultural tourism experiences are less likely to foster reconciliation.

⁸⁸ One outcome of this transformation was the development of the Ngurunderi exhibit at the South Australian Museum which was developed out of extensive consultations with the Ngarrindjeri community (see Hemming, 1994). Additionally, Hemming became involved in the Hindmarsh Island Bridge conflict as he was called to give evidence at the Royal Commission (see Simons, 2003).

Over several years, Councillor Mary Beckett of Alexandrina Council has also many times witnessed the “awakening” that the Camp can facilitate. As liaison officer for the Council with the Ngarrindjeri, she organised Council members and senior staff to visit the camp for Ngarrindjeri cultural training in order to prevent future conflicts and misunderstandings (pers. comm., 26 June 2004).

Camp Coorong’s main focus on race relations work has been directed at South Australian school groups of all ages by supporting their curricula in Aboriginal Studies and providing professional development opportunities to their teachers. Adele Pring of the South Australian Aboriginal Education Unit has taken students and educators on fieldtrips to the Camp since 1984 in order to learn about Aboriginal issues, culture and history as well as the specific experience of the Ngarrindjeri (Pring, pers. comm., 13 August 2003). Camp Coorong’s value in cultural training is attested by its repeated and frequent use by such groups. Pring comments: “I’ve rarely met a dissatisfied customer and I’ve known of many to have had profound changes to their thinking – educators and students!” (pers. comm., 13 August 2003). Attesting to the uniqueness of the Camp in this important work, Pring asserts “I wish there were more similar camps set up around South Australia” (pers. comm., 13 August 2003).⁸⁹

Another source of information on the impacts of Camp Coorong can be found in the report on a pilot project using Camp Coorong to train university medical students to respond to the needs of Indigenous clients. The Adelaide University Medical School introduced an Indigenous cultural awareness fieldtrip into its program for first year

⁸⁹ Pring mentions that Iga Warta in the Flinders Ranges and Reg Dodd at Marree in the far north of South Australia also cater to school groups but they are much more expensive (partly due to travel costs to reach them) and therefore only accessible to certain schools, particularly private ones.

medical students in August 2000. The aim of the fieldtrip was to expose these students to “rural health issues for this particular community, while learning about Ngarrindjeri culture and health, by Ngarrindjeri people, on their land” (Harkin, Newbury, Henneberg & Hudson, 2000, p. 3). While this program was focused on engaging medical students in the issues surrounding Indigenous Australians’ health, it also provided insights into Indigenous culture, history and concerns which were of a more general nature. An evaluation report compiled in December 2000 extracted data from the 134 students who had participated in the program through pre and post fieldtrip questionnaires that included both quantitative and qualitative questions.

While most of this report focuses upon student learning in relationship to issues of Indigenous health, there is some evidence that participants valued the experience for its cross-cultural learning dimensions as well. For example in the section addressing the appropriateness of integrating Indigenous health issues in the medical curriculum in the pre-trip questionnaire, responses addressed such themes as moral obligation, cultural awareness, racism and reconciliation. One student stated:

Many medical students have lived very sheltered lives and have no idea about the state of aboriginal [sic] health or the culture. This ignorance leads to racism and that is a dangerous trait to have. By gaining a better understanding about the issues involved, medical students will turn out to be well rounded practitioners and more socially aware (Harkin *et al.*, 2000, p. 9).

The content of the report indicates the value of a cultural program for medical students. The pre-trip questionnaire indicated 78% felt positive about their participation in the fieldtrip⁹⁰ and 74% agreed that the visit to Camp Coorong would

⁹⁰ This supports the earlier supposition that visitors to Camp Coorong might be predisposed to appreciate the experience.

be the first time that “...they have had detailed discussions with Indigenous people about their lives” (Harkin *et al.*, 2000, p. 3). The post-trip survey revealed that 93% felt that their knowledge of Indigenous culture and health had increased and 95% felt positive about their experiences during the fieldtrip (Harkin *et al.*, 2000, p. 3). While these numbers indicate a predisposition in favour of the Camp Coorong experience, it nonetheless indicates a more powerful outcome than participants anticipated.

However, it is the post trip survey which indicates how effective Camp Coorong is at promoting cross-cultural understanding and thereby reconciliation. Evaluating the responses to the question “did the Camp Coorong trip increase your knowledge and appreciation of Indigenous community, culture and health?”, Harkin *et al.* found that 93% felt their knowledge and appreciation had increased. The researchers identified eight themes emerging from the student responses including history, Indigenous perspective, emotional well-being, media stereotypes, cultural diversity and land (2000, pp.11-12). These comments reveal significant insights gained from contact with Aboriginal Australians (often for the first time) and changed perspectives as a result of the cross-cultural encounter (See Appendix C for some examples of these comments).

While the majority of responses expressed a positive outcome from the Camp Coorong fieldtrip, about ten percent of students expressed dissatisfaction with the experience. The full survey data provide some important insights into those that were not moved by the Camp Coorong experience. Some could be characterised as supporters of a concept of Australia as “One Nation” as they see Indigenous Australians as a very small minority whose problems (in this case health) are not

solely unique to their communities, so their issues are not worthy of separate treatment and attention (pre-trip survey, Harkin *et al.*, 2000, p. 9). Other comments expressed resentment at being forced to attend the compulsory fieldtrip, being exposed to the “bad attitudes” of the Aboriginal people they met at the Camp, the biased and political views expressed by some of the people at the Camp and the feeling that they were resented for being white and expected to feel guilty when they themselves were not personally responsible for past injustices (2000, pp. 12-15; See Appendix C for some examples of these comments).

The student feedback reveals some of the limits to the ability of Camp Coorong to achieve its goals, which were not indicated by the content of the visitor books mentioned earlier. It is clear that Camp Coorong’s success is as a cultural education facility and that being recognised for this role, many visitors are self-selecting to participate in an educational but confronting experience. Accordingly, many are likely to be pre-disposed to appreciate the experience. What we see from the 2000 report from the Medical School Fieldtrip is that when individuals who are not predisposed to appreciate the experience are compelled to go to the Camp, they are more likely to have poor satisfaction levels with the experience. However, without a longitudinal follow-up, there is no way of knowing whether this small minority which expressed strong dissatisfaction with the visit might not have inadvertently learnt something from the cultural education which might result in meaningful change in attitude at some later point in their lives, given that attitudinal change in some individuals can take considerable time.⁹¹

⁹¹ Fruitful lines of enquiry could include longitudinal studies and multidisciplinary research utilising insights from the psychology of racism and attitudinal change using such works as Terry and Hogg (2000).

Finally, the impact of Camp Coorong can be gauged by the response of students of the University of South Australia enrolled in a course on Indigenous Approaches to Revegetation and Land Care who visited Camp Coorong as a part of their studies. Students were required to keep journals which reveal a profound impact on their thinking, particularly in terms of ecology (J. Gibbs, pers. comm., 24 June 2001).

One participant stated:

Everyone needs to come down here and experience this! I believe that if many more people came to this area and talked to the people we have there would be so much more racial tolerance in Australia. I have really enjoyed spending time with the Ngarrindjeri people and learning about their land and hardships. Even though this sounds corny I believe more in the Aboriginal religion of the spirits of the land and animals than my own Christian religion.

Additionally, this participant outlined the lessons s/he learned at Camp Coorong as:

“the land is like our bodies, we are all interconnected”;⁹² “the economy is not responsive to social justice”; and “take without destroying”. Another participant commented:

Over the time I’ve spent at Camp Coorong on our Indigenous Peoples Land Restoration field camp, I found myself relaxed and surprisingly feeling a connection to the area. The Aboriginal people (Ngarrindjeri) have made me feel welcome and through their explanations and stories, have been able to see/view the Coorong area through envisioned, spiritually aware eyes.

I would never have realised to such an extent to which this Coorong area means to the indigenous people associated and the direct and indirect affects that European settlement has had on the area. Through the barraging along the Murray and the channel affects, have caused the increase in salinity, the rise in ocean level (therefore dunal erosion) and the fall of the lagoon level.

I’ve been coming to this area - especially Tea Tree Crossing for many years as a child, and never really understood why it meant so much to these people as a livelihood, culture and history, and as an identity. Now when myself, friends and family venture

⁹² This statement indicates that Camp Coorong is sharing Indigenous ontologies which Stewart-Harawira (2005a, 2005b) asserts can foster an eco-humanism among non-Indigenous people.

down here in future I will be able to share what I have learnt during my time at Camp Coorong.

Camp Coorong is unique in Australia in the focused work that it does towards reconciliation and cross-cultural understanding and it obviously has profound impacts. While other ATSI enterprises and tourism ventures have reconciliation as the aim, Camp Coorong's dedicated effort is indicated by its name "Race Relations and Cultural Education Centre". George Trevorow, founder of Camp Coorong, emphasises the importance of the work done there. He asserts:

It is really important that places like Camp Coorong are supported and able to carry on. I'd like to see a lot of Camp Coorongs throughout the state and the country, for that matter. That's the only way we are really going to get to the children the issue of reconciliation or race relations, as we call it... it's through the young people if reconciliation is ever going to mean anything...it's the only way to make the change (G. Trevorow, pers. comm., 8 November 2003).

6.4.4 Camp Coorong: Is it tourism?

While SATC publications, tourism brochures, television travel shows such as Postcards and some management plans refer to Camp Coorong as a tourist facility, it remains different from other tourism camps in important ways. Firstly, Camp Coorong caters to school groups of all levels as its priority commitment in its efforts to shape a better future through improved "race relations" despite the low remuneration that this market provides. Secondly, Ngarrindjeri community commitments take precedence over tourist bookings, and so it does not meet the reliability of conventional tourism operators. Thirdly, Camp Coorong does not seek "to grow" the business or increase profits in the way that many contemporary businesses do. Camp Coorong, in particular welcomes groups of Indigenous people,

from around Australia and the world to make connections, share culture and contribute to Indigenous pride, as well as foster networks for solidarity that could be characterised as part of the “new social movement” phenomenon.

It is clearly evident that Camp Coorong provides more than “ordinary” tourism experiences. The truth of this statement is relevant in a number of dimensions. During the interview process for this research, the founders of Camp Coorong and the people who conduct its work were quite concerned to emphasise that their vision of Camp Coorong is as a “race relations” facility (S. Gollan, pers comm., 25 August 2003 ; G. Trevorrow, pers. comm., 8 November 2003). Tourism is often seen as a trivial and frivolous activity (highlighted by the preference of most tourists to be called “travellers” and not associated with “vulgar” tourism). For the Ngarrindjeri who founded Camp Coorong as a place for significant and meaningful cross-cultural contact, the label of “tourism” is perceived as demeaning to their vision and their dedicated work. Similarly the visitors who have been interviewed and observed at Camp Coorong think that their visits are more than just “tourism” and their relationships with their Ngarrindjeri hosts have real meaning that is not often associated with the contemporary tourism encounter. In the words of Tom Trevorrow:

We want to bring groups in, we do it in a tourism way, but we want to engage the people’s feelings and we want to be able to share and teach so therefore we want to build a relationship... we believe its [tourism] much bigger than [a money-making thing]... there can be a tourism component but also its sharing your knowledge,

connection to country and making people aware that this is how we must all live in this country (2005).⁹³

It is for these reasons that Camp Coorong's work can more accurately be described as reconciliation tourism. As Aboriginal Tourism Australia vision statement demonstrates, one significant component of the ATSI tourism sector is the cultural education conducted through tourism which contributes to the reconciliation process (ATA, 2002, p.6).⁹⁴ It is also important to note that Camp Coorong fosters reconciliation through tourism not only through its cultural education and race relations work between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians. Tom Trevorrow sees other layers to Camp Coorong's achievements in reconciliation as equally important, including: reconciliation of non-Indigenous peoples with their own lives and with each other,⁹⁵ reconciliation between Ngarrindjeri people (much needed in the aftermath of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge conflict which divided the community) and reconciliation between people and the "environment" (pers. comm., 9 November 2003).⁹⁶

⁹³ This statement indicates that Trevorrow agrees with Stewart-Harawira (2005a, 2005b) that Indigenous ontologies are needed to lead non-Indigenous people to a more balanced way of living.

⁹⁴ The role of such "cultural education" is considered vital to the reconciliation process by its leaders. This belief is well expressed by former Aboriginal Affairs Minister, Robert Tickner, who stated: "The first objective of the reconciliation process would therefore be to educate non-indigenous Australians about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture, the extent of disadvantages these people still experienced, and the need to address indigenous human rights as a central objective of the reconciliation process. Above all, the educational and public awareness strategy would contribute to building a community-based movement for reconciliation and indigenous social justice" (2001, p. 29). While such cultural education was initiated through such projects as the "Reconciliation Learning Circle Kits", Camp Coorong's work proves that it can be done within the "tourism" encounter, albeit a special kind of tourism.

⁹⁵ In particular, non-Indigenous visitors suffering personal traumas and crises have been assisted and treated like a "brother" or a "sister", saving more than one life over the years (Tom Trevorrow, pers. comm., 9 November 2003).

⁹⁶ This is actually a very significant part of the Camp Coorong experience, particularly due to the significant ecological degradation of the Coorong area due to damage to the River Murray, harmful irrigation and farming practices, manipulation of the waters through weirs and barrages and the pressures of tourism and development. Part of the interpretation for visitors at Camp Coorong explains how the Coorong is mislabelled as a "pristine wilderness" and how concerted action of governments (supported by voters) is required to turn things around before it is too late. Environmental issues have not received sufficient emphasis in this thesis due to the parameters

Despite these reservations, Camp Coorong does allow itself to engage with the tourism phenomenon, but on its own terms rather than allowing itself to be dictated by the market imperative.⁹⁷ Yet, if the economic definition of tourism is abandoned for the more sociological conceptualisation found in works such as Wearing (2001) or it is placed in the context of tourism as a social force (as proposed in Chapter two), it could be argued that the work of Camp Coorong is fulfilling the full potential of tourism and shows us what tourism could and perhaps should be. However such a conclusion would require leaving the narrow paradigm set by capitalist globalisation and corporatised tourism by recognising that social values have an importance no less valuable than economic ones in our utilisation of and support for tourism.

The work that the Ngarrindjeri community does at Camp Coorong breaks down the stereotypes and barriers between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. They are making important contributions to reconciliation in all of its aspects thereby exposing just how narrow corporatised tourism's horizons are when economic growth is the exclusive focus. Even so, whereas most visitors to Camp Coorong seem to have valuable experiences there and this facility is recognised as an important place to conduct training for reconciliation, the work of the Camp on

focused on human encounters. This compartmentalisation of analysis is a non-Indigenous approach which is not the way the Ngarrindjeri would work. Tom Trevor would view reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples as inextricably interwoven with reconciliation with the environment.

⁹⁷ Glen Miller of Tourism Queensland observes that the domestic market has preconceived beliefs about ATSI culture including: much of ATSI culture is lost, only a few traditional communities still exist and "if you want to see 'real' Aborigines, then you go to the Northern Territory or the Kimberleys" (2000, p. 93). Rather than arguing for education of the members of the domestic market of Australia, Miller claims it makes good business sense to cater to domestic demand by not focusing on ATSI culture but offering ATSI diversified tourism products. This argument is clearly within the market paradigm of tourism. It does not allow much support for the role of tourism in the reconciliation process. This results in only a few facilities such as Camp Coorong being able to achieve these social aims by their occupation of a special niche (i.e. serving the education sector in particular).

reconciliation and race relations was not able to prevent the conflicts and difficulties over the Hindmarsh Island Bridge and the International Year of Ecotourism 2002 recounted earlier. These experiences highlighted the limits to reconciliation tourism in achieving Ngarrindjeri goals. As a result, Ngarrindjeri leaders have simultaneously pursued a political strategy to secure recognition of their Indigenous rights as Ngarrindjeri in order to ensure that Ngarrindjeri lifeways are protected.⁹⁸

6.4.5 Ngarrindjeri paths to securing their Indigenous rights⁹⁹

At the height of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge conflict when the legal and political struggles afforded little accommodation to the beliefs and values of the Ngarrindjeri proponents, the Ngarrindjeri leaders made a historic move. On Sunday, 22 November 1999 at the construction site of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge lying on the Kumarangk/Hindmarsh Island side, after a significant cultural ceremony, Elders Maggie Jacobs and Grace Sumner raised the Ngarrindjeri flag and Matt Rigney presented the Proclamation of Ngarrindjeri Sovereignty (Proclamation, 2000, p. 11–12; see in Appendix E). This proclamation relates historical facts from the time of the founding of South Australia in which, in particular, the instructions for colonisation from the Crown to the South Australian Colonising Commission acknowledged Aboriginal occupation and rights to land and demanded that consent and compensation for land acquisition be secured. The proclamation then declares “now take notice that Ngarrindjeri have always occupied this place, Ngarrindjeri have never ceded nor sold this land” (2000, p. 12). Additionally, the proclamation

⁹⁸ This parallels a movement in the global tourism arena where communities and non-governmental organisations are demanding that tourism development can only proceed when full recognition and respect for the human rights of host communities.

⁹⁹ See Appendix D for an outline of some of the significant events in Ngarrindjeri assertion of their Indigenous rights.

asserted two demands: first, the return of title of Ngarrindjeri lands to Ngarrindjeri people and secondly to stop the construction of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge which entailed violation and trespass of Ngarrindjeri rights (2000, p. 12). This proclamation, which the Ngarrindjeri described as “denouncing the unlawful nature and genocidal impact of colonisation and ... asserting ongoing Aboriginal sovereignty in South Australia” (2000, p. 11), was delivered to both the Governor of South Australia (the Crown’s representative) and to Her Majesty the Queen of England. While evoking no response from these eminent persons and therefore remaining largely symbolic, this proclamation marked the opening salvo in the Ngarrindjeri efforts to secure their Indigenous rights.

In April 2000, two Ngarrindjeri men, Darrell Sumner and Tom Trevorow, brought a complaint to the United Nations Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights alleging that Australia was failing to live up to its international obligations. In particular, they argued in a media release that the Hindmarsh Island Bridge Bill 1997 was “a racist act” and endangered Ngarrindjeri native title interests in and around Hindmarsh Island and Goolwa (T. Trevorow, 2000). Trevorow complained:

The government listens to local community concerns except where they are to maintain Native Title and to respect the cultural and spiritual beliefs of Indigenous people. The answer to improving the statistics of Indigenous people in the areas of health, housing and education is to respect and support Indigenous cultural and spiritual beliefs, and to acknowledge the native title owners as equal property owners by right. Having one attitude towards the property rights of non-Indigenous people with a lesser approach to the rights of Ngarrindjeri people is wrong (T. Trevorow, 2000).

To date, the major milestone of Ngarrindjeri success in advancing their Indigenous rights has been the Kungan Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement (which in English

translates as “Listening to Ngarrindjeri People When They Are Talking”) negotiated with Alexandrina Council, the local government body in the Goolwa and Hindmarsh Island region. Considering that the Ngarrindjeri lands and waters fall under the jurisdiction of four local councils (Alexandrina, Coorong District, Murray Bridge and Victor Harbor), it is ironic and surprising that Alexandrina would be the first to conclude an agreement with the Ngarrindjeri since it is their district which saw the battles over the Hindmarsh Island Bridge. As might be anticipated, such a conciliation had unusual origins.

The town of Goolwa is a historic river port that is now trading on this image in its tourism promotions. Accordingly, it hosts an annual Wooden Boat Festival as well as special, one-off events to raise its marine profile which is enhanced by its proximity to the Coorong National Park, the Murray River and the local beaches. In early 2002, the SATC and the Alexandrina Council together committed just over \$2.7 million for a redevelopment of the Goolwa wharf precinct (which is in the shadow of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge) in order to make it an attractive tourism zone (SATC, 2002a) particularly with the upcoming 2003 Wooden Boat Festival which had been funded and promoted more extensively.¹⁰⁰ During the digging needed for the wharf upgrade, Ngarrindjeri remains were uncovered. Such a discovery could have brought the provisions of the SA Aboriginal Heritage Act of 1988 into play and as a result endangered the tight timelines of the wharf redevelopment project.¹⁰¹ Tom Trevor of the Ngarrindjeri Heritage Committee

¹⁰⁰ The Wooden Boat Festival’s organisers had arranged funding to bring high-profile boating personalities Iain Oughtred and Dan Houston to Goolwa for the event, which they hoped would secure the attendance of boating enthusiasts from around the world (Littlely & Ker, 2002, p. 44).

¹⁰¹ This unearthing of Ngarrindjeri remains (allegedly dated at 200 years old according to Alexandrina Council’s CEO John Coombe, quoted in Debelle, 2002) so close to the foundations of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge was taken as vindication of Ngarrindjeri proponents’ claims of the significance of this

said that this difficulty would not be addressed by the community until the Alexandrina Council concluded a proper agreement of protocols to prevent future violations of Ngarrindjeri heritage, a call supported by Peter Buckskin, CEO of the SA Department of Aboriginal Affairs, who said “clearly, developers need to work more closely with local heritage groups who know their history and know where their people are” (T. Williams, 2002, p. 2). The Alexandrina Council responded to Ngarrindjeri proposals to use this difficult circumstance as an opportunity to forge more cooperative relationships. The results were two very significant precedents: the Alexandrina Council presented the Ngarrindjeri people with a statement of apology and signed the formal Kungan Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement.

The Alexandrina Council’s statement of “sincere expression of sorrow and apology to the Ngarrindjeri People” was presented on 8 October 2002 (see Appendix F). It not only expresses sorrow at past injustices but also acknowledges current racism and division and promises to work collaboratively to remove them from the community. The council acknowledges Ngarrindjeri connection to and interests in the lands and waters comprising the council area and importantly acknowledges Ngarrindjeri rights to “determine your future”. The council makes two important commitments in the document, including to work with the Ngarrindjeri and acknowledge their wisdom and to be “guided by your vision of a future where reconciliation through agreement making may be possible and we can walk together”. The former could be viewed as a promise to engage Ngarrindjeri visions

area for them, contra the findings of the 1995 SA Royal Commission’s assertion that “women’s business” was fabricated (see Debelle, 2002; Tjukonai, 2002, p. 6; T. Williams, 2002, pp. 1–2). While neither the apology nor the agreement from the council addresses the pain of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge conflict, Tom Trevor told Debelle that the Ngarrindjeri understood the council’s apology to address this problem “not in exact words, but it encompassed everything that happened to us there” (Debelle, 2002).

in a course of “sustainable development” for the council area and the latter is a pledge of support for the Ngarrindjeri agenda of securing Ngarrindjeri rights through a process of agreement-making. The words of the apology contain many words advocating reconciliation such as “work with you”, “walk beside you” and “working together”, but importantly some phrases imply more than rhetoric such as the phrase “acknowledge your right to determine your future” and “reconciliation with justice”.

On the same day as the signing of the historical apology, the Alexandrina Council and the Ngarrindjeri also signed the Kungan Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement (henceforth called the Agreement)¹⁰² which translated sentiments into binding legal commitments.¹⁰³ This agreement specifically addresses the difficulties created by the unearthing of Ngarrindjeri burials during the Goolwa wharf redevelopment project created but extends its mandate to preventing similar re-occurrences: “the Council and the Ngarrindjeri wish to further protect their Aboriginal sites, objects and remains of significance at the Site [the wharf], and across the Council area” (Kungan Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement, 2002). The Agreement provides quite extensive procedures to ensure that the Goolwa wharf redevelopment could proceed with no further damage to Ngarrindjeri heritage or sites in the project area. Importantly, the Agreement committed the Council to allocate \$20,000 to fund two Ngarrindjeri site monitors to be on site through the duration of the project. Further provisions in the

¹⁰² Importantly, the council was persuaded of the need to fund the Ngarrindjeri for their participation in the negotiations to form this agreement and continue consultation subsequently, thanks to an argument put by Councillor Beckett that council paid consultants to inform their decisions and policies and so should similarly treat Ngarrindjeri consultants (Councillor M. Beckett, pers. comm., 26 June 2004). This is in line with Johnston’s recommendations discussed earlier that Indigenous peoples must be adequately resourced for negotiations (2003).

¹⁰³ At the time of its conclusion, this agreement would have been a rare phenomenon. However, as federal political circumstances are closing off avenues to self-determination and “treaty”, such agreements are increasingly being made at the local and regional level. For insights into the breadth of similar agreements see the database provided by the Agreements, Treaties and Negotiated Settlements project funded by an Australian Research Council Linkage grant examining treaty and agreement making with Indigenous Australians, available at: <http://www.atns.net.au/atns.html>.

Agreement accord them powers to issue stop work orders. Recognising the Council's damaging role in the unearthing of the Ngarrindjeri burial sites, the Council committed to pay "the reasonable disbursement costs of the reburial".¹⁰⁴ Of the more wide-ranging provisions, two sections contain statements indicating significant transformations in council–Ngarrindjeri relationships. In the third section entitled "Acknowledgement", it states:

- The Council acknowledges that the Ngarrindjeri are the Traditional Owners of the Goolwa area and that according to their traditions, customs and spiritual beliefs its lands and waters remain their traditional country.
- The Council also acknowledges and respects the rights, interests and obligations of Ngarrindjeri to speak and care for their traditional country, lands and waters in accordance with their laws, customs, beliefs and traditions (Kungan Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement, 2002).

The fourth section of the documents lays out the following commitments:

- The Parties commit to seek ways together to uphold Ngarrindjeri rights and to advance Ngarrindjeri interests when decisions are being made about their traditional country, lands and waters.
- The Parties commit to work together to advance harmonious community relations and promote the interests of the whole community.
- The Parties commit to develop greater community understanding of Ngarrindjeri traditions, culture, laws and spiritual beliefs in the Council area.
- The Parties commit to work together to determine, and to advance the community recognition of, a framework agreement for the protection of Aboriginal sites, objects and remains in relation to development in the Council area.
- The Parties commit to the formulation of a model or models of best practice for consultation in relation to development assessment within the meaning of the Development Act 1993 (SA) to occur in the Council area, which reflects the rights, interests and obligations of the Ngarrindjeri (Kungan Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement, 2002).

¹⁰⁴ These costs included transport of the remains back to Goolwa from Adelaide, the costs of a meeting of Ngarrindjeri Elders and the costs incurred for the attendance of community representatives at the reburial ceremony.

- The Parties commit to formulate a strategy for the Ngarrindjeri to access their lands on, and waters around, Kumarangk (Hindmarsh Island).¹⁰⁵
- The Parties will establish a joint committee comprising equal numbers of Ngarrindjeri and Council representatives to develop a strategy for the implementation of the commitments expressed herein, whose name will be determined by the committee (Kungan Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement, 2002).

The document specifies the appropriate bodies for consultation on development issues within the Council area, including the Ngarrindjeri Heritage Committee, the Ngarrindjeri Native Title Management Committee, Ngarrindjeri Tendi Inc and Meningie Ngarrindjeri Land Council Inc. It also identifies the issues each is responsible for (so that the events that occurred in the “consultation” process during the bridge conflict are not repeated and consultation occurs with only those authorised to do so). Additionally the Council agrees “...that the process of consultation with the Ngarrindjeri in relation to issues arising under the Development Act 1993 (SA), the Aboriginal Heritage Act, 1988 (SA), the Native Title Act, 1993 (Commonwealth) should be consistent across the Council area” (Kungan Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement, 2002).

In order to ensure that the Agreement does not endanger wider Ngarrindjeri rights in areas such as native title, provision 17 states that the agreement does not “affect, extinguish or derogate from any subsisting legal rights, powers, interests or obligations of the Ngarrindjeri People” including sovereign rights, native title rights or rights under the state and federal Aboriginal heritage legislation. Recognising that the Agreement may face future challenges and impediments, provision 28 contains

¹⁰⁵ The Ngarrindjeri refuse to cross the bridge and therefore their rights as custodians of Kumarangk have been hindered.

the *force majeure* clause which explains the conditions for addressing impediments to cooperation with the provisions of the Agreement for either party to the Agreement.

After the apology was presented and the Kungan Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement was concluded, the Ngarrindjeri arranged a moving reburial ceremony where the remains were restored to their original resting place in the presence of their Ngarrindjeri descendants and observed by friends from the community, the Council and other groups. Also, as per the statement in the Agreement and an addendum made on 18 November 2002, the Council has come forward with monetary support for the Ngarrindjeri ferry project which the Ngarrindjeri need in order to return to Kumarangk to perform their duties as custodians.¹⁰⁶

The Council committed to match dollar for dollar any money raised by the Ngarrindjeri up to \$75,000 within a period of eighteen months of the Agreement. Despite expiry of this time limit, the Council has provided these funds as the Ngarrindjeri managed to gather support from sources such as ATSIC, the Community Development and Employment programs operating in Ngarrindjeri country and public donations. The Ngarrindjeri recently found an appropriate boat for sale and have purchased it with these funds. As the Ngarrindjeri can now return

¹⁰⁶ Additionally, this addendum includes an acknowledgement that the Goolwa wharf area is a site of particular significance to Ngarrindjeri women (contra the charge of “fabrication” made in the 1995 Royal Commission). It also addresses the Ngarrindjeri’s concern about four-wheel drive access to the delicate dune system of the Sir Richard Peninsula, stating that the Council supports the Ngarrindjeri desire to have the state government “give over” the area to the Ngarrindjeri under a joint management scheme or some other mutually agreed arrangement.

to Kumarangk in a culturally appropriate way,¹⁰⁷ the Agreement can be seen as a journey to healing the divide caused by the Hindmarsh Island bridge conflict.

Both the Ngarrindjeri and the members of the Council view the agreement as a living document that can help build better relationships (M. Rigney, pers. comm., 22 June 2004; Mayor K. McHugh, pers. comm., 18 June 2004). Mayor Kym McHugh stated: “we’ve found this very rewarding, building up a good relationship with our Ngarrindjeri people and I think we have a lot of ground to make up for over the years ... and we’re very much committed to moving forward with them” (pers. comm., 18 June 2004). When he was asked if there were any differences of interpretation of the Agreement, Mayor McHugh could only point out the continued need the Ngarrindjeri feel to have their lawyer present at all discussions with the Council, which he feels “really does limit and hamper a feeling of trust and some good discussions” (pers. comm., 18 June 2004). In light of Ngarrindjeri experiences with the bridge conflict and the fact that Council attitudes only shifted when lawyers were co-opted in the effort to secure their Indigenous rights,¹⁰⁸ this point of difference is likely to remain for some time. Councillor Mary Beckett arranged for members of the Council to undertake Ngarrindjeri cultural training at Camp Coorong in 2004 so that some of these differences will be better understood and relationships can improve further (pers. comm., 26 June 2004).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ The damage that lack of access to Kumarangk caused the Ngarrindjeri both culturally and spiritually is well explained in Tjukonai, 2003. It has also had economic impacts as the Ngarrindjeri had hoped to develop cultural tourism facilities on the island to complement their work at Camp Coorong and thereby provide scarce jobs and income for the community.

¹⁰⁸ Historian Steve Hemming witnessed much of the conflict surrounding the SATC’s IYE 2002 launch (discussed earlier) and remarked that if the Ngarrindjeri had a lawyer retained then, the launch would not have been allowed to proceed without rectification of the problem to Ngarrindjeri satisfaction because the conduct of the event violated their rights under the state *Aboriginal Heritage Act* (Hemming, pers. comm., 5 February 2004).

¹⁰⁹ This shows the dual pronged strategy in action: the drive for Indigenous rights is complemented by Camp Coorong’s efforts in offering cultural education and thereby improving race relations.

The efforts of the Ngarrindjeri to secure their Indigenous rights continue as they seek similar agreements with the other three councils that are situated in Ngarrindjeri country. The most advanced after Alexandrina is the Victor Harbor Council, which has presented a statement of apology following another incident similar to the Goolwa wharf incident. This council held the Encounter 2002 event on the 23 March 2003 commemorating the surveys by British explorer Matthew Flinders and French explorer Nicolas Baudin off the South Australian coast which thousands attended including British and French diplomatic representatives. A public art work due to be unveiled at the event stated in bold engraving on the concrete base and etched on the silver information plaque “Un/occupied Land” and held symbolic representations of the meeting between the British, the French and the Ngarrindjeri.¹¹⁰ The Ngarrindjeri demanded a rectification of the monument in the days preceding the event as it negated their presence as custodians and could affect their assertion of native title. A compromise was reached with a proposal to change the “un” to “on”. The silver plaque was changed accordingly but the “un” of the concrete base remains, much to the concern of the Ngarrindjeri (M. Rigney, pers. comm., 22 June 2004). On the day, the Council presented its statement of sorrow and apology prompted by the dispute, and the Ngarrindjeri managed an exchange of flags with the British and French diplomatic representatives attending the ceremonies - another expression of sovereignty. The Ngarrindjeri are hoping the apology will pave the

¹¹⁰ The full story of this event must await future analysis, but for now it can be said that the artist believed this wording to be an artistic challenge to mainstream Australian sensibilities. The Ngarrindjeri, who were not consulted in the formation of the public art work, were not pleased with a monument they believed confirmed the principle of “terra nullius”, the term used in the legal justification of the occupation of Australia based on the land being “unoccupied”, and subsequently overturned in the *Mabo* High Court decision of 1992.

way for a protocol agreement and are also discussing establishing agreements with the other councils.¹¹¹

The memorandum of understanding with the SATC first proposed during the negotiations around the IYE 2002 launch discussed earlier has not been abandoned and the Ngarrindjeri hope that talks will commence soon. Because the SATC is a state government agency, this aim may have to await success on another Ngarrindjeri front. In December of 2003, the Ngarrindjeri re-enacted the presentation of a petition in 1923 to the South Australian government by three Ngarrindjeri ambassadors (details of the 1923 event are presented in Appendix D). They took this occasion to issue another statement, the Proclamation of Time Immemorial Ngarrindjeri Dominion, and present it to the Crown's representative. Much of this document is similar to the 1999 Proclamation of Ngarrindjeri Sovereignty. However, the recent proclamation notes the illegitimate founding of the State of South Australia and calls upon the government to "enter into a Social Charter with the Ngarrindjeri Nation to inscribe mutual recognition of our dominium as between Ngarrindjeri Nation and the Crown within South Australia" and to present a bill to the State parliament for a Ngarrindjeri treaty. While this sounds unlikely, the State of South Australia has been at the forefront of progressive initiatives in past decades and may be so again. No such hope can be entertained at the federal level as the Howard government has diverted reconciliation, gutted the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, denied self-determination and limited the effectiveness of native title.

¹¹¹ The apology the Victor Harbor Council presented to the Ngarrindjeri (modelled on the Alexandrina Council's statement) was engraved on a silver plaque and fixed to the Encounter 2002 monument situated in the main tourism thoroughfare of this seaside holiday town.

As the preceding discussion illuminates, the Ngarrindjeri have utilised a dual strategy to assert their Indigenous rights; one tactic is symbolic assertions of sovereignty (which await a more favourable political climate for recognition) and the other is pragmatic agreement-making efforts which cover any institutions and organisations operating on and/or affecting Ngarrindjeri people and country. The ultimate aim of this Ngarrindjeri Indigenous rights agenda is as simple as it is vital; it is to assert an unassailable Ngarrindjeri role in management of their lands and waters in order to ensure the future of Ngarrindjeri lifeways.

6.4.6 Ngarrindjeri perspectives

At the heart of the difficulties between Indigenous peoples and the forces of tourism and globalisation lie ideologies and principles which are largely incompatible. For the Ngarrindjeri, land is not a resource, nor a piece of real estate, nor a designated recreational zone. Their word for land, *ruwi*, is related to the term, *ruwar*, body. Bell presents the discrepancy between Ngarrindjeri feelings for the land and the non-Indigenous, materialistic view: “the *ruwi* on which Goolwa is built, and the *ruwi* on which the marina is planned are not understood as the *ruwar* of the ancestors, to be held in sacred trust by the living” (1998, p. 547). This feeling, attachment and relationship to the “environment” were powerfully illustrated in a Ngarrindjeri submission to the Ramsar consultation process. The Coorong and Lower Lakes were placed on the Ramsar “List of Wetlands of International Importance especially for Waterfowl Habitat” in 1985. In 1999, the South Australian government sought consultation from relevant stakeholders as it created the Coorong, Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert Management Ramsar Management Plan. The Ngarrindjeri community’s Ngarrindjeri Ramsar Working Group (NRWG) presented a submission

which attempted to explain the nature of their attachment to the area covered by the plan:

The Ngarrindjeri lands – in particular the River, Lakes and the Coorong are crucial for the survival of the Ngarrindjeri people. They have a spiritual and religious connection with the land and the living things associated with it. The fish, birds and other living things are the *Ngartjis* (totems) of the Ngarrindjeri people. Many Ngarrindjeri have a strong spiritual connection to their *Ngartjis* and a responsibility to protect them (NRWG, 1999).

The submission was dropped from the finalised publication of the Coorong, Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert Ramsar Management Plan of the Department of the Environment and Heritage (1999).¹¹² It is no longer publicly available and this is a source of hurt to the Ngarrindjeri community. They consider the process of community consultations that the State government funded for this plan as one of the rare instances where the full community was facilitated to deliberate and arrive at a true community submission. One possible explanation for the submission's removal might be the frank discussion of historical injustices in the document, the need to change cultural attitudes, a rights-based approach to negotiations, and its advocacy of native title and joint management, in addition to suggestions for the protection of the area's Ramsar values. It was certainly a severe disappointment to the Ngarrindjeri who believed that the unusual amount of resourcing and facilitation that they were given for their extensive community deliberations meant their perspectives on the Coorong, Lakes and River were going to be received with respect and concern. Whereas the Ramsar consultation process could have been a valuable opportunity to bridge the gap between Ngarrindjeri and non-Ngarrindjeri perspectives of this area,

¹¹² This document was available at http://www.denr.sa.gov.au/herit_biodiv/ramsar/pdfs/rams3.pdf. The Ngarrindjeri submission had been an appendix in the earlier draft versions but was dropped from the final publication of the draft plan.

instead Ngarrindjeri voices were marginalised and silenced by the deletion of their submission.

Despite such treatment the Ngarrindjeri continue to voice moderate positions trying to secure a shared future with non-Indigenous people. This is exemplified in the desire to negotiate a joint management agreement with National Parks and Wildlife South Australia for the Coorong National Park. Ngarrindjeri concerns about the present and visions for the future are evident in these words by George Trevorrow:

For us to survive we need the national park, it's the last bit of land that we have got to carry on our culture. I suppose why Ngarrindjeri people feel this is very important is because there are a lot of surviving sites and burial sites within it, important areas. They're still there, unlike across the land where they've ploughed and torn it up and done so much damage. At least Coorong National Park still holds a lot of culture for the rest of our people. We're willing to share that with the rest of the people in the world, but we want ownership of it in order to feel good about it. We need a handover of the park to us and we're willing to do joint management because then everybody benefits. We need the system that's in place, but we also need to have some ownership as well. So the white structure would stay there, but it would be a minority in the big picture, instead of a majority. We could employ people and have our kids off the street. Stop them dying and get them back on the land so they can live again. We're losing too many (George Trevorrow, Ngarrindjeri community, quoted in Thomsen, 2001, p. 115).

This statement demonstrates just how vital the issues are that confront the Ngarrindjeri in their relationships with government entities, tourism bodies and other institutions. Ngarrindjeri efforts are dedicated to trying to secure Ngarrindjeri values which are integral to the maintenance of Ngarrindjeri lifeways as the key to their survival as Ngarrindjeri. A primary disjunction which must be bridged in order to ensure such survival is for non-Ngarrindjeri to move away from their perspective of the Ngarrindjeri as mere stakeholders and engage with Ngarrindjeri views of themselves as custodians of their environment.

6.4.7 Stakeholders versus custodians of the land

The supporters of capitalist globalisation have responded to the threats and powerful criticisms of the “anti-globalisation” movement (based on environmental destruction and/or perceived social inequity) by reforming, adapting or co-opting.¹¹³ This strategy could include apparent shifts towards sustainable development, ecotourism, community-based development and stakeholder theory.¹¹⁴ In particular, stakeholder theory implies that corporations have responsibilities to members of society and that they must establish responsible relationships with the entities they affect. This is the foundation for the precepts that SATC, NPWSA, other government agencies, industry associations and others follow when they observe the imperative to “consult” with the Ngarrindjeri. However, this technique only provides an illusion of empowerment for the Ngarrindjeri community. As the Rupelle of the Tendi stated concerning Ngarrindjeri input into resource management:

There are people from powerful groups on the Coorong Consultative Committee. People from the 4WD Association, the Shooter’s Association and the fishermen too, so I’m talking about powerful lobby groups being on that committee. So it makes it difficult for us to think of the land as we do, for protection, because the group is too powerful. It seems to me that powerful groups can get together to have more power and National Parks seems to want to be so accommodating with these powerful lobby groups, as far as I’m concerned too accommodating at times (George Trevorrow, Ngarrindjeri community quoted in Thomsen, 2001, p. 78)

¹¹³ Capitalist globalisation has co-opted aspects of the counter movement that the “anti-globalisation” movement represents and commodified its culture and dynamics, as can be seen in the growing market around “New Age” products and services which includes the traditions of Indigenous peoples. Beder’s *Global Spin* (2000) is a valuable description of the corporate reaction to the influence of the environmental movement in countries like the United States and Australia.

¹¹⁴ For a considered discussion of the issues of sustainable development, stakeholder theory and Indigenous rights see Banerjee (2000). Also, see Ryan (2002) for a discussion of stakeholder theory and the “new tourism” within a context of equity and sustainability. Pleumarom (2003) is scathingly critical of the tourism industry’s adoption of the corporate social responsibility agenda. See Section 5.4.

The use of the term stakeholders is anathema to the Ngarrindjeri Indigenous rights agenda as the following statement from Tom Trevorrow powerfully makes clear:

Some Ladies came and spoke to me and talked about this, and we were written down, the Ngarrindjeri people as stakeholders. I said 'I'm not happy about that. We are not stakeholders, we are the indigenous people of this land. I would like us to be seen as the indigenous custodians rather than as stakeholders. So don't put us in the category of the BP Roadhouse or the caravan parks or the motels or the tour operators. You put us in the category of the custodians, indigenous people, because we have more at stake here, we have our culture and our heritage which is in the land, the waters, the trees, the birds and the animals. We don't look at the land with the dollar concept, how these other people look at the land'. So they apologised for that at the time, but I think in the outcome of the report we're still written down as stakeholders. We're not given full and proper recognition and if we had input into the development of that plan we would have said: 'Either you put us down as the custodians of the land - or you don't put us in there at all' (Tom Trevorrow, Ngarrindjeri community quoted in Thomsen, 2001, p. 106).

The Indigenous people as custodians of "country", like the Ngarrindjeri of southeastern South Australia, cannot be well served by being given equal stakeholder status to other stakeholders such as the tourism associations, tourism operators, local government leaders, second home-owners, environmental organisations, among others. Tourism operators, second-home owners, and others residing in the vicinity can move to "greener pastures" if the impacts of tourism and other activities become barriers to their success and happiness (to use a colloquial phrase, the "bugger it up and pass it on" phenomenon). Increasingly, in the global age this need to periodically migrate is accepted as the norm, as evident in the lives of global migrants such as myself. The unfortunate outcome of this phenomenon is that many people enjoying the benefits of the globalisation age, do not have to live with the impacts that they generate and therefore do not have to actually face the difficulties of living in a truly sustainable manner. Many Ngarrindjeri, however, are rooted to their place as their ancestors have been before them. Their relationship to their

lands and waters is a spiritual one that entails certain obligations and is central to their health and survival. For some, the option of permanently moving away is inconceivable. The Ngarrindjeri express this relationship frequently to outsiders, for example as they did in their submission in 1999 to the drafting of the Ramsar Management Plan discussed previously.

Many Ngarrindjeri people still retain a special relationship with specific wildlife species occurring within the planning area. This totemic relationship is deeply embedded in Ngarrindjeri culture and spirituality. Many Ngarrindjeri people have their own *Ngartji* or special friend. This association with wildlife provides a special perspective on Ramsar values and the maintenance of habitats [within the CNP] (NRWG, 1999).

While some might negate the continuity of these spiritual values and cultural traditions (as happened in the labelling of Ngarrindjeri proponents as fabricators of their cultural traditions in the Hindmarsh Island conflict), the Ngarrindjeri and many other Indigenous peoples around the globe retain the essence of these beliefs and values even though they have made many accommodations to the modern world.

The sense of feeling, sense of belonging, sense of responsibility for the river, Lakes and Coorong experienced by Ngarrindjeri people has survived occupation, dispersal and attempted assimilation. It continues to exist irrespective of where Ngarrindjeri people currently live. The link with the land lies at the heart and soul of Ngarrindjeri culture. A proper relationship and role in management of the land is a fundamental platform in building and maintaining Ngarrindjeri culture and Ngarrindjeri self respect. Ngarrindjeri believe that their future involvement in the management of the land would be positive and beneficial to all members of the community, not just Ngarrindjeri. It would represent a significant step in the process of reconciliation and co-existence. The strengthening of Ngarrindjeri people and their culture requires a serious involvement in the managing of their traditional lands (NRWG, 1999).

In her discussion of Indigenous tourism in a context of human rights and Indigenous rights, Johnston argues that while many non-Indigenous actors believe that

Indigenous people want “consultation” or “stakeholder” status, “by definition, a ‘stakeholder’ consultation process is designed to accommodate third-party interests, not human rights or indigenous rights” (2003, p. 129). The difference between these two foundations is vast. Whereas consulting with stakeholders implies the give and take of compromise, the recognition of human and Indigenous rights means there are some things not subject to compromise (such as access to traditional country, protection of spiritual beliefs from the trivialisation or voyeurism of tourism and most basic, the right to the means to survival). Hardy *et al.* flag the fact that at the heart of the sustainable tourism debate lies the issue of whether empowered communities should choose the trade-offs that must be made in the difficult balancing of environmental, economic and socio-cultural impacts of tourism or whether planners and bureaucrats should make “‘balanced decisions’ ... for the ‘greater good’” (2002, p. 491). However, as Tom Trevorrow’s statement above indicates, Indigenous peoples have much more at stake as their very survival as Indigenous peoples rests on such decisions. It is for this reason that Indigenous peoples have needed to articulate an Indigenous rights regime. If their efforts prove successful, as indeed they must if Indigenous peoples are to survive as Indigenous peoples, then firm limits will be placed on the forces of tourism and globalisation to appropriate and benefit from the lands and resources of others.¹¹⁵

Despite the rhetoric of sustainability and consultation, it must not be forgotten that tourism is the subject of raw power plays and that Indigenous peoples are currently

¹¹⁵ While some will say that this gives Indigenous peoples an unacceptable *carte blanche* to block development, available evidence indicates that Indigenous communities are not against development per se and are willing to use modern economic opportunities. However, they do not want these to be to the detriment to their Indigenous values. See Blaser *et al.* (2004) for insights into these dynamics. Stewart-Harawira (2005b) asserts that Indigenous ways of retaining traditional values while engaging with contemporary circumstances could serve as a model for non-Indigenous societies.

severely hampered in their ability to assert their interests against the better resourced and more influential powerbrokers of the tourism industry. I would argue that the Hindmarsh Island conflict marked a backlash against the advances in Indigenous rights gained under the Labor governments of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The indignities and public humiliation in the media that Ngarrindjeri proponents suffered as the inquiries, the Royal Commission and the court cases dragged on sent a clear message about the price of asserting Aboriginal cultural and spiritual traditions against development proposals which deliver the growth rates and indicators that capitalist globalisation demands. The Ngarrindjeri case study reveals two strategies to secure the continuance of Indigenous lifeways. One is to use the opportunity of alternative tourism to try to transform the systems of oppression and exploitation. The other is to assert Indigenous rights to curb the actions of exploitative corporate bodies and to protect Indigenous values which secure more equitable social and environmental outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that tourism and globalisation are encroaching upon the lands, resources, cultures and peoples of the Indigenous world in order to exploit these for profit and wealth accumulation under the capitalist system. However, Indigenous peoples are increasingly aware of these dynamics and seek to respond with their own articulation of their rights and interests through an Indigenous rights regime. While many advocates of Indigenous tourism present it as a win-win scenario in its meeting the demand of tourists, while profiting the tourism industry

and delivering development opportunities for Indigenous peoples,¹¹⁶ the fact is that the Indigenous rights regime is required to ensure that tourism is moulded to be a positive rather than an exploitative force in this era of globalising capitalism.

The Ngarrindjeri case study provides an opportunity to examine how events have unfolded for a particular Indigenous community, thus complementing the earlier macro-theoretical discussion provided in Chapters two through five with a micro-lived experience. The Ngarrindjeri case study shows how development spawned by tourism and globalisation can impact negatively on a community. It also reveals a major disjunction between the values underlying the “culture-ideology of consumerism” (Sklair, 2002) and the values motivating the Ngarrindjeri resulting in conflicts that occurred at Hindmarsh Island or the difficulties surrounding the launch of the IYE 2002.

Despite these difficulties and disjunctions, the Ngarrindjeri nevertheless choose to engage with “tourism” through their work at Camp Coorong. The Ngarrindjeri use this facility to foster cultural education and better race relations in order to open up a space for their continued existence as Indigenous people in the face of the onslaught of capitalist globalisation as epitomised by the unfolding of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge conflict and the pressures being exerted on Ngarrindjeri “environments” and lives described within these pages. There is preliminary evidence that Camp Coorong moves people in real ways and transforms their thinking. In fact, the case study of the Ngarrindjeri experience presented in this chapter demonstrates that

¹¹⁶ This parallels the presentation of ecotourism as a win-win scenario with the tourism industry benefiting from a lucrative niche, conservationists protecting environments from more damaging industries, tourists obtaining the eco experience they crave and local communities benefiting from conservation policies.

communities are engaging with alternative tourism in order to foster an eco-humanism. However it is also evident that this alone was insufficient to overturn inequitable and unsustainable structures that undermine Ngarrindjeri lifeways. Instead, the additional strategy of securing Indigenous rights has proved vital to open up a space in a hostile political context for the alternative tourism work to flourish. This suggests that under the current structures of corporatised tourism and capitalist globalisation, a dedicated strategy of fostering political and societal change is essential to recognise and implement the full gamut of human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights discussed in Chapter two. Only then will the alternative tourisms reviewed in this thesis be fully successful in fulfilling their potentials in fostering equity and sustainability.