

Is there a future for Lajamanu?

One that provides a new approach to the governance of Lajamanu, safeguards the rights of the community and progressively seeks to overcome its socio-economic disadvantages.

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship between the small remote Indigenous community of Lajamanu in the Northern Territory of Australia and the government (federal, territory and shire). It poses the question of whether there can be a fruitful future for the Warlpiri people that form the Lajamanu community; one which will overcome their continuing socio-economic disadvantage; one which satisfies both the Lajamanu Warlpiri community and government. The purpose of this exercise is to research the possibilities and probabilities of providing a new approach to the governance of Lajamanu that safeguards the rights of the community and progressively seeks to overcome its socio-economic disadvantages.

A significant component of this thesis is extensive qualitative field research to reveal the views and opinions of a wide range of Lajamanu residents (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and of people engaged in government agencies that relate to Lajamanu. This new research material represents a substantial addition to the existing scholarly literature. The information gained by the field research (detailed in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight) has been linked to the Literature Review (Chapter Nine). The collation of both the literature, the new research and the other relevant chapter material proves to be most revealing. The new research supports and adds to the views and arguments of the literature and establishes that there appear to be certain key factors that could be applied to facilitate changes that will enable a more equitable future for Lajamanu.

There are nine recurring key factors that should be considered in any process seeking to build a satisfactory future for the Lajamanu community. Each factor is of value in its own right and therefore worth adoption, but may be less effective than the application of all nine. The key factors are:

- Sovereignty, rights and retention of Warlpiri identity
- Leadership and management capacity training and assistance: fostering traditional leadership and development in useful ways
- Supporting traditional leadership and management constructs and re-constructs.
- Hybrid or some alternative structured and sustainable socio-economic development
- Education Development

- Freeing up government resources, funding and strategies
- Long term policies, long term sustainable funding and long-term expectations
- Overcoming the sit-down mentality...learned helplessness
- Thinking small and concentrating on each community as a separate entity

These nine key factors are specific to Lajamanu but may also prove to be applicable to other Indigenous communities when adapted and shaped to their cultural needs.

Given the copious amount of well-researched, well-documented arguments in favour of the key factors it is difficult to understand why government has not more enthusiastically opted to explore their worth more fully.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed: Marcus James Dilena

Date: 8 July 2019

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

I wish to acknowledge my professional background in this area of research. I worked as a senior government manager in a career that spanned over thirty-five years for local government councils in South Australia and in the Northern Territory, including two-and-a-half years in Lajamanu. Prior to this, I was also a Senior Local Government Finance Officer, Council Advisor, and Patrol Officer in Papua New Guinea.

GLOSSARY

Aborigines Progressive Association (APA)	This all-Aboriginal body was formed in 1937 in New South Wales, with Jack Patten as president and Bill Ferguson as secretary.
ATSIC	Cunningham, J. & Baeza, J. 2005, maintained that ATSIC, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission established in 1990 was part of the Australian government's attempts to address disadvantages faced by Indigenous Australians. They describe it as a path-breaking experiment in indigenous affairs which attempted to combine administrative and representative functions in one statutory body.
The Bennelong Society	A conservative organisation committed to Indigenous Australian affairs (2001 – 2011). Gary Johns was the president. It is now defunct.
Bough	The core elite of Warlpiri ritual leaders, more formally known as Yamparru. This group of men and women Elders have been selected because they combine vigorous ritual education and personal charisma with the support networks of close residential kin.
CDEP	The Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) was an initiative by the Australian Government for the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
COAG	COAG (Council of Australian Governments) is the most pre-eminent inter-governmental forum in Australia, composed of the three levels of government and represented by the Prime Minister, State and Territory Premiers, Chief Ministers, and the President of the Australian Local Government Association

Dadirri research	Defined by Atkinson (2002, p. 17) as follows: <i>'I will listen to you, share with you, as you listen to, share with me... Our shared experiences are different, but in the inner deep listening to, and quiet, still awareness of each other, we learn and grow together. In this we create community, and our shared knowledge(s) and wisdom are expanded from our communication with each other'.</i>
Dreamings and songlines	Terms for describing Indigenous Australian Origin stories.
Elders	The term used for the male and female leaders in Indigenous Australian communities. Leadership is derived from a complex gerontocracy-learning based system which is described in more detail in Chapter 4. Elders are usually but not always older.
Ethnographic research	Qualitative research aimed at exploring cultural phenomena.
Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation (GMAAAC)	An Aboriginal corporation established to receive 100% of the affected area payments for its members, the landowners of an area affected by gold mining operations in the northern Tanami Desert. Under the ALRA (1976) NT, none of its funds may be distributed to individuals. It is managed by the Central Land Council.
Indigenous Community Governance Research Project	A research project jointly run by the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) and Reconciliation Australia, which involved twelve Indigenous Australian communities. The findings are discussed in Chapter 2.
Kardiya	The Warlpiri word for those who are not Indigenous to Australia; i.e., 'whitefellas'.
Kurdiji	This group of senior male and female Warlpiri is largely responsible for matters of community governance and control. It is answerable

to the Bough authority. Kurdiji in the Warlpiri language means to shield or to ward off. It is an evolution of a law and justice committee that was formed in 1998 by the Office of Aboriginal Development (OAD). While it was primarily an OAD concept, it was predominantly composed of traditional tribal council members.

Jukurrpa	Warlpiri word for their people’s traditional origin stories.
Lajamanu Governance Project	The aim of this project was to develop a model to assess and to strengthen remote community governance, particularly in its ability to deal with government.
Multiculturalism	<p>Described by Crowder (2013, p. 17) as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multiculturalism starts with the observation that most contemporary societies are ‘multicultural’—that is, they do, in fact, contain multiple cultures.• More distinctively, multiculturalists respond to that fact as something to approve of rather than oppose or merely tolerate.• More distinctively, still, multiculturalists argue that the multiplicity of cultures within a single society should be not only generally approved of but also given positive recognition in the public policy and public institutions of the society.
Oombulgurri	An Indigenous community in Western Australia.
NTER	In 2007, the Australian Government announced a radical and unexpected Northern Territory Emergency Response to protect Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory from sexual abuse and family violence. This action become known as the NT intervention.
Phenomenon Research	This research focuses not on the life of an individual but rather on contextual concepts or phenomenon, such as the psychological

meaning of a caring interaction (Riemen 1986, cited in Cresswell 1998)

RJCP In 2013 the Remote Jobs and Communities Program integrated four existing employment and community development services in 60 remote regions, for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. It replaced CDEP, Disability Employment Services, and the Indigenous employment program.

RSD The Remote Service Delivery (RSD) project was initiated to improve the delivery of services in twenty-nine remote Indigenous communities. Each of these communities was to develop a Local Implementation Plan (LIP) that would define targets, actions, and performance measures for their specific community (COAG 2008b).

The Wulain Resource Centre (WORC). A locally owned Aboriginal agency. It was involved in the establishment of the Wulain Rangers. Wulain is primarily involved in those functions responsible to maintain outstations, and for contracts (mainly government) for heavy machinery hire and for road works throughout the area.

Warnayaka Art Centre A successful community-owned enterprise that produces traditional but often contemporary Warlpiri art.

Yamparru The traditional Warlpiri name for the Bough.

Yapa The Warlpiri word for the people, meaning Warlpiri people.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: WHAT FUTURE FOR THE LAJAMANU WARLPIRI COMMUNITY?

The focus of this thesis is on one small Indigenous Australian community, Lajamanu, its past and present, its difficulties and its future both socio-cultural and economic. Lajamanu's future or lack of future is at the heart of this research thesis.

The theoretical premise of this work is that by examining historical events, as much relevant literature, philosophical and political observations and first-hand information from the Warlpiri community of Lajamanu, non-Warlpiri residents of Lajamanu, government and other relevant persons that the gained knowledge may reveal ways and means to negotiate the cultural differences between the Warlpiri community of Lajamanu and the governing Australian nation. This may give some hope for the facilitation of a future for Lajamanu that is both suitable to the Warlpiri community and government. The National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM 2019) states that:

There is a significant gap in a number of outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia. In particular, Indigenous people have worse health, higher mortality, lower literacy and numeracy, and higher overcrowding. From 2002 to 2009, rates of child abuse and adult imprisonment had increased for Indigenous people (Productivity Commission, 2011).

The purpose of this research thesis is to ascertain if there are opportunities to confront and lessen perceived socio-disadvantages and to enhance equity and rights in the Lajamanu community; perhaps by pinpointing key factors and/or finding better pathways forward. Interpretive research methods were used to interpret both the previously exposed knowledge and the new field research. The overall findings of this work suggest that there are key points that could enhance and effect the desired changes.

A significant component of this thesis is that of the field research which reveals the many views and opinions of a wide range of Lajamanu residents (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and of people and agencies that relate to Lajamanu. This material represents a substantial addition and reinforcement to the existing scholarly literature. The literature material is extensive and persuasive, but it has gaps which I argue, are largely filled by the findings of the new field research. In summary, the case study sources information from the existing

scholarly literature, history and some philosophy, and has added to and reinforced it with insights from this new field research material.

The thesis is structured in the following way. The first task was to gather information on Lajamanu and its community from as many sources as possible. Location, history, cultural difference, and philosophical differences were considered to be the best avenues to gain a better understanding of that community. The second task was to obtain and discuss how the Lajamanu community, government and other observers view the past and present management and governance of the Lajamanu community, the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of government policies. The next task was to collate a Literature Review. Finally, all of the research and literature was compared and collated and conclusions made.

Although Lajamanu is a remote community and its population is small there is a remarkable amount of research available that relates specifically or generally to that community. The study, using new research, builds upon existing knowledge seeking to better understand how or if the Lajamanu community can equitably and fairly survive. It asks whether Lajamanu can hope to relate symbiotically with the dominant Australian colonial-settler society without losing its identity and cultural integrity. Rights, Indigenous sovereignty, cultural retention and the future economic prospects of the community are given focus to more fully understand their relevance in past and future relationships between government and the Lajamanu Warlpiri community. Views and arguments relating to the past and present socio-economic challenges and the threats to rights and privileges of the Lajamanu Warlpiri community are researched to garner a better appreciation of the difficulties and how they may be managed more successfully as are the policies, practices and actions of Australian governments¹ (federal, state and local) that have impinged on the Lajamanu community.

Recurring, relevant factors (key factors) are identified suggesting that there are possibilities for identity retention, rights recognition, more economic stability and new governance and decision-making roles for the Lajamanu Warlpiri. However, these things are unlikely to be

¹ Government referred to throughout this thesis generally refers to federal government policy and/or practice unless specifically designated as Territory or local.

gained without a substantial attitudinal change by government and to a lesser extent by the Lajamanu community.

Indigenous Australian communities have one thing in common: most (including Lajamanu) are materially disadvantaged in comparison with the Australian mainstream, having inadequate housing, poor education, low health standards and shorter life expectancy (Altman, Biddle & Hunter 2008b p. 3). But remote communities are not all the same, many things create differences e.g. location, environment, culture. Behrendt (2003) notes that:

Indigenous communities are diverse in culture and circumstances and therefore their needs are very different. Communities that are enclaves within urban areas, finding themselves a sub-group of a larger, non-Indigenous political unit, have different needs and strategies to those of Indigenous communities living in remote and distinct geographical areas where they may already be engaged in initiatives that can be categorised as decentralised self-governing actions. Aspirations will be specific to small communities – the need for a medical centre or a doctor, a school – but there is also a broader vision of the relationship that is sought with Australian society and its institutions that is expressed when needs are articulated (Behrendt 2003 p. 87).

The Lajamanu Warlpiri community have their own specific aspirations and difficulties in finding a way to relate with the mainstream². This research thesis seeks to more fully understand why these disadvantages have occurred and why they remain; to more fully understand the problems and complexities that a minority Indigenous community faces when confronted with having to live and survive in, or alongside, a radically different society. It also seeks to understand and to appreciate the difficulties faced by government in accommodating minority societies within its majority governing democracy.

I appreciate that a major potential problem in any research is that of researcher-bias, and that it is particularly important to recognise the possibility of this when undertaking intercultural research. I recognise that I am an older, non-Indigenous, Australian male and that age, racial and gender bias is possible. I have noted that:

Unlearning one's privilege is a key element of doing good cross-cultural research. It requires critical reflection on how we have come to value our own knowledge and practices and investigating why that knowledge is privileged. It requires the adoption of an attitude of genuine humility, a genuine acceptance that we do not have answers and that sometimes we might be part of a problem. Unlearning

² Mainstream in this sense refers to the dominant culture, a system of shared values and behaviour that prevails in Australia.

one's privilege is not only a key to doing cross-cultural research, it is one of the things that happens to you when you do cross-cultural research. If you are open to it, you are constantly confronted with how privilege operates to maintain personal positions of status and power, even when those might not be obvious (Porter, 2004 p.105)

As the sole researcher I was aware of this and endeavoured to avoid, minimize and to overcome these potential biases by seeking research methods recognised by Indigenous scholars, listening rather than deciding and seeking to allow a cross-section of research recipients to be freely forthcoming with their views and arguments. The views of the non-Indigenous, Indigenous, male, female, young and old have been researched. I have attempted to obtain balanced, authoritative views from the vast amount of literature. I believe that a faithfully recorded composite of the views of those researched has resulted in some valid thesis conclusions, conclusions of those researched rather than those of the researcher.

Nevertheless, I acknowledge the possibility of some unintended researcher bias which may have resulted from my having worked in many communities in Papua-New Guinea, the United Kingdom, South Australia, the Northern Territory and importantly for over two years in Lajamanu as the Chief Executive Officer of the Lajamanu Local government. Much of my 35-year career was in local government, particularly with rural and Indigenous communities. My cultural background is obviously different that of Warlpiri people. I try to value the diversity and value of cultural difference. I have noted Nicholls comment:

Collective-reflexivity' ...entails simultaneously being receptive to new cultural domains of understanding and attempting to maintain space for this throughout the entire research process by ceding researcher control beyond the initial phase of negotiation, and extending participation into data collection, analysis and distribution. ... 'being open and susceptible ... learning from difference rather than learning about the Other' (Jones with Jenkins, 2008, p. 480). ... attention to the three layers of reflexivity is like juggling: requiring concentration, movement, balance and coordination. Juggling is resisting essentialist positions while also recognising difference. This is the ability to see that the hyphen both connects and separates us when we undertake collaborative counter-colonial research (Nicholls 2009 p.124).

A casual observer might conclude that an Indigenous community of approximately 700 people, situated in one of the remotest semi-arid areas of Australia has no choice but to

assimilate (or at least fit in with) the dominant Australian majority, a society that adheres to western socio-economic patterns. However, many small remote Indigenous communities, including the Lajamanu Warlpiri community, have resisted any such change and have so far managed to cling to their unique identity, retain much of their cultural heritage and continue their kinship arrangements. Behrendt stresses the importance that Indigenous Australians place on community and identity (2003 pp.74-84) and Pearson, in relation to his Indigenous community, also states that:

our ultimate goal is to ensure that Cape York people have the capabilities to choose a life they have reason to value. It is an agenda of economic and social development that does not entail making choices for people but is rather about expanding the range of choices people have available to them (Pearson 2005 p.9).

While Pearson specifies Cape York, this goal would also seem to hold true for the Lajamanu Warlpiri community (Chapter Six).

I began this research project with a flawed premise. My years as an administrator in Lajamanu had led to frustration and concerns with the ongoing problems of poverty, disadvantage and with the government failure to adequately train and/or to allow the Lajamanu leaders to determine the present and future of their community. As a local government manager over a rather long career my instinct suggested that by applying my experience and knowledge as well as that provided by previous researchers, and by seeking the views of the Lajamanu community members and those associated with the community, that a rectifying formula could be found, a neat solution that could satisfy government and the Lajamanu community. I was proved wrong. Frankly, it is not that simple. This is a problem of great complexity. The accommodation of a minority Indigenous group within a majority mainstream while protecting that group's identity and culture is indeed a daunting task. These are problems that stem from the historic colonial incursions into Indigenous lands and the subsequent effects colonisation has had on Indigenous livelihoods. There are questions regarding the need to build some form of economic activity within communities and there are questions regarding community rights and governance. Altman explains the complexity of this task:

Indigenous development policy faces the complex task of balancing the often-incompatible goals of socio-economic equality for Indigenous citizens, and the recognition of difference, choice and self-determination for first Australians as 'special' citizens (2009a p. 1).

A realisation of the complexity of the problem suggests that an inquiring and investigatory approach is needed to possibly gain a better understanding and appreciation of how this complex task should be tackled.

Therefore, the thesis became a case study to research the possibility of using information obtained from the field research to build on the existing literature, history and philosophy to more fully understand the past and current interactions between government and the Lajamanu Warlpiri community, and to understand how those actions have influenced the socio-economic dynamic of that community. The aim was to find any key factors that could assist the process of positive change; if there were factors. The field research coupled to and reinforced by the known literature suggests that these factors do exist.

The field interviews and discussions sought to elicit what the community wanted, needed and was prepared to do. The field research also sought to obtain views of a wider group of people (mostly non-Indigenous) directly and indirectly involved with Lajamanu and to compare and balance those views with those of the community members. This information was then analysed and collated to form a composite understanding of what both the Lajamanu Warlpiri and government wish for Lajamanu and to ascertain if it may be possible for Warlpiri and government to negotiate some agreeable possibilities, some key factors. The information and understanding gained is intended to indicate what the Lajamanu community wants and how they may be able to work towards accomplishing those wants with government.

The case study of the Lajamanu community is divided into chapters presenting background information, documenting field research into the views of Warlpiri people and those that have directly or indirectly engaged with and/or had some relationship with the Lajamanu community. Government policies and practices are examined. The thesis then seeks to build upon the knowledge revealed in the scholarly literature. Each chapter supplies information that relates to the Lajamanu community and of the challenges it faces in overcoming its socio-economic disadvantages and in the governing of its future. Each chapter summarises significant findings and/or assumptions. The chapter to chapter compilation of relevant ideas and information builds into a comprehensive overview. The Lajamanu research chapters (Chapters Six to Eight) gather information to add to, reinforce and sometimes rebut the known research. The Literature Review is the known knowledge chapter that provides vital

learning and ideas, and then 'Pulling the Threads Together', Chapter Ten, consolidates and further analyses the information, views, suggestions and arguments. Finally, there is a concluding chapter which makes the argument that there are opportunities for government and the leaders of the Lajamanu community to develop new, more effective approaches to provide a more acceptable governance, rights and future for Lajamanu. It discusses nine key factors and the possibilities of new governance and decision-making roles for both the Lajamanu Warlpiri and government parties. Those factors are:

- Sovereignty, rights and retention of identity
- Leadership and management capacity training and assistance: fostering traditional leadership and development in useful ways.
- Supporting traditional leadership and management constructs and re-constructs.
- Hybrid or some alternative structured and sustainable socio-economic development
- Education Development
- Freeing up government resources, funding and strategies.
- Long term policies, long term sustainable funding and long-term expectations
- Overcoming the sit-down mentality...learned helplessness
- Think small and concentrate on each community as separate entities

Changes in attitude, intent and most essentially the development of trust are needed, and this requires a new approach to the governance of the Lajamanu community, one in which government and the Lajamanu community leaders consent to work together to set priorities and to make decisions about the future of the Lajamanu community.

Waziyatawin (2004), an Indigenous Dakota American academic and scholar of indigenous American studies argues that Indigenous resistance is necessary; that Indigenous-non-Indigenous cultural interfaces need to be recognised; and an acceptable form of Indigenous empowerment arrived at:

As Indigenous knowledge is revalued and revived, our people become stronger and we fuel our capacity for meaningful resistance to colonization. The importance of this work, then, cannot be overstated; the recovery of Indigenous knowledge is Indigenous empowerment. However, nation strengthening also requires a recognition that Indigenous Peoples are in need of protection. Just as the restoration of an Indigenous land base is necessary to the production of

Indigenous knowledge, so too are Indigenous Peoples. Thus, the struggle for our lives, our lands, and our knowledge is a common struggle (2004 p.359+)

To reiterate, the chapter organisation is segmented into 5 parts:

Research design

Background Information

Field Research

Literature; relevant knowledge and theory

Collation and analysis

Conclusion

1.1 Research Design

Chapter Two specifically discusses the research design for each field research chapter and specifies that it is qualitative rather than quantitative research. It explains why an interpretive case study approach is used; why Lajamanu community is selected; the research question structure; where and why ethnography and phenomenological research and Dadirri methodology is used to obtain an approach that is as unbiased as possible for a non-Warlpiri person. It also explains how the research was methodically but analysed and triangulated.

The thesis has been planned to be a non-Indigenous researcher's searching examination of the views of the Lajamanu Warlpiri community, all those directly and indirectly associated with that community and of the views of previous researchers and writers of note. Further it seeks to explore the history of Indigenous-government relationships since colonisation, focusing on Lajamanu. Attempt is also made to explore the philosophical differences of Indigenous/non-Indigenous thought to those of European classical thought, especially relating to rights and sovereignty.

1.2 Background Information

Chapter Three, in this chapter, the history of Australia's Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships and governance provides a concise picture of the history of how colonisation,

government authority and policy decisions have severely affected the lives of Indigenous Australians; influences that have led to disadvantage and in loss of rights. The early history of Indigenous deprivation, humiliation and inhumane behaviour by government, settlers and miners is documented in some detail.

Chapter three shows evidence of continued failure by government to facilitate Indigenous input into Indigenous affairs policies and direction.. A government concentration on *Closing the Gap* policies over the last few decades is noted, as are its decisions to ignore some of the rights of Indigenous persons. Government seems to have decided to prioritise the lessening of disadvantage over the rights of Indigenous people (Altman, Biddle & hunter, 2008; Sullivan 2011, & Hunt 2013). The failure to significantly lessen gap targets is exposed (Hunt 2013).

Chapter Four. In a similar vein to the previous chapter, this section is a social and historic overview and concentrates specifically on Lajamanu, providing a record of its history with settlers and with government. It briefly explains the intricacies of Warlpiri culture and community relationships (particularly the kinship structure). The Warlpiri community's retention of traditional values is emphasised.. The disastrous impact and the effects of colonisation and of many federal, territory and local government policies are exposed. McClay (1988) highlights the difficulties that the Lajamanu community face when attempting to relate their previous lifestyle with that of an imposed capitalist socio-economic system.

However, the many Lajamanu Warlpiri people have stated that while they have reservations, they are willing to embrace these challenges (Chapter Six). The Ngurra kurlu (2014) plan of Wanta Jampijinpa Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu (Steven Patrick) is a demonstration of willingness.

This is a chapter that seeks to give an over-view insight and an understanding of the Lajamanu community and their culture.

Chapter Five The writers in Chapter Five attempt to explain the differences in philosophical thinking that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities/societies.

Mainstream western and Indigenous non-western philosophical origins are discussed, as are culture , rights, sovereignty and compatibility. The views seek to accentuate the differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous philosophies. It is however broader than just a philosophical synthesis in that it is linked to theories re policy, economy, politics, etc. that are further discussed in the Literature review (Chapter Nine). The chapter shows that the views of

Indigenous authors have been sourced from a totally different cultural base than those of non-Indigenous authors; non-Indigenous views being sourced from a classical European cultural base and Indigenous views from a very different cultural base. Comparisons and the reasons for difference are seen to be the important focal-point because they further the understanding. This suggests that embracing the cultural interfaces should be expected to be complex and not easily achieved. These views give some hints of ways in which Indigenous Australians may be able to carve out a satisfactory future amongst or alongside a governing mainstream society. A few scenarios of how minority cultures may function within a dominant majority culture are discussed.

1.3 Field Research

Each of the next three chapters provides the differing views of individuals and of groups. The Lajamanu Warlpiri community, the non-Warlpiri Lajamanu residents, government and those having some association with Warlpiri and/or Indigenous people all provide valuable contributions because of their differing relationships with the Lajamanu community. These chapters summarise the salient views from various perspectives. The compilation and analysis of these three chapters adds considerable insight and support to much, but not all, of the vast amount of literature.

Chapter Six - Researching the views of the Lajamanu Warlpiri community. This section carefully researches and records the views of the Lajamanu Warlpiri people using methods designed to avoid non-Indigenous researcher bias (Chapter Two). However, I acknowledge that as an elderly male non-Indigenous researcher it is impossible to ignore the potential for some bias in the views and opinions that relate to my cultural background and my lived environment. Dadirri listening and hearing methodology is used in a qualitative approach. Views and comments are attempted to be presented without comment or critique. The widely-held views of the Warlpiri people of Lajamanu were that they:

- are determined to live Warlpiri cultural heritage and Warlpiri kinship attachments.
- want to have a say in the day to day management of the Lajamanu community and in its future governance and development.
- wish to be respected and socially accepted.
- are convinced that the government is not genuinely consulting and not listening.

- appreciate the need for better education and learning but would be more supportive if the education was bi-lingual.
- prize Warlpiri social attachments far more highly than material possessions.
- consider that housing, preventative health, local government, the alcohol and drug problems are important issues to be urgently addressed. They wish to establish their priorities and address them in their own way, or in genuine partnership with government.
- realise the on-going need for financial assistance from government.

Chapter Seven expresses the views of the non-Warlpiri managers, advisers, and employees based in Lajamanu. They are relevant because these people have first-hand experience with the Warlpiri community and Lajamanu governance. Many of these non-Warlpiri residents hold or held positions of power and influence in the community. Most are well-educated with a heritage of western knowledge and practices that often differ greatly from those of Warlpiri peoples. Yosso (2005) suggests that this potential bias needs to be recognised and acknowledged (Hallinan 1991, Tatz 2010). Research assessments of their views have accordingly attempted to take note of this. However, it is also recognised that these non-Warlpiri residents of Lajamanu have a unique opportunity to observe and evaluate the customs, problems, failings, and the values of that community and that their contributions have the potential to add significantly to the understanding of the Lajamanu situation (Hinkson & Smith 2005; and Moran 2016).

These non-Warlpiri residents are or have been employed in various community pursuits, health, education, art, local government, police, community welfare, etc. Therefore, it was anticipated that their views may relate particularly to their areas of employment. But it is also noted that they may also have general observations of life in the community. This chapter differs somewhat from previous chapters in that the views on governance, development education, etc. mostly come from the contributor's uniquely located work and socially experienced perspectives.

The views of non-Warlpiri Lajamanu residents and ex-residents show some interesting points of agreement. They agree with the Warlpiri community that government has failed to

communicate effectively with the Lajamanu community, that government has usually not listened to the community, and that red tape and poor bureaucratic practices impede effectiveness. The non-Warlpiri residents also are of the view that much of the government funding is sometimes poorly allocated and often unproductive.

All agree that the Lajamanu Warlpiri people want to retain their culture, their traditions, their identity and that government (federal, territory and shire) has failed to fully appreciate or understand how much importance they place upon these issues.

The views regarding Warlpiri leadership, managerial capacity and potential were mixed. There is considerable doubt that the Lajamanu community has enough education and western management expertise to effectively negotiate and to self-manage the community at present. However, some believe that there is potential to achieve this over the long term if the community is given the right incentives and opportunities. There is considerable support of the view that there are employment opportunities if resident Warlpiri tradespeople and semi-skilled workers were to be given employment preference over non-Warlpiri.

Education and school attendance are seen to be a major problem. Most were of the view that the government educational program needs to be re-assessed, changed, and that Warlpiri teachers and/or teacher aides should be given more opportunity for employment. The Warlpiri people's 'lip service' support for education was criticised, it being considered that the Warlpiri community need to take more positive action to ensure regularly school attendance.

Chapter Eight like the previous chapter, seeks to gain a better understanding of how non-Warlpiri people associate with the Lajamanu community. How they view and relate to that community, its governance, its development and its future. Again, like the previous chapter these views come from specific perspectives of individuals that have been or are currently in positions to affect that community. This chapter adds another dimension to the understanding of the Lajamanu Warlpiri community. Governance, management, education, etc are discussed and the views of Government's members, employees and associates reveal a grab-bag of interesting and sometimes surprising observations. Notably, the views mainly

focus on western neo-liberal³ conceptions of how to overcome Indigenous disadvantage. Government policies and practices are critiqued, and include lack of government consultation, over-governing, non-specific Indigenous community policies and concentration on efficiency and accountability whilst neglecting effectiveness.

Indigenous leadership, Indigenous governance capacity, the community's lack of initiative and willingness to adapt came under scrutiny.

1.4 Literature: relevant knowledge and theory

Chapter Nine explores the relevant literature, the known knowledge. The objective of this chapter is to focus on the literature which has been the major source of information, argument and comment in providing understanding of the socio-economic problems that challenge Lajamanu and other Indigenous communities. The selected literature offers views and theories which present a comprehensive overview of issues relevant to this subject. They focus upon and relate to the problems facing the future governance and proposed elimination of socio-economic disadvantage in Indigenous Australian societies (some targeting Lajamanu). The thesis field research (Chapter Six, Seven and Eight) is intended to supplement, reinforce and sometimes to reject the views and insights of this literature.

1.5 Collation and Analysis

Chapter Ten Pulling the Threads together. As its title indicates, this is where information researched and gathered from the chapters is collated, analysed and evaluated. The results show the most prominent and/or agreed views of the contributors, although I hastened to advise that there is not consensus on all views. However, there is consensus that the socio-economic problems facing Lajamanu and other Indigenous communities are highly complex and that they will not be easily overcome. Indications are that changes are necessary and that problems will not be solved in the short term. They are:

³ Neoliberalism is often characterized in terms of its belief in sustained economic growth as the means to achieve human progress, its confidence in free markets as the most-efficient allocation of resources, its emphasis on minimal state intervention in economic and social affairs, and its commitment to the freedom of trade and capital.

The research collectively reveals key factors that. They are:

- To think small and concentrate on each community as separate entities
- That rights and retention of identity should be included with the Closing of the Gap targets (Thompson 2000).
- That government should consider rethinking its conceptions and attitudes to Indigenous sovereignty and more sincerely assist the development of responsible of community self-management.
- That community leadership and management capacity training and assistance be an urgent undertaking, by both government and the Lajamanu community. Cornell & Kalt (2000) state that in regard to United States Indigenous people.:

Generous resource endowments, human capital, and access to financial capital will be virtually useless if tribes are incapable of making collective decisions and sustaining collective action, and if they lack the institutional structures necessary to maintain a hospitable environment for human and financial investment. (Cornell & Kalt 2000 p. 467).

- The need to establish some form of hybrid, structured and sustainable socio-economic development.
- To re-think education, preferably favouring a bi-lingual education process.
- The necessity to free-up government resources, funding and strategies.
- Find ways to overcome Pearson's sit-down mentality and learned helplessness syndrome.
- To make and adhere to long-term goals, long-term policies and long-term sustainable funding.

Chapter Eleven – Conclusion. Lajamanu and other Indigenous communities face an uphill struggle to secure rights and identity and to close the socio-economic gap. However, I argue that the consolidated literature, field research and associated historic, philosophical and cultural environmental chapters shows that there are nine significant factors (Chapter Ten) that appear to be major factors in the search for a fair and equitable future for the Lajamanu community.

Statistics indicate that efforts to *Close the Gap* have been ineffective (Prime Minister 2014, 2015, 2017). The literature (Chapman, Holmes, Kelly, Smith, Weepers & Wright 2014: Altman

2005; Sullivan 2011; Hunt 2013a) and field research (Chapter Six, Seven & Eight) urge change, in many cases advocating more consideration of the abovementioned nine key factors.

The complexity of facilitating a future for Lajamanu is recognised and establishing a suitable pathway towards obtaining this goal is considered to be daunting, but not impossible. Results indicate that the attitudes of government, of the bureaucrats and the Lajamanu Warlpiri community require change, Government (federal, territory & shire) will need to take the lead, and the Lajamanu community will need to accept the challenges that it faces. The development of trust, by all parties is perhaps the most important factor and the most elusive.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research for this project is based on obtaining knowledge of the interface relationships of Indigenous societies with those of a dominant settler-state. The research approach that has been adopted is to gather incisive knowledge of the Lajamanu community and its future by obtaining the views of Warlpiri and non-Warlpiri residents and those of persons and bodies that have association with Lajamanu. The task that has been set is to more fully understand the needs and aspirations of the Warlpiri people that make up the Lajamanu community, of those associated with government (federal, territory and shire) and of those with associations that relate to Lajamanu. The knowledge gained is intended to facilitate opportunities for the Lajamanu community and government to address these issues and to lessen the socio-economic disadvantages of that community.

I believe that it is reasonable to assume that each community in some ways differs, culturally, environmentally, economically, etc. and these differences need to be appreciated to better understand the specific problems faced by that community. If this is so then the researching of that community's idiosyncrasies and needs would seem to be critical.

This chapter gives details of how and why specific research methods were arrived at and how the research was analysed. Care has been taken over the research design to ensure accurate and informed views having noted Yin's comment that:

The ultimate goal is to treat the evidence fairly, to produce compelling analytic conclusions, and to rule out alternative interpretations (Yin 1994, p. 103).

An interpretive case-study approach was chosen because it is considered the best choice for the Lajamanu having observed that Yin (1994) states that the case study is a suitable research strategy 'when the investigator has little control over events and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context' (Yin, 1994 P.1). Swanborn also explains that:

A case study is defined as the study of a social phenomenon

- in one, or only a few, of its manifestations
- in its natural surroundings during a certain period

- that focuses on detailed descriptions, interpretations and explanations that several categories of participants in the system attach to the social process
- in which the researcher starts with a broad research question on an ongoing social process and uses available theories, but abstains from pre-fixed procedures of data collection and data analysis, and always keeps an eye open to the newly gathered data in order to flexibly adjust subsequent research steps
- that exploits several sources of data (informants, documents, observatory notes) in which sometimes the participants in the studied case are engaged in a process of confrontation with the explanations, views and behaviours of other participants and with the resulting preliminary results of the researcher (Swanborn 2010 pp. 21-22).

The case study method, in this case, seemed to be especially apt given the complex social phenomena being researched; the Lajamanu community being Indigenous, remote and affected by external influences. Creswell (1998 pp. 13-14) and Bryman (1984) are of the view that a case study approach offers an opportunity to provide new insights into the experiences of individuals, groups or communities and perhaps into issues such as environmental change, public policies and planning. Bryman also suggests that qualitative research can be a tool for ‘discovering novel or unanticipated findings’ (Bryman 1984 pp. 77-78).

Methodological framework

Having confirmed the choice of the case study method of research a research design was required. It is noted that Yin (1994) maintains that case study evidence should be obtained from ‘documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant, observation, and physical artefacts’ (1994, p. 78). Yin’s systematic design strategy seemed to be appropriate considering that multiple research sources were to be accessed for this thesis. These included the researching of literature, material researched through library sources and by interviewing authors wherever possible; formal and informal interviews with the Lajamanu Warlpiri community and non-Warlpiri persons (associated directly or indirectly with Lajamanu); and direct participant observation in specific formats (as described later in this chapter).

The Lajamanu case study has been designed to be of a qualitative nature, using a combination of ethnography and phenomenological research, and applying the Dadirri method in the Indigenous (Warlpiri) field research. The Australian Government National

Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2015) explains qualitative research in the following way:

Qualitative research involves disciplined inquiry that examines people's lives, experiences and behaviours, and the stories and meanings individuals ascribe to them. It can also investigate organisational functioning, relationships between individuals and groups, and social environments (NHMRC 2015 p. i).

Ethnography is a qualitative research data methodology aimed at exploring cultural phenomena to represent, describe and to study the behavior of a culture-sharing group (Creswell 1998, p. 2). Wolcott states that 'The ethnographer's task is the recording of human behavior in cultural terms' (cited in Creswell 1984 p. 39). Musharbash and Barber (2011) observe that:

Accumulating, contextualising and interpreting [ethnographic] data crystallised a mystifying fieldwork experience in such a way that I began to make sense of phenomena I was observing (and participating in) while I was in the field, and which, subsequently, when I returned from the field, enabled me to productively analyse and communicate to others, the significance arising out of those data (Musharbash & Barber 2011 p. 6).

A Phenomenological study augments that of an ethnographical one in that it:

focuses not on the life of an individual but rather on the concept or phenomenon, such as the psychological meaning of a caring interaction... seeks to understand the meaning of experiences of individuals about this phenomenon (Creswell 1998 p.38).

A phenomenological study can perhaps be further explained as being more intent on understanding the meaning of people's experience towards a phenomenon. However, Habermas (1971) suggests that this type of research limits the value of this methodology when seeking to critique the phenomenon being studied. It is reasoned that both ethnography and phenomenological studies were deemed to be necessary because of the unique culture of the Lajamanu Warlpiri people and of the changes created colonization. living.

McIntosh & Marque (2017) suggest that:

Successful design for culturally-diverse communities hinges on a nuanced understanding of the cultural environment; building trusting relationships and fostering a respectful approach to community (2017 p.21).

I also decided, in accord with Groh (2018), that a specifically tailored research design is required because it needed to be suitable for both the Warlpiri and non-Warlpiri people living in Lajamanu and for bureaucrats, politicians and academics living elsewhere. Langdridge (2008) reinforces this approach, stating that a case study should seek to do more than to just “describe things in their appearing” (Langdridge 2008 p. 1135). This suggests that special research methods need to be used for Indigenous research. Obviously, the views of the Warlpiri people that form the Lajamanu community are particularly important to this thesis. The need to receive and to interpret reliable, accurate information from this community led to the idea of using Dadirri method (Atkinson 2002) for the Warlpiri people’s interview and discussion research. I was persuaded to use this method after reading the work of Anderson in developing the Dadirri methodology. Professor Judy Atkinson, an Indigenous woman, informs that her Dadirri methodology is ‘an interpretive qualitative approach to research which involved traditional phenomenology’. She argues that Dadirri offers an opportunity for researchers to more fully understand and appreciate how Indigenous people ‘reflect on and experience their lifeworld’ (Stronach & Adair 2014 p. 126 citing Langdridge 2008). She explains Dadirri as a process in which:

I will listen to you, share with you, as you listen to, share with me...Our shared experiences are different, but in the inner deep listening to, and quiet, still awareness of each other, we learn and grow together. In this we create community, and our shared knowledge(s) and wisdom are expanded from our communication with each other (Atkinson 2002, p. 17).

Atkinson (2002) further explains the Dadirri research methodology as revealing:

a knowledge and consideration of community and the diversity and unique nature that each individual brings to community; ways of relating and acting within community; a non-intrusive observation, or quietly aware watching; a deep listening and hearing with more than the ears; a reflective non-judgmental consideration of what is being seen and heard; and, having learnt from the listening, a purposeful plan to act, with actions informed by learning wisdom and the informed responsibility that comes with knowledge (Atkinson 2002 p. 16).

Both Tuhiwai-Smith (2003) and Langdridge (2008) agree that Dadirri is a dynamic process which enables the researcher to gain a more accurate, empathetic understanding of those

Indigenous people being researched and of their world. Atkinson (2000) contends that the Dadirri methodology can particularly aid non-Indigenous researchers when dealing with cultural sensitivities. She also suggests that it helps with the building of trust with Indigenous participants and the researcher. Although noting that Dadirri differs from the Western scientific research methodology approach Stronach and Adair (2014 pp. 123-124) consider that Dadirri has been productively used by non-Indigenous investigators in research with Indigenous people (e.g. Atkinson 2000; Burrows 2004; Gabb & McDermott 2007; Tanner, Agius & Darbyshire 2004). Stronach, as non-Indigenous researcher explains her experience with Dadirri research and why she values it so highly:

The researcher [Stronach] is non-Indigenous and mature aged: she encountered a number of challenges in her efforts to understand Indigenous culture and its important sensitivities, and to build trust with the Indigenous male participants she interviewed. An Indigenous methodology known as Dadirri, which emphasises deep and respectful listening, guided the development of the research design. Consistent with previous studies conducted by non-Indigenous researchers, an open-ended and conversational approach to interviewing Indigenous respondents was developed (Stronach & Adair, 2014 pp. 117-134).

2.1 Research design details

Stronach & Adair (2014) argue that there are three important items that need to be addressed in research design. These are the cultural sensitivities involved with conducting research with Indigenous peoples, potential power imbalances between researcher and participants and the need to develop power relationships and trust between the researcher and participants (2014 p. 120). My research has some rapport because of the trust developed from the two and half years of previous residency. The two months allocated to the current research continued this approach.

I also have taken note of Tuhiwai-Smith's warning (2003) that Indigenous Australian research has often had:

an inescapable political dimension, with investigators operating in the context of a history of previous scholarship that has variously been "inappropriate, irrelevant, and irreverent" (Tuhiwai-Smith 2003 p. 437).

Others have noted that they believe that research of Indigenous Australians has sometimes been influenced by entrenched prejudices of non-Indigenous researchers (Hallinan 1991, p.

71; Tatz 2010). Fejo-King (2006) offers some explanation of why this may have occurred and why care must be taken to avoid the pitfalls:

In the past, most researchers in Australia privileged Western knowledge, research methods and methodologies in undertaking research with Australian Indigenous peoples. The impact of this ideology has rippled out and touched all aspects of the life of Australian Indigenous peoples and continues to have profound implications for individuals, families, communities, and Nations (Fejo-King 2006, p. 2).

Yosso suggests that this latent bias needs to be recognised and that past and future research conducted by non-Indigenous researchers may be affected. Therefore, care should be taken to avoid bias (Yosso 2005). Markiewicz maintains that evaluators concerned with programs established for Indigenous peoples and communities should aim to:

- respect Indigenous peoples and communities by understanding the context whereby evaluators need to: – develop their understanding of Indigenous history, culture and social context and reflect this understanding in both the designs of evaluations as well as the interpretation of evaluation results – appreciate Indigenous perspectives and world views while also allowing for, and accommodating, differences from people to people and community to community.
- ensure relevance by negotiating methodologies and approaches with commissioners of the evaluation whereby evaluators: – advocate for the design and use of evaluation methodologies that involve collection of data in culturally appropriate ways – apply realistic methodologies and time frames for the conduct of evaluation – build partnerships with commissioners of evaluations to produce credible and useful evaluation findings and results
- act with responsibility by developing interpersonal and communication skills so that evaluators: – ensure that they act with cultural sensitivity and in a culturally appropriate manner at all stages of the evaluation process – develop high-level interviewing skills that can respond to non-verbal cues and interpersonal sensitivities – negotiate with participants in the evaluation process to ensure an understanding of its purpose and use
- exercise reciprocity by considering benefits whereby evaluators: – ensure that consequences of questions asked are fully considered in order to ‘do no harm’ – operate in an ethically appropriate manner using informed consent processes – consider appropriate benefits for participants through direct reciprocity and/or dissemination of evaluation findings – ensure that evaluation is capable of producing findings that can inform future program design and social policy wherever this is possible and achievable (Markiewicz 2012 p.24).

As a white non-Warlpiri male researcher, formerly in a senior local government position in the community, I have taken note of the warnings and sought to avoid this situation. Thus, it

was decided to use Dadirri for the Warlpiri research because it is seen to be a conduit for the gathering of better quality, and less biased views from, and of, the Lajamanu Warlpiri people.

Having decided to use a case study, with a combination of ethnography, phenomenological research and Dadirri methodology, it then became a priority to determine the final research design detail. My status as a non-Indigenous, senior male researcher was recognised as a potential for biased assessments. Appreciating these factors, the aim was to present a competent research study that embraced historic and philosophic understanding, used an extensive literature review and applied in-depth field research. It was understood that endeavours needed to be made to interview representative sections of the community that encompassed age, gender, leaders, senior and junior members. In accord with the requirements of the Dadirri method attention was also to be paid to listening and absorbing what is said. This was largely achieved by mixing with the social groupings, taking time and allowing information to flow as and when the individual or group felt comfortable in conveying it.

Researcher accommodation in the Warnayaka Art Centre facilitated my day to day mingling with women (and some men) artists of varying ages and seniority. Opportunities to talk with a community cross-section were taken wherever and whenever possible; in the Art Centre, the town park, at sports venues, the community store, private houses, and when invited to the Bough and to Senior Women's meetings. I strove to engage with the various contributors, make them feel comfortable in conversing, and to observe the proprieties of their culture. Most of the research material was obtained in informal discussions rather than by formal interviewing. Sitting, meandering and chatting informally produced freely given information. Old, young, male and female Warlpiri residents responded more positively and were more forthcoming with views using the relaxed Dadirri format.

My experience in Lajamanu, other Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory and in Papua New Guinea assisted me to understand some of the cultural diversities and the accepted practices of Indigenous peoples.

2.2 Literature material

The relevant literature was researched through library and internet resources. These resources were supplemented by interviewing authors and academics in Canberra, Alice Springs, Darwin and Adelaide.

2.3 Research approval and modelling

Ethic research approval 6212 was obtained from the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Sciences Committee on 18 December 2013, prior to any field research. Permission was also obtained from the Central Land Council (CLC) and the Lajamanu community to enter Warlpiri people's land and the Lajamanu community on two occasions. Copies of approvals are attached in Appendix G & H.

Yin's case study research design model is used, because it places emphasis on caution when selecting the nature and purpose of the questions; how and what to analyse and in the order of analysis (i.e. self-determination, lessening the perceived socio-economic disadvantages); and in determining criteria for interpreting the findings (e.g. comparing government and Warlpiri priorities).

Yin is informative regarding interview procedures.

Most commonly, case study interviews are of an *open-ended nature*, in which you can ask key respondents for the facts of a matter as well as for the respondents' opinions about events. In some situations, you may even ask the respondent to propose his or her own insights into certain occurrences and may use such propositions as the basis for further enquiry...A second type of interview is a *focused* interview (Merton et al, 1990), in which a respondent is interviewed for a short period of time ...[these]are more likely to be following a certain set of questions derived from the case study protocol... a third type of interview entails more structured questions, along the line of a formal survey (Yin 1994 pp. 84-85).

Interviews with the Lajamanu Warlpiri people, non-Warlpiri residents of Lajamanu, government people and influential writers form a vital part of the research and therefore care was taken in selecting the type and format of interviews for each. In the main, interviews with the Warlpiri residents were informal, unstructured and gathered in open conversation with little regard to time limitations. However, some more formal interviews occurred when it was considered more desirable by the interviewees. Interviews with the non-Warlpiri Lajamanu residents, academics and others residing away from Lajamanu were usually be conducted on

a more formal basis. Information was transcribed, checked for coherence and then returned for participant review and acceptance. Transcripts were compared and analysed in a manner recommended by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

Participants willingly participated in discussion and interviews. Their answers were treated as strictly confidential except if interviewees gave written permission to release information. Conversations were recorded with the permission of the interviewees or noted post-discussion. As the only researcher I accepted the responsibility for ensuring ethics conformity, accuracy with information recording and for the unbiased selecting of interviewees. These research records, including permissions and authorisations are lodged securely at Flinders University.

Research Outcomes

2.4 Lajamanu Residents: Warlpiri

To ensure that an extended research visit to Lajamanu would be acceptable to Warlpiri residents, it was decided to contact the Lajamanu Elders, male and female. This task was undertaken by telephone conversations and explanatory emails. It was explained that views in relation to the present state and prospects for the Lajamanu community would be sought. Once formal and informal assurance that the research would be welcomed was obtained arrangements were made for posters, notifying of the impending research visit, to be displayed on the various Lajamanu community notice boards. It was hoped that this would encourage a 'snowball effect' in which people would discuss the visit and be prepared to be involved. The snowball effect occurs where people encourage each other to be involved. If a few key people contact others, involvement gathers speed and size like a snowball rolling down a hill (Goodman 1961). Approval to enter Warlpiri land was obtained for the two-month field trip in 2014 and for the shorter-timed revisit in 2015.

Two registered, locally based, male and female Warlpiri interpreters and Lajamanu residents, Geoffrey Barnes and Agnes Donnelly were engaged to be used and remunerated on an as-

needed basis. These arrangements have been conveyed to and approved by the Flinders University Ethics Approval body.

A guideline of questions that could be framed and discussed was compiled. However, most interviews with Warlpiri residents were planned to be informal in nature, often in combination with group conversations. The interview guideline was submitted and approved by the Flinders Ethics committee with the understanding that it is only an indicative guide to matters to be discussed in the field research. Details of suggested subjects for discussion are shown in Appendix D.

Some individual interviews were conducted, but most responses were to be obtained through informal individual discussions, and in group conversations at the male Bough (also known as Yamparru)⁴, the Warnayaka Art Centre, in the town square meeting place, and throughout the community. Concerted attempts were made to obtain the views of both genders, young, middle-aged and old, traditional Elders and less traditional leaders. It was noted that in group discussions traditionally an Elder (or senior member) usually act as the spokesperson. Endeavours were made to differentiate representative views from those of perhaps the most vocal or most senior in group conversations.

As mentioned, most of the research information was obtained in the Dadirri informal discussion format rather than through formal interview procedures. It bears restating that this method favours a format where questions are generally not formally framed but are introduced as possible subjects for discussion. A copy of the possible discussion subjects is attached (Appendix D). People were encouraged to discuss matters of concern, of importance and of value to their community. Some of the suggested subjects for informal discussion are the future of Lajamanu, the perceived disadvantages and advantages of living in Lajamanu, the pros and cons of their community, local leadership capacity and capability, views of government and the bureaucracy; changes, reviews, ideas and comments. Warlpiri

⁴ The Bough or Yamparru is the traditional elite leadership body of Warlpiri. It is composed of men and women Elders who have been selected because they 'combine vigorous ritual education and personal charisma with the support networks of close residential kin' (Dussart 2000, p. 86). In Lajamanu, the male Elders and female Elders have informal Bough discussions nearly every afternoon. The males and females sit in separate groups but can confer when necessary. Numbers vary but usually seem to number approximately 15-20 male and a similar number of females. This arrangement is believed to have changed little since colonisation.

participants were given opportunities to talk about their place of birth and early experiences growing up in the bush, outstations, and Lajamanu. Great care was taken to ensure accuracy in reporting the people's views, having noted Atkinson's warning that this is an imperative because their livelihood is at risk (Atkinson 2002). Field notes and recordings were carefully collated, evaluated and corroborated. In addition, efforts were made to ensure interviews and discussions were a representative, voluntary selection of gender, age and status of people in the Lajamanu community.

These guidelines were followed closely with the following outcome. Officially, sixty-two Warlpiri residents were interviewed: twenty-two male adults, twenty-three female adults, ten young males, and seven young females (under 18 but older than 12). As previously mentioned, informal discussions were frequent and proved to be a useful way of obtaining the views of a large cross-section of the community. Several male and female elders were identified for more intense discussions because of my prior knowledge of their leadership standing in the community. I was able to mingle freely with the Lajamanu Warlpiri people and to informally discuss what interested them regarding present state and future of their community. The annual sports weekend, several funerals, and holiday occasions provided ideal opportunities to discuss matters. As the sole researcher I was invited to the male (but not the female) Bough gatherings. Accommodation was provided at the Warnayaka Art centre and this gave me the daily opportunity to mingle freely with the artists, most of whom were females, including senior Elders. The Lajamanu town square offered another opportunity to meet and discuss matters with young, old, female and male members of the community. Care was taken to obtain the approval of the participants when recording, taking notes and to elicit formal permission to use the interviewees' names.

2.5 Non-Warlpiri residents and ex-residents

Interviews were conducted with present or past employees of government (federal, territory or shire), the Lajamanu Store and associated agencies. Attempt was made to elicit information from people that had experience with Lajamanu, and/or Indigenous community related knowledge, that may contribute to the research. The research with non-Warlpiri persons were usually conducted as formal structured interviews and were usually limited to approximately one hour. A guideline question structure for interviews was compiled

(Appendix E). Views were sought using research that is predominantly qualitative in nature, using a combination of phenomenon and ethnographic methodology (Creswell 1998 pp. 38-40). Elements of Dadirri methodology were only planned to be used where it was considered applicable.

The selection of questions from the prepared format varied depending on the expertise and experience of the person being interviewed. The questions were to be structured to ascertain answers that related to the person's area of expertise —health, local government, employment, store, school, etc. Their views were expected to relate particularly to their specific experience.

This research resulted in a total of fifteen people being interviewed, thirteen males and two females. All those interviewed were adults and held management or supervisory positions.

It was reasoned that their views would be valuable because of their close contact and interaction with the community. It also may perhaps give better insight into the effectiveness of service delivery. Those interviewed live and work in Lajamanu and have had the opportunity to be informed and understanding of the Warlpiri community and of government and agency policy and practice.

Cruess, Cruess & Steinert believe that 'When professionalism is taught, it should be related to the different cultures and social contracts, respecting local customs and values' (2010, p. 357). Non-Warlpiri people that resided in Lajamanu have had the opportunity to appreciate cultural difference and to gain some understanding of the problems associated with the difference. However, many had not received any formal training in cultural understanding, prior to their appointments. It was recognised that because of their non-Indigenous heritage the varying views of the non-Warlpiri residents needed to be tempered in the knowledge that their views might have a Western cultural/economic bias.

2.6 Government Members and Employees

Interview selection for persons suitably qualified to offer government views and/or their personal views of government policies, was expected to be a difficult task and this proved to be the case. Persons willing and or available for interview were limited, as was the research

funding for travel. Interviews were only possible for limited dates in Canberra, Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs. Letters of request were sent to elected and/or appointed persons considered to be associated with Indigenous issues and knowledge (directly or indirectly to Lajamanu). Interviews were sought from members of the three tiers of government, Federal, Territory (or State) and local (shire). A total of thirty nine letters of request were sent.

No current Ministers were available. However, one past Minister, one member of parliament, one past Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, two past CEOs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, one past territory member, one past CEO of Department of Aboriginal Affairs (Darwin), The CEO of the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory, and ten associated government employees were interviewed. Three were females and fifteen were males; all were adults.

Interviews were arranged by appointment and were of a formal nature similarly structured in a similar vein to that used for non-Warlpiri residents. The same guideline question format for interviews was used (Appendix E) and views were obtained using the same research methodology (Creswell 1998 pp. 38-40). Dadirri was not used. Care was taken to obtain written authorisations, and recordings and notes have been lodged securely at Flinders University in Adelaide.

2.7 Interviews with academics and writers of note

Ten academics were interviewed in Canberra and three in Darwin; two females and eight males, all adults. These interviews were sought as a valuable means to supplement, and to better understand the views and arguments that have significantly contributed to the academic debate on Indigenous issues that are relevant to the Lajamanu community and its future direction. Interviews were arranged in a similar manner to those of government, by appointment, usually for about one hour and the guidelines of Appendix E were used. These formal interviews are an integral part of the understanding of the gained knowledge that came to be used in this research thesis. Written authorisations, and recordings and notes were lodged securely at Flinders University in Adelaide.

Participant Observation

McIntosh and Marques argue that:

participatory design when performed correctly can increase the capacity for community engagement; provide substantial benefits to the design outcomes; and beneficially exploit the process of design-led research (McIntosh & Marques 2017 p.212).

Yin is also especially mindful that participant observation plays an important role in any case study, making the point that:

Participant observation is a special mode of observation in which ...you may assume a variety of roles ...these roles may range from having casual social interactions with various residents to undertaking specific functional activities within a neighbourhood (Yin 1994 p.87).

He explains participant observation as observing, not just as a passive observer but, by living, working and participating in the area over enough time to have formed reasoned assessments of cultural difference and of its effects. I adhered to this concept when research was conducted, by interview, discussion or when referring to texts. It was recognised that participant observation was of prime importance.

The Lajamanu research was undertaken in two trips. Overall, I resided in Lajamanu for nearly three months. This was in addition to a previous period of over two and a half years I was employed in Lajamanu as the Local Government CEO. I believe that this initial time in Lajamanu proved to be of great benefit because it allowed the community to get to know me and for me to better understand them. Hopefully, this has led to mutual trust and a better understanding.

2.8 Trust

Integral to the value of any research into Indigenous communities is the trust factor. Yosso maintains that trust is affected by power relationships:

White, middle-class society has assumed a standard of cultural dominance, with a tendency for other groups to be deemed deficient when compared to this 'norm' (cited in Stronach & Adair 2014 P.121).

The Lajamanu case study was a very complex and delicate research task. Indigenous research

needs to be carefully planned and designed to maximize the information given the limited resources available, while also attempting to minimize the pitfalls that might occur when a non-Indigenous person conducts research with Indigenous people (Atkinson 2002, Tuhiwai-Smith (2003) and Langdrige (2008). It then remained necessary to for me to ensure that the results were to be effectively analyzed.

2.9 Analysis

Yin states that:

Clearly, the proposition helps to focus attention on certain data and to ignore other data...The proposition also helps to organize the entire case study and to define alternative explanations to be examined (Yin 1994 p. 104).

As previously stated, Yin's reasoning and methodology was adopted as the base from which the case study was planned and organised. The research involved five components; field interviews and discussion with Warlpiri residents, past and present non-Warlpiri residents, government personnel and academics; careful study and review of the literature; the philosophy of cultural difference; the history associated with Lajamanu and Indigenous Australians; and a general outline of the Lajamanu community. But as Evans (2002) has warned, there are pitfalls in the analysing of this vast amount of data. He states that there are:

Two methods commonly used during reviews of interpretive research that are best described as a descriptive synthesis include narrative summary and tabulation. The common theme in these methods is that they aim to describe what has been reported in studies and make little attempt to re-interpret the published data. The descriptions generated during the review process provide the basis for the conclusions drawn by the review (Evans 2002 pp. 23-24).

Evans advocates a method to alleviate this problem which he calls Interpretive Analysis, a synthesising process of four phases:

1. Gather the sample of studies'
2. Identify the findings of each study,
3. Determine how these findings relate to those of other studies, and
4. Bring common findings together to generate a description of the phenomenon (Evans 2002 p. 25).

This is the process chosen to interpret the data gathered in this thesis. Much of the interpretation was simplified because of the commonality of views, Indigenous , non-Indigenous, male and female, young and old.

But perhaps the most vital factor is to ensure the credibility of the research. Triangulation analysis was used as an attempt to minimise the probable bias when non- Indigenous persons, like myself, set out to research Indigenous communities. Triangulation, a strategy described by Chilisa (2012) ‘for enhancing the credibility of a study ...based on the assumption that the use of multiple methods, data resources, or investigators can eliminate biases in a study’. Triangulation was considered to be the method most likely produce more accurate results. Krefting (1991) advises that there were several types of triangulation; methodological, investigator, data source and theoretical triangulation. These are simply explained by Chilisa in the following way;

- Methodological triangulation is comparing data that has been collected from interviews, group talks, observation, song-lines, etc.
- Data Resource triangulation is based on the times that events happen, where they occurred and who was there.
- Investigator triangulation is the comparison of investigator or participator observations. In this case study those of mine as the sole investigator with the official interpreters, and by repeat confirmatory conversations with those who had contributed.
- Theoretical triangulation is the comparison of views from different and differing theoretical evaluations (2012 p. 167).

As a researcher who recognised my own cultural understandings and misunderstandings, I sought to avoid misinterpretation and misrepresentation as much as was possible. The documentation and analysis obtained from the Lajamanu Warlpiri people was discussed at length with them on revisit, and with the appointed official translators. The research material of Lajamanu non-Warlpiri residents and of government personnel elsewhere was checked wherever possible with those interviewed. The material for the Literature review, history and philosophical views was sourced from the literature that I believed to be the most relevant to the thesis subject and attempts to give a reasoned synthesis of the subject material.

I believe that my previous residency in Lajamanu, and other documented inter-cultural experience, helped to ensure that research interviews and discussions took note of cultural sensitivities, potential power imbalances and the need to develop trust. I attempted to be unbiased, non-selective of previous acquaintances, and sought a balance of gender, age and seniority. I attempted to mingle unobtrusively in the Art Centre, Community Store, sporting functions, and the town park and in places where all sections of the community tended to congregate. Wherever possible I grouped research results into the subject headings recommended:

1. Cultural identity and retention
- 2 Lajamanu community's capacity and capability which included community control over the management and decision-making; the disregard by government and associated agencies including the bureaucracy; the lack of respect and philosophy.
3. Socio-economic matters including education; employment and training; economic development; health; alcohol and drug control; housing; local government, roads and infrastructure (Stronach & Adair 2014 p. 120).

Most of the field research questioning and discussions were designed to concentrate on the problems and deficiencies facing Lajamanu but views on the advantages and appeal of living in Lajamanu were also sought e.g. football, music and associated entertainment and particularly the family relationships. The information in the philosophy and history chapters is presented as background information, sourced to provide a better understanding of the development and contextual situation of the Warlpiri people that form the Lajamanu community. The Literature review chapter attempts to source well-researched material that is of importance to the Lajamanu Warlpiri community and the arguments, theories and projects that have been forthcoming that involve Lajamanu directly or indirectly.

The knowledge gained from each chapter is intended to contribute in some way to the understanding of the Lajamanu 'situation'. Each chapter in some way adds to the overall knowledge and to provides material that may further that knowledge. The resultant compilation is intended to offer opportunities for government and the Warlpiri Lajamanu community to improve trust, respect and in doing so to develop capacity and understanding in such a way that they may work more constructively and productively together in the future for Lajamanu.

In 1994 Yin stated that:

[a] good guideline for doing case studies is therefore to conduct the research so that an auditor could repeat the procedures and arrive at the same results (Yin 1994 p. 37).

And I consider this continues to be a valid guideline.

2.10 Summary

The Lajamanu case study is designed to obtain views from a representative (gender, age and seniority) cross-section of Lajamanu community residents, and of persons that have information relative to that community: informal and formal interviews with the Lajamanu Warlpiri community and non-Warlpiri persons (associated directly or indirectly with Lajamanu). Literature and archival material (Indigenous history, philosophic thought, critiques and argument) was researched through library sources and supplemented by interviewing authors wherever possible. Every effort has been made to ensure that the views were representative, were honestly obtained and accurately recorded. The names of interviewees have been used wherever possible, with the written permission of participants. Information was transcribed, checked for coherence and then returned for participant review and acceptance. Transcripts were compared and analysed in a manner recommended by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

The research presents a first-hand qualitative expression of the views of many that are part of the small Lajamanu community and of those that inter-relate with that community, directly or indirectly. Time and financial limitations meant that it was not possible to undertake a complete statistical quantitative analysis.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA'S NON- INDIGENOUS RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES.

This is the first chapter in the section of the thesis that is entitled Background Information. Rather than immediately delving into details of the Lajamanu community it seeks to better understand how and why the colonisation of Australia has disrupted, influenced and disadvantaged the many Indigenous Australian communities. Cavanagh perceptively states that:

The history that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people have shared in Australia since 1770 matters because it influences our understanding of who we are and how we relate to each other. If we have no knowledge of it, we can have little understanding of either our personal identity or of the national identity (2013 p. 21).

This chapter is intended to understand how the British (western) colonisation of Australia has impacted on the Indigenous peoples of that country; how governing practices and policies have been reasoned; how and why they have developed; how they have been applied; and of their general outcomes from initial colonisation to the present. It is not intended to present a complete account of this complex period in history, rather it seeks to explain and understand the difficulties that have presented when a dominant culture and alien economy imposes itself on a minority of Indigenous peoples. Thankfully there has been a gradual and continual awakening of the settler, now mainstream state, to the plight and disadvantage of Indigenous Australians. Sullivan somewhat confirms this gradual process in stating that:

For simplicity Australian Indigenous policy is normally characterised by several phases: conflict and appropriation; protection and segregation ; assimilation and integration; and self-determination and self-management. The present policy could be called 'normalisation' a term justified by the apparent failure of self-determination with a tendency to swerve towards a new kind of assimilation (Sullivan 2011 p.1).

The evolution of these processes from colonisation to the present is briefly described using Sullivan's phases.

3.1 Conflict and appropriation

At the time prior to colonisation the Australian Indigenous population comprised a relatively large number of language groups (tribes) with diverse cultural and economic practices.

Indigenous Australians were generally considered to be semi-nomadic hunters and gatherers. There was not a united Aboriginal nation. Stevens notes that it is 'normally accepted that around that time there were 'approximately 250,000 Aborigines in Australia, divided into some 500 tribes varying in size from 100 to 1500' people (1981 pp. 2-3). Bourke (1994) also estimates that there were between 300,000 and 1 million Aboriginal people, over two hundred and fifty language groups and six hundred dialects. However, estimates do vary and some people suggest they may be considerably higher (ABS 2008a). [Hunter](#) & Carmody suggest that 'Our preferred estimate is exactly equal to the Mulvaney estimate of 800,000 people'(2015 p.11).

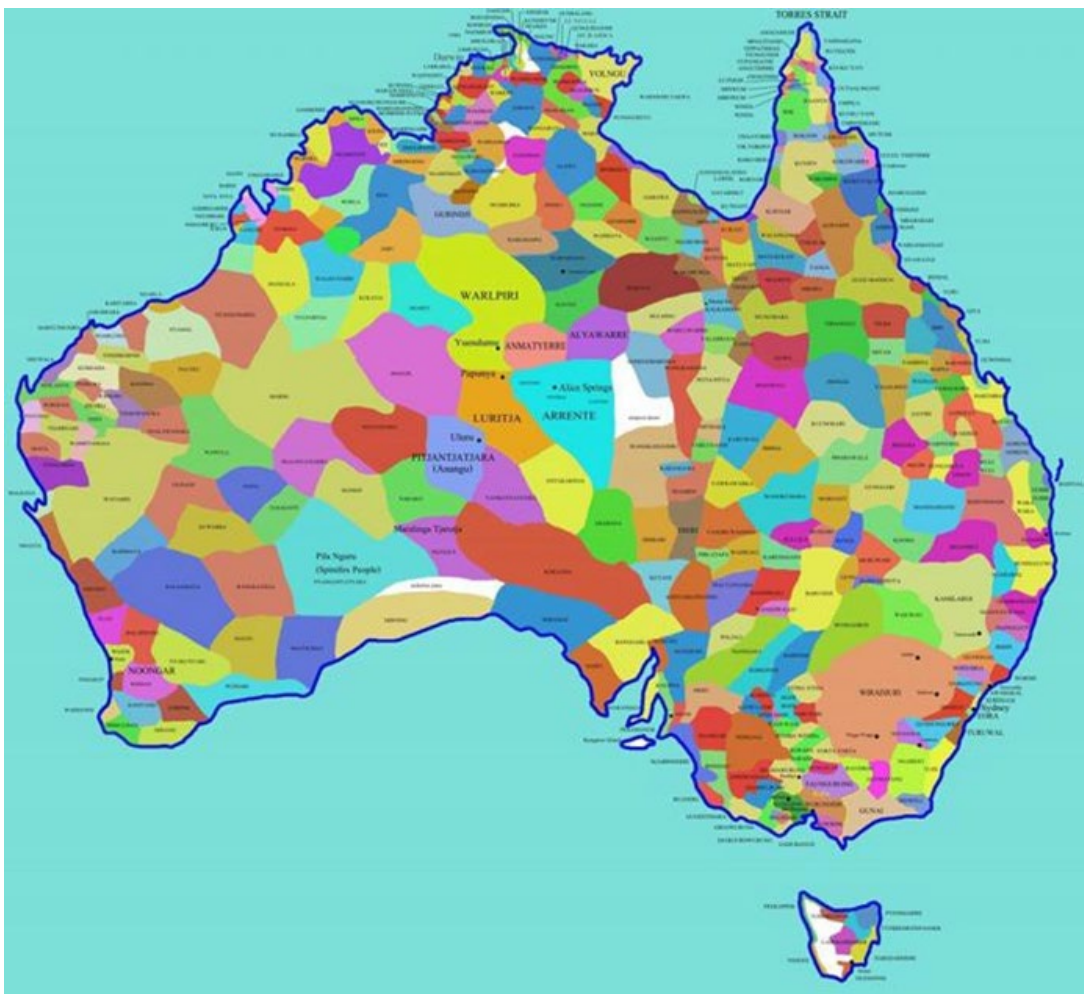


Figure 3-1 AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia map

This map attempts to represent the language, social or nation groups of Aboriginal Australia. It shows only the general locations of larger groupings of people which may include clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. It used published resources from 1988-1994 and is not intended to be exact, nor the boundaries fixed (permission applied for 2007).

1788 marked the beginning of British and European colonisation and the evolving dominant governing Australian society. British colonial culture and heritage was totally unfamiliar to the Indigenous Australians. European people had developed a culture that relied upon individual purpose and a cash economy as opposed to that of group support and a subsistence type of economy (Chapter Five), a concept that was at variance with the group survival kinship lifestyle of Indigenous Australian societies. Clearly, the white settlers and the Indigenous Australians had very different ways of life, one that had very little in common with the colonisers (Day 1996 pp. 2-3; Stevens 1981).

Cultural interaction was always going to be difficult.

Miller partially explains the European thinking of this colonial period:

When England and English colonists set out to explore, exploit and settle new lands outside of Europe in the fifteenth through nineteenth centuries, they justified their claims to sovereignty and governmental and property rights over these territories and the Indigenous inhabitants with the Discovery Doctrine. This international law had been created and justified by religious and ethnocentric ideas of European superiority over other cultures, religions and races of the world. The Doctrine provided that newly arrived Europeans immediately and automatically acquired property rights in native lands and obtained governmental, political and commercial rights over the inhabitants without the knowledge or the consent of the Indigenous peoples (Miller 2010 p.2).

Unlike New Zealand, Canada, and other countries colonised by Britain, no treaty has ever been negotiated with the Australia's Indigenous First Peoples. This means that there has never been an agreed treaty or agreement that offers appeasement to Indigenous people. It seems that the doctrinal thinking of this era cultivated a settler mentality which ignored and/or rejected Indigenous sovereignty and led to a belief that Aboriginal lands could be considered unoccupied and vacant, a status that became known as *terra nullius*, 'nobody's land' (Buchan & Heath 2006 pp. 2-6). There were only a few exceptions in which Indigenous property rights were legally recognised, such as the South Australian Letters of Patent, but in practice even these rights were usually ignored (Bignall, Rigney & Hattam 2015). It was not until 1992 that the High Court, with the 'Mabo' decision, was partially responsible for the reversal of the dubious concept of *terra nullius* (Bartlett 1993) and provided conditions for the recognition of native title. However, Chan is of the view that Mabo produced problems as well as benefits:

The native title debates were explosive because they threatened place. It is the ultimate irony that the Mabo judgement, centring around ancient Indigenous connection to land and place, threatened more recent white connection to land and place. Both a physical place – land – and place in terms of social standing. And by threatening place, it threatened identity and, potentially, livelihoods (Chan 2018 p. 39).

But, in the early days prior to the Mabo decision there had been Indigenous resistance to colonisation. Kingston estimates that 'somewhere between 1000 and 1500' Europeans died fighting Aborigines on Australian frontiers and the number of Aboriginal deaths to have been 20,000 or more (Kingston 1988 p. 304). These figures have been disputed in the 'History Wars' that are discussed later in this section, but losses must have been considerable. The Indigenous population was also dramatically affected by the inadvertent introduction of previously unknown European diseases (Berndt 1958; Hinkson 2014; Reynolds 1981). Gilbert records that:

As Aborigines began to sicken, physically and physiologically, they were hit by the full blight of the alien way of thinking. They were hit by the intolerance and uncomprehending barbarism of a people intent only on progress in material terms, a people who never credited that there could be cathedrals of the spirit as well as of stone. It is my belief that Aboriginal Australia underwent a rape of the soul so profound that the blight continues in the minds of most blacks today (Gilbert cited in Read 1999 p. ii).

The impact of colonisation led to a gradual forced withdrawal of Indigenous Australians into the less populated urban fringes and into the more remote infertile and less hospitable areas (Butlin 1983).

There is a minority argument, which includes historians such as Blainey, Hirst, Windschuttle, and former Prime Minister Howard, that the historical views as described above are too negative and present a one-sided Indigenous biased view of the European colonisation. Instead they suggest a different picture:

the Aborigines had accommodated their behaviour and society to the white arrivals. Indeed, many had been positively seduced by the ability of the colonists not only to provide a permanent supply of food, but also the irresistible stimulants tea and tobacco (Windschuttle 2009a p. 17).

This argument led to what became known as the History Wars. However, whichever view is supported, it is true to say that Indigenous Australians were colonised and disenfranchised by the settler-colonists, without treaty or agreement, then or now, and were subjected to the mindset of terra nullius.

3.2 Protection and Segregation

The decline of the Indigenous populations of Australia because of imported diseases, violence and a presumed Indigenous inferiority, led to the incorrect conjecture by some colonialists that they were in danger of extinction (Blainey 1994 p. 45). This led to the implementation of various government protectionist policies intending to slow what was regarded as the foreseeable loss of the Indigenous population. However, these protectionist policies also served to maintain control and subjugation of Aboriginal people (McGrath & Stevenson 1996 p. 40). Protectionist policies became more transparently recognisable when the Federal government passed the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act, which became known informally as the White Australia policy. While this Act was primarily concerned with prohibiting non-European immigration it had the important supplementary effect of rejecting the 'formal acceptance of Indigenous societies as being part of a future Australian format' (Day 1996 p. 210).

Federation of the six states and territories occurred in 1901, and Australia became the Commonwealth of Australia. Prior to federation the Australian states had established Aboriginal mission stations, reserves and similar establishments. These establishments continued to remain under the control of the states because the new Federal Australian Constitution expressly prohibited the Commonwealth Government from passing laws to govern Aboriginal people. The continuation of state control often resulted in inconsistencies in the governing of various communities (Chesterman & Galligan 1997).

It became common practice for Indigenous Australian people to be put on reserves or missions situated in places where they lost much of their freedom to live in their traditional ways and to maintain their culture. Many of these institutions continued to operate until well into the 1950s. These supervising institutions were established to offer basic education, and to manage, contain, and, in the case of missions, to convert Indigenous Australians to Christianity. However, for many reasons, including lack of funding, few suitable educators, very limited training facilities, corruption, and lack of understanding, these institutions performed poorly, in the main, and generally failed to achieve their objectives. Tatz (2007) documents his views of the authoritarian role played by these organisations:

they became active agents of various governmental policies, such as protection-segregation, assimilation, so-called integration and some of the latter-day notions like self-determination and self-management...They ran schools, infirmaries, farms and gardens, provided water, sewerage and similar public utility services, established dormitories, built jails, prosecuted "wrongdoers," jailed them, counselled them, controlled their incomes, forbade their customs and acted as sole legal guardians of every adult and every child (2007 p. 326).

These were institutions of segregation that in most cases failed to passably educate or to assimilate Indigenous Australians into the mainstream. Louth expresses the view that:

The nation building exercise that underpinned the establishment of modern Australia ignored the complexity of alternative economies that operated within and between Indigenous communities. Instead, there was an attempt to subsume those economies, first through attrition and then through assimilation (Louth 2018 p. 104).

The continuing difficulties and criticisms of the treatment of Aboriginal people led to the Commonwealth becoming increasingly involved in Aboriginal Affairs policy. By 1937, the Commonwealth and the States had agreed that the policies should concentrate on assimilating 'the natives of Aboriginal origin but not of the full blood' (Reynolds, 1981, p. 25). Later by the 1950s these assimilation policies were seen to be gradually broadened to include all Aboriginal people.

Special purpose institutions were established by the church and/or the state in each Australian state. Young Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and sent to these institutions, or to foster homes. Families were not usually informed of the whereabouts of their children. In some cases, the children were treated well, but more frequently they were not. Physical and sexual abuse and more extreme mistreatment was commonplace (Griffiths 2015). Read records that 'terrible deeds occurred at every one of them' (1999 p. 23) and cites an example of a case where 'One fifteen-year-old girl was imprisoned in a tiny cell at Moore River for 67 days during 1918-19 for repeatedly attempting to run away and join her family' (1999 pp. 23-24). He estimates that many thousands of children were removed from their parents by the government and by church missions throughout the whole period. His claim has been confirmed in the *Bringing them Home Report* (HREOC 1997).

The abducted Indigenous children have become known as the 'Stolen Generations'. The film entitled *Stolen Generations* (Johnson 2000) vividly depicts the mistreatment of three Indigenous children. Bobby Randall was removed from his family to a mission at four years of age and was never to see his mother again. Cleonie Quayle was removed from her mother when she was five years old and lived for twelve years in foster homes where she was sexually abused. Daisy Howard was separated from her sister and forced to work as a domestic on a cattle station (Johnson 2000). Mary Terzak, another member of the Stolen Generations, has described her experience thus:

I have lived my life with shame, anger, low self-esteem and no confidence. But the worst of all has been living my life without knowing who I really am. This is something that most people know. You may ask why I don't. I am a fair-skinned Aboriginal person who happened to be born at a time when the government determined it was best for me to be removed from my parents, and my culture. And I was brainwashed into believing I was an orphan (2008 p. 2).

3.3 Assimilation and Integration

But to go back a little, after the 1930s, there had been a gradual change from the focus on Indigenous separation to one of assimilation. However, protectionist policies continued well into the mid-century. As late as 1951, Paul Hasluck, the then Minister for Territories, determined that assimilation was meant to achieve the following goal:

all Aborigines and part-Aborigines will attain the same manner of living as other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians (1988 p. 3).

Clearly, Hasluck and the government were prepared to ignore the cultural differences of Aboriginal people and not consider any cultural interaction. The 1961 Native Welfare Conference of Federal and State Ministers defined assimilation in much the same terms:

The policy of assimilation means that all Aborigines and part- Aborigines are expected to attain the same manner of living as other Australians and to live as members of a single Australian community, enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs as other Australians (ALRC).

Not surprisingly, assimilation policies were established by government without any consultation with Indigenous Australians (Mowbray 1990 p. 24). But as distasteful as they

were to Indigenous Australians, assimilation could perhaps be viewed as a shift in early colonial thinking in that government had gradually begun to realise that the disgraceful treatment of Indigenous peoples had to change. Between 1966 and 1973, separationist policies began to lose favour and the White Australia policy was gradually abandoned. Changes started to occur around 1967, with some states beginning to close missions and government reserves and loosening protection policies (Tavan 2004).

Indigenous Australians had increasingly begun to be more successful in expressing their concerns, and to be heard (Tavan, 2004 pp. 116-124). Although the Commonwealth had granted Indigenous Australians citizenship rights in 1948, they remained legally under the care and control of State and territory governments until 1967. Control of Indigenous Australians differed in the various states and territories but there were many similar controls. Indigenous Australians were restricted in their travel and often required identity cards. They were prohibited from hotels and not permitted alcoholic beverages and they were at times prevented from marriage with a partner from a different race (Coombs & Robinson 1996). However, the Commonwealth did assume control over social security, welfare payments and associated responsibilities.

Tex Camfoo had a Chinese father and an Indigenous Roper River mother. The Northern Territory Government, using a condition in the Welfare Ordinance deemed him to have been sufficiently assimilated into European ways and therefore granted him an Aboriginal ordinance card. When he met and fell in love with Nelly, a Roper River Aboriginal woman, this meant that he was forbidden to marry her because 'whites' and those classified as 'whites' were forbidden to marry Aborigines unless permission was obtained from the Director of Aboriginal Affairs. Permission was rarely granted. Tex and Nelly ran away, continued their relationship and eventually did marry (Camfoo, Camfoo & Cowlshaw 2000). Both are now revered elders. Mary earned an Order of Australia for her work with the community. I am proud to say I had the opportunity to travel to Bullman, Northern Territory, to meet them.

The 1967 constitutional referendum gave the Australian government the power to enter the field of Indigenous affairs and it began to instigate more progressive policies (Coombs & Robinson, 1996). The granting of additional powers to the Commonwealth corrected many, but not all, of the state variances and anomalies. Inconsistencies remained but the federal

government now had powers to legislate on Aboriginal policy and allocate funds to Indigenous projects directly and/or through the states and territories. Commonwealth laws were deemed to override those of the states (Bandler & Fox 1983 p.111); and although conditional voting rights had been granted a few years earlier Indigenous Australians were now included in the regular census (Attwood & Markus 1999). Nevertheless, the states and territories continue to have significant control of education, health and housing, and in the financing of many programs.

Assimilation gradually became an unfavourable government policy direction because of its association with past Indigenous policies and practices and their overtones of racial superiority. There was some recognition that assimilation was not the answer. Governments and mainstream Australians had begun to recognise that something had to be done to improve the level of social recognition and poor living conditions of Indigenous Australians (Hasluck 1988). 'Integration' became a softer, somewhat similar, but more acceptable term. According to Reynolds:

The term 'integration' was sometimes used by the critics of the assimilation policy to denote a policy that recognised the value of Aboriginal culture and the right of Aboriginals to retain their languages and customs and maintain their own distinctive communities ... and to focus on developing new approaches to problems rather than on long-term aims (1981 p. 30).

However, a more cynical view is that it is largely the same thinking under a different name. Arguably both assimilation and integration policies are, by their nature focused on Indigenous people becoming a part of Australian mainstream culture on government terms.

3.4 Self-determination and Self-management

The period 1967 to 1986 saw the federal government attempt to provide Indigenous Australians with improved representation and greater control over their affairs, but only in a limited way. The Industrial Commission decision to grant equal pay to Indigenous workers occurred and was introduced in 1968. This resulted in pastoral station walk offs by the Gurindji people (whose area immediately adjoins Warlpiri country) claiming their right to equal pay. This industrial action turned into the first Aboriginal land rights movement (Day 1996 p. 218). The Gurindji Walk-Off was to have generational negative effects on Indigenous employment (Ginsberg & Myers 2006 pp.26-45).

From 1967 to 1976, a newly established Council for Aboriginal Affairs (CAA) was formed and became a 'kind of independent, research-based think tank' (Coombs & Robinson, 1996 p. 7) with some sympathetic advisers. In 1972 the Whitlam government innovatively adopted a positive policy of limited self-determination for Indigenous communities. Whitlam appreciated that self-determination for Indigenous peoples was being urged on a global basis. The principle of self-government was incorporated into the United Nations Charter of 1945, the UN General Assembly Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries of 1960, and the UN International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 (United Nations 1966 & 2007).



Figure 3-2: Prime Minister Whitlam symbolically handing Gurindji land rights back to Vincent Lingiari in 1975 (Sydney Morning Herald). Approval was obtained from the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), on behalf of the Australian Government who holds the copyright. Mr Mervyn Bishop is also acknowledged as the author of the image to comply with his moral rights of attribution under Division 2, Part IX of the Copyright Act 1968.

Any move toward self-determination was seen by some to be a step in the right direction.

Professor Erica-Irene Daes, former Chair of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations stated that:

Self-determination means the freedom for indigenous peoples to live well, to live according to their own values and beliefs, and to be respected by their non-indigenous neighbours... [Indigenous peoples'] goal has been achieving the freedom to live well and humanly - and to determine what it means to live humanly (HREOCa 2002).

However, when it became government in 1975 the federal Coalition Government led by Malcolm Fraser, changed the policy to one of 'self-management' which continued the focus on local Indigenous communities managing government projects and funding, but with

substantially less say than the previous policy of self-determination. Self-management was to rectify much disadvantage and this was to be accomplished by delivering government originated mainstream services. This was a subtly different approach but to some extent Prime Minister Fraser did continue some of Whitlam's policies, but they were redefined (Blainey 1994, p. 222). Partington observed that:

During the final third of the now almost completed century [from 1973 to 1979] since Federation, there was a reaction against assimilationism in favour of what its advocates termed Aboriginal autonomy and self-government and its critics termed separatism and discrimination of a new type (1996 p. 1).

Government interpretations of the terms Aboriginal autonomy and Indigenous self-determination were broad and misleading. Government policies were only designed to give Indigenous Australians marginally more say in the management of their communities. Arguably, government Indigenous self-determination and self-management policies were never designed to give Indigenous Australians the capacity to fully achieve HREOC goals. Nevertheless, the Hawke Labor government's Aboriginal Employment Development Policy (AEDP) of 1987 did acknowledge 'the different aspirations and employment needs of Aboriginal people arising from markedly different social circumstances and cultural values' (Rowse 2002 p. 8). The AEDP policy was designed to monitor the basic socio-economic indicators of employment, income, and education and to target desired improvements and Indigenous persons were to be consulted in the process.

This was a period in which socio-economic Indigenous disadvantage had begun to be a genuine government concern. It was a rethinking by government developed to such an extent that the Hawke government decided to establish a new statutory commission which developed into the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). ATSIC was established in 1990 with some parliamentary difficulty and modification to initial proposals. ATSIC was meant to provide a national representative voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to provide a means for government to implement limited self-determination policies (Palmer 2004 pp. 4-6). ATSIC was an ambitious statutory authority which incorporated the administrative roles of both the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) and the Aboriginal Development Corporation (ADC). It had an elected representative structure of Indigenous regional councils to be led by a national board of Indigenous commissioners (Dillon 1996 pp. 92-93; Rowse 2000 pp. 200-201). ATSIC was considered by

some to be a bold initiative to give all Indigenous Australians the opportunity to attain equity with mainstream Australia (Cunningham & Baeza 2005 p. 3). Rowse believes otherwise stating that:

ATSIC had less power than many believed. Although officially it was a statutory authority for practical terms it acted as a government functionary because its employees remained public servants, including its CEO (Rowse 2002 pp. 222-24).

This meant that ATSIC employees were technically answerable to the government rather than to the elected ATSIC Commissioners (Coombs & Robinson 1996), not an ideal situation. Nevertheless, ATSIC was a progressive step forward. But its much-criticised life was to last only fifteen years. ATSIC functioned from 1990 to 2005.

3.5 Mabo & Wik

Two landmark native title decisions were made in this period Mabo (1992) and Wik (1996). Mabo is the landmark case for native title at common law in Australia in that it attempts a practical compromise of the rights of the Aboriginal people and Australian mainstream society. The Mabo decision:

acknowledged the prior ownership of land by Indigenous people, but not their prior sovereignty. It created (or technically 'recognised' a new *sui generis* form of title with unique characteristics: it was part of the common law and where native title existed, it was held to have always existed...communally owned; inalienable; and importantly would be extinguished by the grant of inconsistent interests by government...It recognised that native title existed where Indigenous groups retained an ongoing connection with their country and there had been no intervening extinguishment of title by inconsistent crown grants...It accepted the consequences of settlement by non-Indigenous Australians, leaving Indigenous non-native title holders (that is, those whose title had been extinguished through the process of settlement and colonisation) without recompense and compensation, unless their title had been extinguished post 1975 (Dillon 2017 p.2).

Mabo and the resultant Native Title Act offered a somewhat hazy potential for political autonomy, recognition, and Indigenous rights while ignoring issues of Indigenous sovereignty. This was later somewhat clarified by the Wik decision which states that pastoral leases do not confer exclusive rights of possession on the leaseholder. The High Court held that native title rights could coexist on land held by pastoral leaseholders. The High Court decided that:

- a pastoral lease does not necessarily confer rights of exclusive possession on the pastoralist

- the rights and obligations of the pastoralist depend on the terms of the lease and the law under which it was granted
- the mere grant of a pastoral lease does not necessarily extinguish any remaining native title rights
- if there is any inconsistency between the rights of the native title holders and the rights of the pastoralist, the rights of the native title holders must yield (AIATSIS 2011).

Some saw this as extending native title. Others saw it as limiting it. The High Court later did however add a further clarification stating that:

where native title was claimed on land covered by a pastoral lease the rights conferred by the lease and the nature and content of the native title rights and interests would have to be assessed and considered (Stevenson 1996 Abstract).

The Howard government believed it to have extended native title.

3.6 The Howard Liberal-Coalition Government 1996 - 2007 move to a Neo-liberal⁵ policy direction.

Previous policies and intentions regarding self-determination were largely discarded by the Howard government and the emphasis changed to one of encouraging Indigenous participation and input, providing better delivery of services and the developing of partnership and shared responsibility agreements. Hunt notes that the new mainstream policy direction by the Liberal coalition government:

heralded a ‘re-colonisation’ of Indigenous people. Indigenous governance, decision-making and expertise has been overridden by ‘mainstreaming’ processes that involve increasingly controlling tenders and contract arrangements that no longer reflect the self-determination agenda (Hunt 2018 p. 7).

Limerick is of the view that unfortunately mainstreaming effected only few changes to long-standing Indigenous disadvantage:

By the early 2000s, it was clear that despite the reforms in remote Indigenous service delivery limited progress was being made in overcoming Indigenous disadvantage. In fact, there were concerns that conditions in many communities were deteriorating. (Limerick 2014 p.13).

⁵ Neoliberalism is regularly used in popular debate around the world to define the dominant policy paradigm of the last 40 years. It’s used to refer to an economic system in which the “free” market is extended to every part of our public and personal worlds. The transformation of the state from a provider of public welfare to a promoter of markets and competition helps to enable this shift (Birch 2017 p.1).

The Howard federal government was convinced that government policies should focus on overcoming socio-economic disadvantages in health, housing, education, and employment in Indigenous communities, rather than on Indigenous rights, stolen generations, deaths in custody, and land rights that had been the core of the previous government's policies. The Howard government labelled this focus practical reconciliation (Altman & Hunter 2003).

One of its first moves, in 2002–3, was to arrange for a separation of ATSIC's powers, effectively removing from ATSIC the capacity to allocate funding. This action foreshadowed the later decision to abandon ATSIC and to shift all delivery of services for Indigenous Australians to mainstream government departments. ATSIC was gone by 2005. Cunningham and Baeza have concluded that the Australian government's removal of ATSIC had 'effectively abandoned the policy of self-determination for Indigenous Australians' (Cunningham & Baeza 2005 p. 47). Indigenous affairs policy now concentrated on developing cooperative relationships between federal government agencies; leadership from ministers, senior agency staff and Indigenous representative bodies; a more flexible allocation of funds to meet needs; a focus on regional level differences and needs; and better leadership and accountability at all levels. This was to become known as the whole of government challenge:

Whole of government denotes public service agencies working across portfolio boundaries to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response to particular issues. Approaches can be formal and informal. They can focus on policy development, program management and service delivery (Australian Public service Commission 2018).

Attempting to implement this challenge, the Howard government initiated a program of Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs) where Indigenous communities could agree to undertake certain governance and health initiatives in return for one-off funding of chosen Indigenous (government-endorsed) community projects. Unfortunately, government interference and excessive bureaucratic processes interfered with Indigenous decision-making and resulted in few successful outcomes. In 2006, the government quietly abandoned the SRA program (Strakosch 2013 pp. 593-95).

The Council of Australian governments (COAG)⁶ had the same focus on achieving mainstream standards for indigenous people. Earlier (1992) it had initiated a national commitment to improve outcomes in the delivery of programs and services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In 2002, COAG commissioned the Productivity Commission to produce regular 'Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage' reports. These reports were published every two years and provided key indicators intended to measure the impact of reforms to policy settings and service delivery. COAG trials were initiated. Eight Indigenous communities in different regions across Australia were targeted to evaluate the effectiveness of a co-operative whole-of-government model which sought to deliver more effective responses to the needs of those communities. These trials had seven important objectives: to modify government action so as to identify community needs and aspirations; match up government programmes and services to improve service delivery outcomes; foster innovative approaches; cut through bureaucratic red tape; resolve issues quickly; assist Indigenous communities to build their capacity for genuine negotiations with government; negotiate agreed outcomes and establish benchmarks; and build the capacity of government employees to work with Indigenous people (COAG 2006 p. 4).

While the trials were eventually judged to be unsuccessful, they did reveal valuable information and reasoning for their lack of success. The trials showed that there was potential to further explore this avenue given the recommendations of the trial reports (Altman 2004 p. 4; Hunt 2008 p. 19). Major inhibiting factors were assessed as the scale of the trial, its complexity, its over-ambitious expectations, and most importantly the failure to assess results over a long-term trial period (COAG 2006 pp. 29-31). There were significant observations of note:

- Government must be willing to understand and work with Indigenous communities and vice versa;
- Staff requires training to learn how to engage and respect the protocols and processes of Indigenous communities;
- Both government and Indigenous partners must accept a shared responsibility for improving social and economic outcomes;

⁶ COAG is the most pre-eminent inter-governmental forum in Australia, composed of the three levels of government and represented by the Prime Minister, State and Territory Premiers, Chief Ministers, and the President of the Australian Local Government Association. COAG initiated a national commitment to improve outcomes in the delivery of programs and services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

- Solutions should be flexible and responsive to local circumstances;
- Whole-of-government initiatives need to be flexible enough to incorporate systemic changes at the local community, state, and national levels;
- Coordination and decision-making mechanisms need to be effective, differentiated from each other, and timely;
- Recognition is required by national, state and local levels that change is needed to improve coordination and to reduce unnecessary bureaucratic processes;
- Government, staff, and community leaders should be allowed time to increase their skills;
- Acceptable leadership capacity is essential for sustained change to occur (COAG 2006 pp. 7-8).

To its credit the government took some notice of the COAG trial outcomes and sought to further its knowledge by instigating the Indigenous Community Governance Project (2004–2008) in partnership with the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) at the Australian National University (ANU). This project undertook to research the capacity and capabilities of Indigenous community governance across Australia with participating Indigenous communities and with regional Indigenous organisations and their leaders. This undertaking has resulted in an extraordinary amount of research information, much of which has been used in this thesis.

Government focused on *Closing the Gap* policies, and subsequently the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery became a long-term, ambitious goal of government.

3.7 Closing the Gap

In his Social justice report 2005, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Calma had urged Australian governments to commit to achieving equality for Indigenous people in health and life expectancy within 25 years (Calma 2005).

In 2008, COAG promised \$4.6 billion funding over ten years, which was targeted to accelerate reform in remote housing, health, early childhood development, employment, and in improvements to remote service delivery. COAG also announced the National Partnership Agreement (NPA), which pledged that the Commonwealth, states, and territories would agree to address six undertakings, all of which aimed to close the gap between Indigenous and mainstream Australia. These undertakings were targeted to close the gap in life expectancy within a generation, to halve the gap in Indigenous children’s mortality rates by 2018, to ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four year old children in remote

communities by 2013, to halve the gap in children's reading, writing and numeracy skills by 2018, to halve the gap in attainment rates of Year 12 Indigenous students by 2020 and to halve the Indigenous/non-Indigenous employment outcome gap by 2018 (COAG 2008b p. 5). *Closing the Gap* has become a long-term, ambitious and established framework.

Government continues its attempt to *Close the Gap*, but its policies have not met the targeted dates.

3.8 Northern Territory Emergency response (NTER) and Local Government Council/Shire Amalgamations.

Un-expectedly, in 2007, the Howard government, while continuing to implement *Closing the Gap* policies took extraordinary action by introducing the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER), often called the Intervention. Altman suggests that there are number of provided explanations as to why NTER was implemented at this time:

- Frustration that the Northern Territory Government had not moved quickly enough in implementing the Anderson/Wild report;
- A desire by Mal Brough, an ambitious and passionate Indigenous Affairs Minister, to cut through political and bureaucratic inertia;
- Electoral and political opportunism based around 'wedging' the federal Opposition (that is, using the divisive and controversial nature of the issue to split apart or create a 'wedge' in the support base of the Australian Labor Party);
- The need to be seen as taking an initiative in the run up to an election, using the concerted and often sensationalised media focus on Indigenous negatives as a populist aid; and
- The existence of federal 'territory powers' that provide the constitutional rationale for such interventions (Altman 2007 p. 1-2).

It argued that this radical move was essential and urgent, stating that such action was needed to address the problems that had been revealed by the *Little children are Sacred Report* (Wild & Anderson 2007) of the Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse.

The NTER, along with other supporting measures, provided a legislative framework for alcohol restrictions to stem the instances of family violence and sexual abuse of children; for computer audits to detect prohibited pornographic material; for five-year leases to better manage investments; to improve living conditions in townships, for land-tenure changes to enable town camps to become normal suburbs; for the appointment of predominantly non-

Indigenous Government Business Managers in Aboriginal townships to manage and implement the emergency measures, for the removal of customary laws as a mitigating factor for bail and sentencing conditions; and for better management of community stores to deliver healthier and more affordable food to indigenous families (NTER 2011). The federal government later also imposed bans on pornography and made changes to the remote community permit system, lifting the requirements for permits to visit Aboriginal land in townships and access roads and airstrips (NTER 2011). Possibly the most radical implementation, however, was that of the imposition of compulsory income management for certain sectors of the Indigenous population. Income management means that half of all income support and family assistance payments are compulsorily income managed, with the retention amount to be expended only on food, rent, and other essential items.

In introducing the NTER, the Howard government ignored the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples. Fred Chaney, a former Liberal Minister for Indigenous Affairs, drew attention to the suspension of the provisions of the 1975 Racial Discrimination Act, the restrictions on Indigenous property and the absence of joint community–government consultation (Hunter 2007, p. 42). Limerick suggests that the government believed that the effectiveness of the NTER would justify this radical action:

The NTER launched in 2007 reflected many of the principles in the new Indigenous policy orthodoxy. It represented a significant injection of funds for a suite of new services designed to close the gap in priority areas, with these services to be delivered by a combination of government agency staff and service providers contracted through competitive tenders. Coordination was to be achieved through GBMs in each community and new IEO positions were subsequently created to facilitate better engagement with communities (Limerick 2014 p.15).

Notwithstanding government intent, Hunter argues that:

The most substantial criticism of the intervention is that it is an assault on indigenous choice and ironically, responsibility. The N.T. intervention is clearly paternalistic as it imposes a new set of constraints on what indigenous people can do, both inside the welfare system and elsewhere (Hunter 2007, p. 43).

Altman concurs:

I note that a paternalistic state project of assimilation has been tried before, some 40 years ago, and it failed. Now it is being tried again under a different paradigm of neoliberalism and it will fail again. There are already early signs during the 'stabilisation' phase that existing development gains are being

jeopardized by the machinery of intervention. Some talk of ‘policy failure’ or ‘failed states’ in remote Indigenous Australia; I just ask what have we learnt as a nation in the last forty years that makes us so blind as to revisit past failure? (2007 p.16).

The NPA RSD (National Partnership Agreement – Regional Service Delivery) officially commenced on 27 January 2009 and expired on 30 June 2014. The Remote Service Delivery (RSD) project was initiated to improve the delivery of services in twenty-nine remote Indigenous communities (including Lajamanu, discussed in next chapter). Each of these communities was to develop a Local Implementation Plan (LIP) that would define targets, actions, and performance measures for their specific community (COAG 2008b). The broad intent of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery (NPA RSD) was to contribute to improved access, range and coordination of services, improved levels of governance and leadership, and increased economic and social participation in priority locations by setting up Regional Operations Centres (ROCs) and employing GBMs in each community. In addition, Local Reference Groups (LRG) were initiated and an Indigenous Engagement Officer (IEO) employed to act to assist local community/government engagement. An additional reason for the Local Reference group was to facilitate the development of a meaningful Local Implementation Plan (LIP). Limerick notes that:

The evaluation found that the NPA RSD has had an impact in expanding the quantum of services and infrastructure; that findings were ‘difficult to gauge’, but ‘has potential to address service gaps and community priorities (Limerick 2014 p.15).

Under the National Partnership Agreement, COAG established a clearinghouse to amass evidence as to what is proving successful or less than successful in closing the Indigenous disadvantage gaps (McCallum 2003).

Since the end of the Howard government, there have been six changes of prime ministers; Rudd (2007–10 ALP); Gillard (2010–13 ALP); Rudd (2013 ALP) Abbott (2013–15 Liberal NP Coalition), Turnbull (2015–2018 Liberal NP Coalition) and Morrison (2019 - Liberal NP Coalition). The Rudd Labor government promised some change. Most significantly, a formal apology was given to the Stolen generations. Successive governments have continued with *Closing the Gap* policies to *address* Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage.

The results of the *Closing the Gap* project have continued to be disappointing with only limited progress occurring in meeting goals over a period of twenty years. The Prime Minister

in his report on *Closing the Gap 2018* states that the 'latest data indicate that three of the seven *Closing the Gap* targets are on track to be met' (Prime Minister 2018 p.8). Given the past lack of progress this comment appears to be optimistic. Sanders maintains that despite the lack of progress, government policies seem to have continued without any major change in strategic approach. He suggests that the government's 'Indigenous Advancement Strategy' is:

continuing the experiments of the post-millennial phase, informed by ideas of responsibility, welfare reform and economic opportunity, as well as ideas of competitive contractualism and normalisation within government service arrangements (Sanders 2014 p. 12).

Information provided by the *Closing the Gap Clearing House Report* (Hunt 2013a) shows that government approaches to Indigenous communities continue to be by 'telling' rather than by consulting and negotiating and confirms that a more flexible, accountable, and responsive whole-of-government collaborative working is necessary; one that seeks to develop Indigenous capacity (Hunt 2013a p. 2).

Local government has been another important instrument for the implementation of Federal and Territory government policies.

3.9 Local Government and its role in the Northern Territory

Community local government bodies were operating in parts of the Northern Territory in the 1970s. Lajamanu community council had begun in 1970. But it was not until the late 1980s that both Indigenous community government councils and some other associated bodies were formally recognised and were able to access funds from the Northern Territory Grants Commission. By the year 2000 the Northern Territory had 68 recognised local governing bodies, six municipalities, 32 community government councils, 29 association councils and one special purpose town council.

Local government in the Northern Territory has not been regarded as being particularly effective (Sanders 2004). Partly this may be because in addition to their usual local government responsibility for maintaining local roads and infrastructure, garbage collection and disposal, parks and garden maintenance, sport and recreation, etc. councils were also usually required to carry out such agency functions as post office, CDEP, housing

maintenance, aged care, power and water services, airstrip maintenance and safety, night patrol, and for other roles as designated by Territory and federal government from time to time. In many ways, these local councils tried to maintain overall community governing and management duties with insufficient, usually unqualified and poorly trained staff (Sanders, 2011; Dilena 2012b). While their efficiency and effectiveness were poorly rated by government and in many cases Indigenous communities, local government offered a real, somewhat limited opportunity for community input and decision-making. However, government (Territory and State) became increasingly critical and concerned with the lack of performance of local government:

There was an increasing focus on the governance and financial management deficiencies of many Indigenous councils and organisations as well as concerns about whether mainstream service standards were being achieved. There were concerns that Indigenous councils in remote areas were burdened with too wide an array of services, which was beyond their capacity to deliver (Limerick 2014 p.13).

In 2006, the Northern Territory Minister for Local Government, Elliot McAdam, announced sweeping local government reform, proposing to amalgamate local governments into a lesser number of municipal and regional shires across the entire Northern Territory by 1 July 2008 (Pedersen et al. 2000 pp. 4-5). This was achieved in 2008. The existing Aboriginal community councils in the Northern Territory ceased to exist and were replaced by shire councils. Initially, sixty-one local government bodies—including six municipal and fifty-one community government councils, three incorporated associations, and the Jabiru mining township—were incorporated into shires and the existing municipal councils (Moran 2012 p. iii). The new structure comprised eight large shires, three small ones, and the five municipal shires of Alice Springs, Darwin, Palmerston, Litchfield, and Katherine (Sanders 2011 p. 1). Lajamanu was incorporated into the Central Desert Shire (later re-named Regional Council). The amalgamations were meant to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency. But Sanders comments:

As a member of a minor advisory board in Canberra, I cannot help but think that the mixing of interests in these shires was always very ambitious and that their overly large scale of operation was simply determined by centralised, administrative rationality. Experience suggests that to be effective, local government must be on a scale to which local communities and constituents can comfortably relate. Otherwise it is no so much local government as just another manifestation of centralised State or Territory government. Unfortunately, this may be where generational reform has taken Northern Territory local government. Only time will tell (Sanders 2011 p.14).

3.10 Summary

This is a brief and by no means complete description of how Indigenous Australian peoples have been affected by the European colonisation of Australia and the subsequent policies of the now dominant mainstream.

In the earlier colonisation era Indigenous people were abused and killed, saw their children removed, relocated to alien places, and often badly mistreated. They were deprived of citizenship and limited in movement, forcibly placed in missions and government settlements, underpaid, and badly fed. Gradually, the settler-state developed an awareness of these wrongs and this became particularly noticeable over the period of the past 70 years. In 2008 Prime Minister Rudd issued a formal apology to Indigenous Australians for forced removals of Australian indigenous children from their families by Australian federal and state/territory government agencies. The Mabo and Wik High Court decisions are indicative of the gradual realisation that the rights of Indigenous people must be recognised.

However, while Mabo and Wik decisions have undoubtedly sought to advance the cause of Indigenous rights they obviously have not overcome Indigenous socio-economic disadvantages. Short (2005) maintains that:

it is arguable that the creation of modern nation-states has been partly achieved with the mastery and attempted assimilation of native or minority communities that has resulted in the formation of permanent minorities whose interests are persistently neglected or 'misrecognised' (Taylor 1995: 225) by the majority. The state apparatus and the dominant majority may be, in effect, a permanent bar to the recognition of certain minority interests...Indeed, Kymlicka (1995) argues that for anti-discrimination policies to be effective, they require the appreciation that individuals are often discriminated against by the wider society not merely as individuals but as members of a cultural group (Short 2005 pp.271-272).

This view suggests that history has re-cast Indigenous peoples as dependent and disadvantaged citizens of a wider society, where their cultural priorities and their perspective on events are subordinate to the authority and voice of white privilege. If this is so then the addressing of Indigenous disadvantage becomes another mechanism for control and over-riding community cultural preferences.

Colonisation has caused extraordinary trauma, hardships and distress for Indigenous Australians. It has pressured Indigenous Australians to change their ways of living, severely limited their rights, threatened their identities and usually ignored their cultural heritage.

Government continues to decide on Indigenous policies and their priorities. Policies are developed and decided in Canberra, Darwin and Local government head offices (Sullivan, 2011).with little consultation with the people that are to be affected by these policies. Indigenous input has usually been ignored and rarely been acted upon (Altman, Biddle & Hunter 2008).

In recent history, *Closing the Gap* policies have shown that government has realised that Indigenous Australians live in sub-standard conditions of socio-economic disadvantage and that this situation should be rectified. But there has been little progress in lessening this Gap. Indications are that continuing the present central decision-making and direction policies will only produce minimum change at best (Hunt 2013). Socio-economic disadvantage continues in remote Indigenous Australian communities and their prospects for the future appear to be poor.

CHAPTER 4

LAJAMANU – A SOCIAL AND HISTORIC OVERVIEW

What is Lajamanu? This chapter attempts to answer that question.

4.1 Lajamanu

Present-day Lajamanu is one of the most remote Indigenous communities in Australia. It is an artificial construct originally formed by government to more easily manage and control the northern Warlpiri populace, but more of that later. The Australian Bureau of Statistics records that in 2016 the population was 660, approximately split into half male and half female, the average age was 22 years and there were 167 residences (ABS 2018).

The Lajamanu community is located at the northern end of the Tanami Desert, some 550 kilometres west-south-west of the nearest main town, Katherine. It is approximately 1,000 kilometres from both Alice Springs and Darwin (ABS 2008). Non-Indigenous persons who wish to visit or reside in Lajamanu require a permit from the Lajamanu Community via the Central Land Council (CLC). Photographs of contemporary Lajamanu are shown below.



Lajamanu from the air



Central Town Park adjacent to Lajamanu Store



Lajamanu, Main Street looking towards the Lajamanu Store



Lajamanu Store and diesel/petrol station



Old Health Centre (a new centre has since been built).



Typical housing in Lajamanu

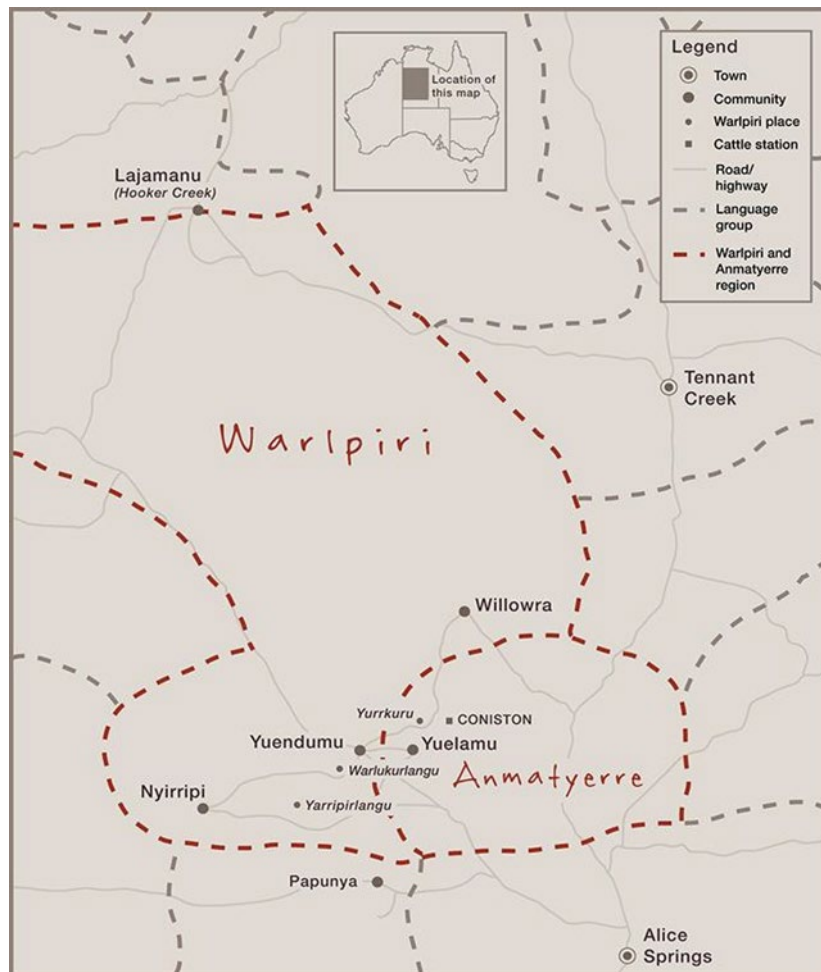


Old women painters' accommodation (called a Jilimi)



Kurdiji Office





This map comes from Warlpiri Drawings with kind permission from the National Museum, Canberra.

4.2 Warlpiri People

The Warlpiri ‘tribe’ is one of the largest in Australia, numbering approximately 4,500 people residing mostly in several communities in and around the Tanami area (see map); i.e. Yuendumu, Yuelamu, Willowra, Ali Curung, Nyirripi, and Lajamanu. Some Warlpiri people have also resettled in Alice Springs, in Katherine, in Darwin, and other areas, but this number remains remarkably small (Burke 2013a). The Lajamanu community regard Katherine as their main centre and tend to visit it frequently for goods, recreation and to visit with Warlpiri kin. The diaspora to Katherine is more temporary than permanent and much less than the Indigenous groupings east of Katherine. There are indications that Warlpiri people’s interaction with settlers in Katherine, coupled with their cultural strength have been factors that have limited permanent diaspora (Merlan, 1998).

Although they are spread over a large geographic area, Warlpiri people do share a common language and socio-familial cultural tradition.

This chapter is meant to contribute to the understanding of both the Warlpiri people and the Lajamanu settlement. It includes an explanatory description of the Lajamanu Warlpiri, their environment, their culture (markedly its kinship structure) and of the impact colonisation has had on their lifestyle. Attention is paid to the present-day Lajamanu situation and to Warlpiri-government interaction. This collation is meant to provide a clearer understanding of the Warlpiri people of Lajamanu and of their difficulties in connecting equitably and symbiotically with mainstream Australia.

4.3 Warlpiri identity and culture

It is unclear as to how long Warlpiri people have inhabited the Tanami area. Warlpiri oral history suggests that the time was for perhaps several thousands of years. Today, the Warlpiri people's pre-colonial hunting and gathering economy associated with their semi-nomadic lifestyle is largely, but not altogether, a thing of the past. The Warlpiri people have sought to retain their identity and many Warlpiri traditions and socio-familial ways are still very much intact. Hudson explains that::

Culture cannot be separated from who we are and put in a box never to be touched again. Culture is more than what anthropologists describe as 'high culture'—language, dance, painting, and music—it is the sum of our lived experiences and worldviews. At the same time, every culture has to adapt when it encounters another. To not adapt is to stagnate and die. Culture is dynamic, not static. The belief that Aboriginal culture could avoid this characteristic and be 'preserved and frozen in time' has contributed to the disadvantage and dysfunction experienced by remote Indigenous Australians and hindered their participation in the modern world (2013 p. 175).

Hudson's comment that culture is in a continual state of change is of note. However, the rate of change is conditional on circumstances. The Australian mainstream economy has had some impact on Lajamanu (and many Indigenous communities) with the introduction of store food, mobile phones, computers, television, motor vehicles, sporting pursuits and a need to obtain cash to acquire goods. But, notwithstanding these introduced changes much of the complex

Warlpiri cultural heritage, kinship, their origin 'dreamings and song-lines', familial relationships and socio-classifications have managed to remain remarkably intact (Nicholls 2016; McClay 1988; Meggitt 1962).

Many non-indigenous societies, including most of Australian mainstream society, are structured in nuclear family arrangements. Warlpiri society and most Indigenous societies are dramatically different in that they rely on very complex extended family arrangements. Kinship systems have become a support mechanism involving responsibilities and obligation. The differences in cultural heritage between settler societies and those of Warlpiri have evolved from very different philosophical paths (as discussed in Chapter Five) and this presents a great challenge for Indigenous/ settler colonial cultural interaction

It is unnecessary to comprehensively explain or document the social structures of Warlpiri people in this thesis, however, some detail is useful and has been given as a means of gaining an understanding of the Warlpiri people's very sophisticated and intricate culture; a culture that is based on group support, survival, and protection.

Nicholls states that Warlpiri cultural origins come from the Dreaming. She explains that Dreaming (Jukurrpa) 'governs every aspect of [Warlpiri] life. It accounts for the world and creation' (Nicholls 2016, p. 1). Korff also emphasises the significance of Jukurrpa stating that, 'English can never capture what "Dreaming" or "Dreamtime" is all about. The Dreaming and its stories are linked to the creation process and spiritual ancestors' (Korff 2016). Keys further reinforces this thinking:

Culturally-specific beliefs provide significant organising principles in the way Warlpiri people understand their world and social relationships. Individuals are born with pirrlirpa (spirits) that relate them to Jukurrpa (Dreaming) and their living relatives. Warlpiri social organisation elaborately links every individual with all other people in their language group (Keys 1999 p. 15).

There are five key elements to Warlpiri culture: land (country or home), law, language, ceremony, and kinship. Each of these elements is inter-connected and inter-related and all link into country or land. Each element is an essential, integral part of the sophisticated societal structure. Wanta Jampijinpa Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu, commonly known as Steven Patrick (Patrick, Holmes & Box 2008) advises in the Ngurra-kurlu plan that these five elements govern the lives of Warlpiri people in an interconnecting manner, as shown in the following diagram.

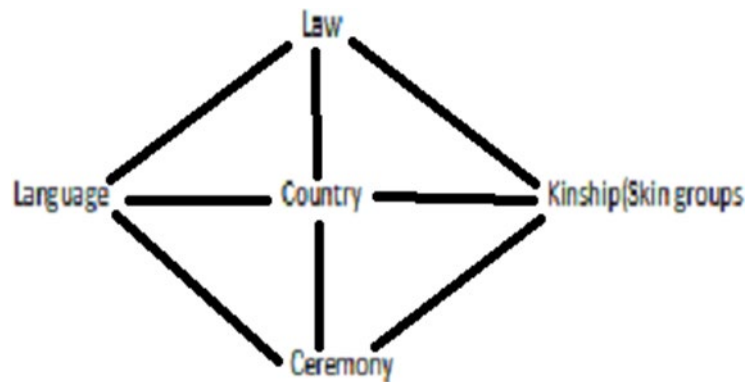


Figure 4-1: The five elements of Ngurra-kurlu (Patrick et al. 2008 pp. 3-4).

The five elements are seen in many representations throughout Lajamanu, some examples are seen below.



Ngurra-kurlu illustrations

Note the reoccurrence of these five elements in artistic display seen above figure on the left, law; i.e. Language Skin, Ceremony and Country (Patrick, Holmes & Box 2008 p.18), and Neil Cooke standing in front of a painting on the galvanised iron wall outside the Centre (Photographed by the author in May–June 2014).

However, this is only an introduction to the complexity and sophistication of Warlpiri culture. Warlpiri kinship relationships determine ‘rights and obligations with respect to other people, country, and artistic expression’ (Nicholls 2016).

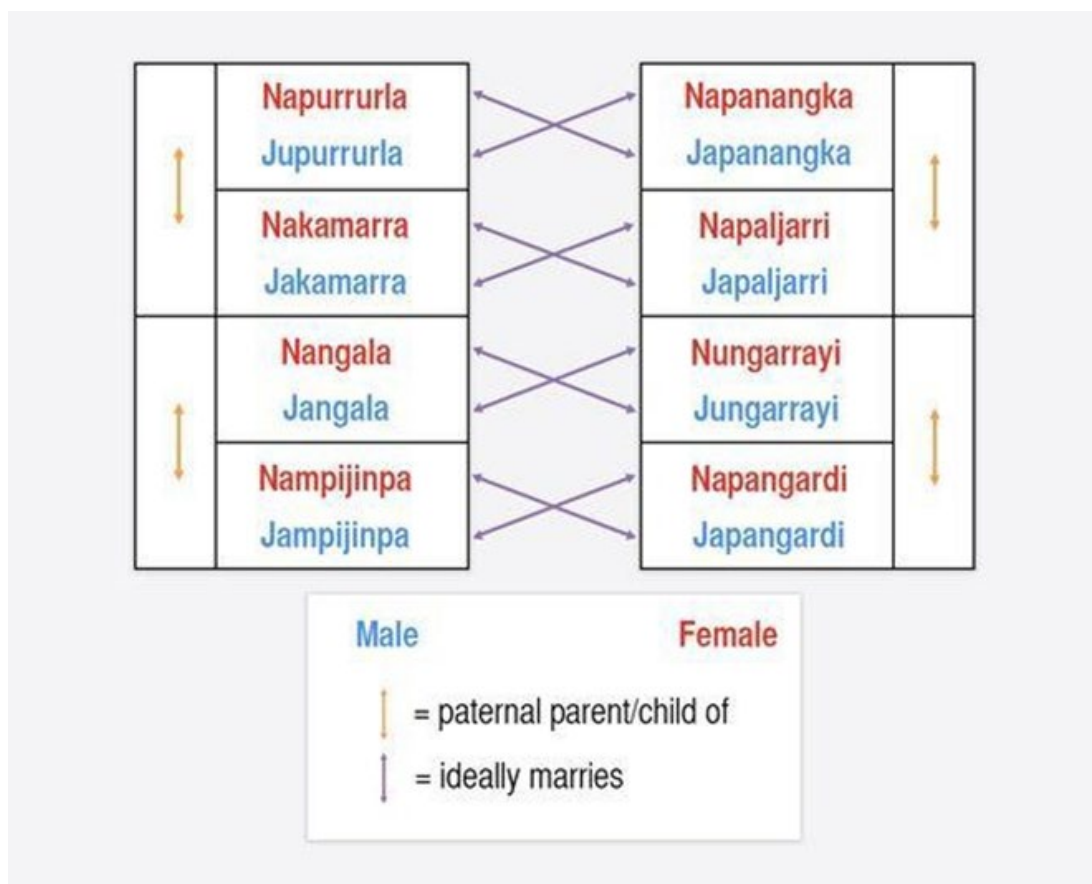


Figure 4-2: Warlpiri skin system, showing the complexity of social interactions and relationships (Ling & Liam, ND).

Kinship grouping is composed of eight categories (eight skins) each distinguishing between male gender (prefixed with ‘J’) and female gender (prefixed with ‘N’). For example, Jungarrayi is male and Nungarrayi is female.

Each Warlpiri person, male and female, has a skin name that is defined and inherited from this system. Non-Indigenous people who live in Lajamanu for any length of time are also given a skin name by traditional family leaders (Elders) who have some contact with her or him. This

then allows Warlpiri to place or identify non-Indigenous residents in Warlpiri society. Warlpiri culture is indeed a sophisticated structure, with Meggitt further identifying four Warlpiri geographical sub-groups: Wanaka, Naglaa, Walmart, and Yallara. These sub-groups are family relationships that originated in the areas of their descendants.

Kinship or skin classification is further complicated by moieties involving patri- and matri-moieties. Meggitt observes that:

The norms and kinship and the totemic religion continue to bind [Warlpiri] men into social groups, to orient their behaviour and to express values that they still believe are fundamental. Western society so far has not offered substitutes in these contexts that the people can accept. Indeed, the apparent absence of corresponding values among many Europeans whom they commonly encounter strengthens their opinion that, in such matters the Warlpiri norms are best (1962 p. 331).

Traditional Warlpiri leadership and management are based on knowledge and skills within an umbrella of cultural correctness. Dussart states that for Warlpiri, 'ritual is a tool of social empowerment and political engagement' (2000 p. 85). The core elite body of Warlpiri ritual leaders is formally known as Yamparru (commonly referred to as the Bough in Lajamanu). The Yamparru (Bough) body is composed of two separate groups, one of men and one of women Elders who have been selected because they 'combine vigorous ritual education and personal charisma with the support networks of close residential kin' (Dussart 2000 p. 86). Dussart states that the:

Attainment of the status of Yamparru (the Bough) is highly competitive, and one that demands ongoing, wide spread affirmation for its maintenance, thus mitigating the very nature of the control (Dussart 2000 p. 86).

It is difficult for some non-Warlpiri people to understand how Warlpiri lore and leadership were managed and controlled prior to colonisation, and specifically of how the Bough maintained authority. Meggitt explains that shame played an integral part. He has noted that:

Punishment must be metered out in public gaze, and the observers are quick to point out the moral to their juniors. This inevitable publicity may well be a significant factor determining the general conformity of the people to the more important jural roles (Meggitt 1962 p. 262).

Shame and the ultimate threat of ostracism would seem to be the controlling factors in ensuring that cultural mores and laws are maintained. Interestingly, Patrick et al. have explained it in another way:

order is generated in two ways. Firstly, by structures and rules; and secondly, by creating the emotional feeling of a “common sense of belonging”, which in turn creates group cohesion (Patrick et al. 2008 p. 15).

However, while the Bough (Yamparru) is the main leadership authority, it is too simple to suggest that it is the only element of Warlpiri leadership. Warlpiri society has a very specific system of social control. Nicholls explains that there are two groups associated with each land and Jukurrpa (dreaming), the Kirda and the Kurdungurlu. The Kirda are the bosses for certain specific ceremonies, a Jukurrpa site, or a stretch of country. The Kurdungurlu are the auditors responsible for policing those ceremonies, Jukurrpa, and stretches of country, ensuring that the Kirda follow Indigenous protocols correctly and maintain the integrity of these cultural pursuits. It as a system of complementary checking in which;

The checks and balances involved could be likened to the relationship between the Australian House of Representatives and Senate (Nicholls 2016 pp. 5-6).

Warlpiri ritual leaders are responsible for preserving social cohesion and the Kirda or Kurdungurlu system ensures that there is a fine line between leadership control and domination. As with most societies, potential leaders of Warlpiri engage in a delicate struggle for social power (Dussart 2000 pp. 99-101). When Bough leaders are perceived to overstep or misrepresent their roles, they can very quickly lose the support of the community. ‘A leader must perform elegantly, advise cautiously, appear to participate willingly, educate unflinchingly, and always be careful to teach by example rather than by command’ (Dussart 2000 pp. 99-100). The community exercises control limits over the Bough and in its composition. An example of this occurred while I was working for the Lajamanu Local Government Council where the Council President was demonstrably removed by the Bough from his position. The Bough had decided that he had not represented the Lajamanu community adequately at home and that he spent too much time away from the community. The Council voted unanimously for his removal at the next meeting.

Dussart has stated that 'Because Yamparru [Bough] derive their authority from relatives with whom they live, they are answerable to their needs and monitored closely by them' (2000 p. 104).

Warlpiri people developed a system of authority, control, decision making and governance that is suited to their cultural needs. Warlpiri needs and those of non-Indigenous Australians appear to differ greatly. However, it becomes extremely complex for Warlpiri to address and to retain their cultural needs when confronted with the often very difficult requirements of a dominant culture (mainstream). Nevertheless, much of Warlpiri culture appears to remain largely unchanged, notwithstanding the many pressures that have been inflicted upon it by colonisation.

4.4 History of the development of Lajamanu

Historically, the Lajamanu settlement did not exist prior to colonisation, Warlpiri people lived in small groups on specifically demarcated areas of the Tanami region. They hunted and gathered in specific areas, only meeting with other Warlpiri groups infrequently, usually on pre-arranged occasions. Nevertheless, these small groupings developed and maintained a common Warlpiri language and culture. Warlpiri were not a town-dwelling society. However, this lifestyle has changed markedly since colonisation.

The small semi-nomadic groups of Warlpiri people were relocated, often forcefully, by the controlling settler-state into several town communities. In all cases, these town communities were artificial constructs of the dominant Australian colonial settler state formed to enable easier administration and control by government and/or missions (Havemann 1999 p. 2). Lajamanu was established as the Hooker Creek government ration station in 1946 (Meggitt 1962) as was the Hooker Creek Mission and was renamed Lajamanu in September 1977. Yuendumu, Willowra and Nyrripi were other Warlpiri town constructs.

The geographical remoteness of the Tanami desert region and its harsh climate discouraged exploration and investigation, except for a few mining prospectors. Few explorers and prospectors visited Warlpiri tribal territory prior to the mid-1800s (Reynolds 1989, 1981; Rowley 1978). Those that did regarded Warlpiri people as potential problems that were to be avoided and/or ignored wherever possible. There are few records of the first encounters of

the Warlpiri with European settlers and explorers (Meggitt 1962 pp. 18-20). However, McClay notes that Warlpiri people were ill-treated by the settlers, the miners, and the police when they eventually came. He states that:

racist views coloured the popular [settler-colonial] imagination. The Warlpiri, as Aborigines, were relegated to an inferior position with respect to the white man. From the very start, relationships of domination and subordination were established between the races (1988 p. 157).

Settler-pastoralist activity in Warlpiri country began in 1855 when Gregory explored some of the Victoria River area (Meggitt 1962 p. 35). Buchanan, Gordon, Farquharson, and the Duracks were some of the early pastoralists seeking land, and by 1937 they had appropriated approximately 25,000 square miles of grazing land in these areas. Pastoral stations were established and began to employ Warlpiri, Gurindji, and other Indigenous people (Meggitt 1962 p. 20). Around the same time Davidson discovered gold in both the Tanami and the Granites areas in southern Warlpiri country. Davison's and associated gold discoveries resulted in a large influx of miners into these areas. One of the largest mines was the Granites mine which closed in the 1950s but reopened later as better technology was developed (McClay 1988 pp. 153-62). The Newmont Mining Company still operates in that area.

The seizure of these Warlpiri lands by the mining and the pastoral industry meant that Warlpiri were gradually and effectively excluded from the use of significant areas of their traditional hunting and gathering lands, and of access to some of their important watering places. Conflict was inevitable. McClay relates that 'At first the Warlpiri simply took the white man's goods, but they rapidly learnt that whites would not tolerate this, and retribution was swift' (McClay 1988 p. 159). Powell points why Warlpiri ceased this pursuit:

Only absolute surprise gave a spearman any chance against the six-shooter revolver: white men could travel safely in pairs where a dozen could not have ventured in the days of the flintlock musket (Powell 1982 p. 124).

From 1863 to 1911, the Northern Territory was administered by the South Australian Government, and 'little was done to control the relationships between Aboriginal people and the settlers' (Hinkson 2014 p. 198). At that time, the South Australian government was focussed on developing the pastoral and mining industries, and not on the protection of Indigenous inhabitants. However, it did enact the Northern Territory Aborigines Act (1910), which later became the Aboriginal Ordinance of 1911 after the Commonwealth government

assumed responsibility for the Northern Territory. This Ordinance became the basis of all subsequent legislation until 1953. Under this Ordinance, the Federal Aboriginal Department, led by the Chief Protector, was established. Sub-protectors were employed, and they were usually the appointed police officers of that area. Tarrow explains that the Aboriginal Department's responsibility was in 'exercising a general supervision and care' (2011 p. 230) over all matters concerning the welfare of Indigenous Australians. However, Rowley observes that:

In practice it [the Federal Aboriginal Department] restricted itself to a charitable policy of rations and blankets and a protective policy of restriction and regulation most often exercised in the interests of the white settlers and pastoralists (Tarrow 2011 pp. 230-36).

The Aboriginal Ordinance controlled Aboriginal employment, Aboriginal exclusion areas, and areas that were designated as being off-limits to settlers and miners. Indigenous people, and those considered to be part-Indigenous, who were under the age of eighteen, were placed under the legal guardianship of the Protector. This allowed the government to forcibly remove Aboriginal children, predominantly those of mixed race, from their families and transport them to institutions. Institutions that were often considerable distances from their homes. Much to Australia's shame, this practice, that created the stolen generations, continued well into the 1950s (Marcos 2002, p. 6). Other racially orientated restrictions were imposed on Indigenous Australians. They were not permitted to possess or consume alcohol and they were not allowed to 'habitually consort' or inter-marry with non-Indigenous or 'half caste' persons without approval of the Minister. Indigenous Australians were 'defined in racial categories and legislated for as passive recipients of special treatment, much in the manner of prospective inmates of institutions' (Benedict 1935 p. 230). McClay notes that this was a 'period of undirected change that sought to protect and segregate Aboriginal people ... characterised above all else by racism' (1988 p. 209). Much of this did not affect the Warlpiri in the early periods, because of their remote location. However, it did eventually catch up and confront them.

The northern pastoralists and the Tanami miners introduced different foods, previously unknown animals (e.g., horses, cattle, sheep, camels and donkeys), clothing, blankets, guns, and tobacco. These innovations and goods had the effect of breaking down the Warlpiri economy. Their economy had previously lacked any similarity to a European economic system

and this incursion sent it into another dimension. Madigan notes that the people were 'enticed and persuaded' (1936 p. 253) by these new items, and Tonkinson (1974 p. 142) confirms this opinion. Both pastoral and mining activities played a major role in changing Warlpiri's traditional way of life. As the pastoralists and miners became established, Warlpiri people found that they were increasingly competing for the land and water with the miners, pastoralists, and their livestock. Inevitably, violence ensued, and Warlpiri suffered significant losses. Reynolds argues persuasively that in the Australian colonial establishment period, 'the initial lack of hostility many Aborigines displayed towards whites was later replaced by opposition and armed aggression as the news of the whites and their ways spread' (1981 p. 199). This was the case in the Warlpiri situation.

4.5 Violence and devastation

It seems that circumstances very quickly forced Warlpiri people to recognise the threat to their livelihood. Conflicts over cattle, food, water, and women were frequent and often resulted in violence and deaths. McConvell and Hagen (1981 p. 38) pointedly state that 'The Aborigines, for the most part, directed their attack upon the cattle, while the whites shot people'. One example of this occurred at the Granites in 1910 when ten Warlpiri people were shot for killing a miner, although some observers reported there this was a conservative estimate (McClay 1988, pp. 159-60). Read has noted that in the early settlement/exploration years, the ratio of Aborigines to 'whites' killed in conflicts was close to 'ten to one' (1999 p. 96). McClay believes that for Warlpiri people the ratio was nearer to one hundred to one (McClay 1988, p. 159). This, however, may be somewhat overstated. Nevertheless, Meggitt (1962), McClay (1988), Tatz (1964) and others give very detailed accounts of the many bloody, one-sided confrontations that occurred throughout this period. The ratio was certainly in favour of the settlers and miners.

A particularly violent event known as the Coniston Massacre occurred in 1928 when Brooks, a white dingo hunter, was killed by a Warlpiri man following an argument over a Warlpiri woman. A police party, led by Constable William Murray officially reported killing thirty-one Warlpiri people and wounding others while investigating the murder (McClay 1988, p. 165). Strehlow (1970 p. 107) estimated the real figure to be more than one hundred Warlpiri people. Interestingly, in 2010, a young man at Yuendumu told me that the Warlpiri man

responsible for the murder had been his great-grandfather, and that his great-grandfather had been absent when the massacre occurred. He had managed to escape capture or death by the notorious Constable Murray. The young Warlpiri man said he was pleased because if his great-grandfather had been killed, he wouldn't have been born. This is a good example of Warlpiri humour in the face of adversity.

Berndt (cited in Hinkson 2014 p. 56) documented another bloody example in the same period; that of the shocking death of an Aboriginal man named Lalliliki who was dragged behind a vehicle at Mount Cavanagh pastoral station and died horribly. Remarkably, the court acquitted those responsible because it stated that the dead man's skull could not be conclusively identified. One wonders how many skulls were around.

In addition to white settler/miner incursions, the Tanami region experienced a severe drought in the period 1924 to 1929, which worsened existing food and water shortages (McClay 1988, p. 163). From 1900 to 1940, the Warlpiri people were faced with the choice of adapting to the changed environment or dying. Confrontations between the Warlpiri people and the European miners and pastoralists threatened their health and their livelihood. The policies and practices of the settlers, miners, and government were focused on their own interests and not those of Warlpiri. Because of their small numbers and 'less efficient weaponry', Warlpiri represented only a minor problem for the economic interests of colonial society and were not considered to be a major threat to the miners and pastoralists (McClay 1988 pp. 173-74; Tatz 1964). However, the miners and pastoralists were a considerable threat to Warlpiri. Throughout this period, the hunting and gathering existence of Warlpiri people was steadily being eroded because of the selective occupation of Warlpiri traditional lands and water by the white settlers and miners.

Warlpiri were encouraged and enticed into mining or pastoral station work. They were gradually moved, often forcibly, into government settlements for administrative convenience, first into Yuendumu and later into Lajamanu (known then as Hooker Creek). McGarry, the superintendent of Native Settlement in Katherine, described the Warlpiri situation in 1945 in the following words: 'I have seen poverty, distress and anguish in my day, but nothing can touch the appalling conditions of this mob. It is a blot on Australia's name' (O'Grady 1977 p. 97).

McClay also notes that a patrol report in 1943 by an officer named Sweeney observed that the official policy of Wave Hill Station was as follows:

The immediate dependants of the workers will receive a meagre ration of white flour, tea and sugar. They will get the bones and offal when bullocks are killed at the station and will share in the workers' food which reaches the camp; other natives in the camp will receive nothing but what is shared with them by their more fortunate relatives (1988 p. 176).

In summary, Warlpiri were forcefully prevented from the use of much of their traditional hunting country, and many of their watering places. They were exploited, mistreated, violently abused, and in many cases killed. Warlpiri quickly became demoralised and in total disarray. They became malnourished and susceptible to many of the diseases introduced by the colonists. Meggitt (1962), McClay (1988), and Tatz (1964) have explicitly detailed just how dreadful the plight of the Warlpiri population was.

The Federal Government took over the Northern Territory administration from the South Australian government in 1911 and appointed an Administrator for all non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples of the Northern Territory, under the direction of the Minister for the Interior in Canberra. This position was changed to the Minister for Territories in 1951. While the Northern Territory Legislative Council had been established in 1947 to assist the Administrator, the major decisions and real power continued to be in Canberra. There was little change for Warlpiri in this period, but gradual improvements were to come (McClay 1988).

4.6 Gradual change

The aftermath of World War II led to gradual improvements in world attitudes. The British, German and French empires were in a gradual decline; humanitarian concerns were becoming internationally recognised, the United Nations became established and there was the beginning of awareness of the disenfranchisement and poor socio-economic conditions of Indigenous people around the world. Conditions of the Indigenous people in the Northern Territory gradually became an embarrassment to the Australian government and it was realised that the situation was untenable (McClay 1988 p. 185). The federal government decided to relocate Warlpiri people into formal settlements on specially allocated reserves. A 1943 report by Patrol Officer Sweeney had urged the establishment of 'a reserve to protect

the natives being drawn onto the stations to the North ... should The Granites and Tanami goldfields develop after the War' (Sweeney, 1944 p. 2). He was supported by McGarry, Superintendent of Katherine Native settlement, who officially reported that:

Never have I seen people living under such appalling conditions. Food is so scarce that only the fittest may survive ... Certainly the present conditions must lead to the extermination of the Warlpiri tribe (O'Grady, 1977 p. 143).

In 1945, acting on the reports of Sweeney and McGarry, the Director of Native Affairs established Hooker Creek as a reserve. Tatz maintains that there were two main reasons for the Minister's action: to be seen to be humanitarian but more likely to protect the economic interests of pastoralist and mining enterprises in the area (1964 pp. 272-81). The government ignored the fact that Hooker Creek is situated on the Gurindji people's traditional land, and not on traditional Warlpiri land. This oversight has subsequently presented problems for Warlpiri, for Gurindji, and for government. The settlement of Lajamanu did not become fully functional until the late 1950s (McClay 1988 pp. 191).

In 1951, the Minister of Territories, Paul Hasluck, decided that assimilation was to become the objective of native welfare policy. Lajamanu and Yuendumu were intended to be temporary training centres for assimilation. This meant that they would be places:

... where work and living habits and attitudes will be developed, skills taught, education and health services provided, which would bridge the gap between the present conditions of Aborigines and those which they will necessarily have to attain to be acceptable in the community (Hasluck 1988 pp. 30-31).

In 1954, control was strengthened with the appointment of a director who became the 'guardian' of Aborigines, excluding 'part-Aborigines', and he was given the power to control their property, movements, location, employment and earnings, and with whom they could 'cohabit' (NT Admin 1959).

In 1964, the Welfare Ordinance was repealed, thus permitting Indigenous Australians to purchase and consume alcohol (except on gazetted reserves) and to freely inter-marry with the wider population. The law also reflected that Indigenous Australians were no longer wards of the state in the Northern Territory. Then in the early 1970s Indigenous health and education management, which had previously been managed by the Welfare branch, was

reassigned and amalgamated with the appropriate specialty Northern Territory departments (McClay 1988 p. 203).

Until the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 was passed, there were only two small areas of gazetted reserves for Warlpiri people in all their traditional Warlpiri lands, which encompass most of the Tanami area. These two small reserves were the Hooker Creek Reserve (which was to become Lajamanu) and the Yuendumu Reserve. Yuendumu had been the first settlement reserve to be established for Warlpiri settlement in 1946. Yuendumu had developed quite quickly, with initially over 400 Warlpiri people and a few other Indigenous groups being trucked in from the Granites, from the Tanami, from Ti Tree, and from adjacent areas (Meggitt 1962 p. 28). Yuendumu remains the largest Warlpiri settlement, with a current population of approximately 700.

4.7 The establishment of Hooker Creek as Lajamanu

Hooker Creek was not fully established until 1952. A work party of about twenty Warlpiri people was trucked to Hooker Creek in 1948, but it was four years before the settlement became operational, and then only as a 'medical, educational, training and control centre' (NT Admin 1955 p. 25). Warlpiri people were collected from all over the region and transported to Hooker Creek: 'Abie Jangala recounted that the ... people were collected by truck and again, nobody was asked if they wanted to go, they were just told' (McClay 1988 pp. 191-92).

There were two main transportations of Warlpiri people to Hooker Creek: one in 1958, when seventy people were moved from Warrabri and Yuendumu (NT Admin 1959 p. 52); and another in 1961, when 114 people were trucked from Yuendumu, Warrabri and Papunya (AIATSIS 1959 pp. 1-8). McClay (1988) has recorded several verbal accounts told by Warlpiri people of them being forcibly trucked to Hooker Creek and of their unsuccessful attempts to return to their traditional country. While at Lajamanu in 2005, I also had a discussion with a Warlpiri Elder working for the Wulain Outstation Resource Centre called Alec, who recounted the story of how his father refused to stay at Lajamanu and had walked back to their traditional land, carrying him on his shoulders, of how they had been caught, and then returned to Lajamanu against their will. He said that they had tried this twice and had been returned each time.

Prior to colonisation, small groups of Warlpiri had lived and roamed on the specific parcels of land which they traditionally considered to be under their care and protection. Their removal to Lajamanu meant that they were unable to continue their traditional way of life and their responsibility to care for their land. They were gradually being forced into a totally alien, dependent township lifestyle. Warlpiri people were permanently refused permission to return to live on their traditional land, seemingly because they were more easily controlled in reserves and to avoid conflict with the miners and pastoralists.

As mentioned earlier, the arrival of the settlers, miners, and pastoralists brought great change to the remote Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, including the Warlpiri people. By the 1970s, there were few, if any, Warlpiri people still living at their traditional locations in their traditional way. Most had become part of settlement life. Hooker Creek commenced supplying basic schooling in the early 1950s and Warlpiri people were taught carpentry, building, and mechanical skills. These educational programmes introduced social and cultural changes, but they were changes decided by the government and missions, not by Warlpiri people.

4.8 Welfare and learned helplessness

Welfare began in the 1960s for the Warlpiri people of the Lajamanu community. Their subsistence economy was rapidly being destroyed and replaced by government welfare. Warlpiri people were rapidly becoming town dwellers. This changing Warlpiri lifestyle was strictly controlled by government and Warlpiri people were largely dependent upon white officials for their livelihood (McClay 1988). Adamson, a resident teacher described Hooker Creek as being a place where 'no visitors ever go' because 'it's the end of the line (*The Bulletin* 26 May 1973)'. She noted that 'one beast (from the 3000 head of cattle) is given to the kitchen each week, supposedly to supply the protein needs of the 550 (Warlpiri people)'. Warlpiri residents had no government housing and that 'corporal punishment is common for Hooker Creek Aboriginals under the age of 13' (cited in McClay 1988 p.211).

Another report in 1974 by Coombs and Stanner was also scathingly critical of the Hooker Creek settlement describing it as:

a disaster area ... Our impression was that neither the Aboriginal Council nor the community which it represents believes that it is in fact or is to be trusted with real authority. The white staff ... have reason to think of appointment to Hooker Creek as evidence of personal failure or departmental antagonism towards them (Coombs & Stanner 1974 p. 27).

4.9 Government policies

Although government policies had become somewhat more enlightened elsewhere in Australia, they were slower in coming to Hooker Creek. Things gradually began to improve in the late 1970s. The Lajamanu School was upgraded, and a new health centre and a police station were constructed. Housing gradually increased but was still well below acceptable standards and was culturally unsuitable (Keys 1999 p. 86). The Hooker Creek (later Lajamanu) Community Council, Yuwarli Housing Association, the Wulaign Outstation Resource Centre, and the Wampana Progress Association were formed. These organisations were largely initiated, controlled, and funded by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, but they did provide some potential for future community self-management. However, Tatz has noted that this potential was stifled 'by the attitudes and actions of government departments and other European advisers at Lajamanu' (1979 p. 23). Subsequently, the government did make some attempts to rectify this situation in Lajamanu, particularly in relation to attitudes of non-Indigenous Lajamanu staff, and of their over-managing practices. But Tatz considers that core problems remained:

First, there is the psychological inability of whites to stop talking about blacks rather than with them, to cease being their protectors and curators, to allow them to act on their own behalf. White society unilaterally defines the problems, prescribes the policy dicta, enables the laws, creates the administrative machinery and determines the nature, content, personnel and flavour of remedial programs. Innumerable examples show that Aboriginal affairs have always been, and still remain, a white activity (1979 pp. 24-25).

In 1978, the Commonwealth granted limited self-government to the Northern Territory; limited because the Federal government maintained some rights of veto at any time. It handed over a large amount of responsibility for Aboriginal Affairs and the Northern Territory Government became responsible for financing the Indigenous communities, including Lajamanu. To assist the process, the Northern Territory government received hugely inflated grants from the Commonwealth Grants Commission. But this transfer of responsibility of Indigenous affairs placed additional responsibility and burden onto the Northern Territory

government, a difficult task for a territory that is a huge area, with a small population, limited finances, and limited expertise. It particularly presented difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified and experienced officers (Loveday 1982 pp. 1-41). For the Lajamanu Warlpiri, it meant that Canberra had only a limited knowledge of progress and activity of Indigenous affairs in Lajamanu.

The gradual move towards integration policies was supposed to offer Indigenous communities more opportunity for social inclusion but these policies continued to largely ignore culture and identity. When they also failed to produce significant change, the federal government introduced limited self-determination policies, including the unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) experiment that ran from 1990 to 2005 (ATSIC 1995). ATSIC has been discussed in a previous chapter. As will be shown in Chapter 6, the discussions with members of the Lajamanu Warlpiri reveal that the community favour these self-determination policies but was critical of the limitations imposed by government. Although it was Indigenous, the Lajamanu residents gave ATSIC only limited support because they saw it as being a centralised, distant bureaucratic non-Warlpiri body that lacked an appreciation of the needs of Lajamanu.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Howard Coalition was less focused on self-determination and in favour of a more neo-liberal and whole of government approach.

In ATSIC's stead the Howard government set up a whole-of-government approach partnership arrangement with Indigenous communities. This whole of government approach was intended to bring out Indigenous self-responsibility and develop a more mutual obligation (Shergold 2005). Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICCs) were established throughout Australia to negotiate Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs) and Regional Partnership Agreements (RPAs) (OIPC 2005 p. 15).

Shared Responsibility Agreements (2004-2007) were supposed to be partnership agreements where Indigenous communities were to undertake certain behavioural changes on the one hand and government on the other hand was to undertake to fund a community specified project. One such SRA in Lajamanu was for improvements to community sporting infrastructure in return for '10-12 volunteers to complete the fencing; identify long-term

truant students and work to ensure that they attend school; and ensure that children play within the safe recreation area' (ATNS, 2018). It was a concept initiated and developed by government rather than the Lajamanu community. While the SRA program promised improved self-determining by the communities the Warlpiri community saw it as largely initiated and controlled by government and therefore it had only minimal success. The SRA program gradually was discontinued (Strakosch 2013 pp. 593-95).

The government also initiated the Indigenous Community Governance Project (2005-2008) based on research results of the United Nations Development Program, the World Bank and of the Harvard Project on American Indian Development that had revealed effective governance increases the possibility of successful economic and community development (Cornell & Kalt 1997). The evolution of the Central Land Council (CLC) Lajamanu Governance Project (CLC 2014) from this initial somewhat stereotyped government formula has shown potential and promise. This project is discussed in some detail in Chapter Nine.

Then controversially in 2007, the Howard government introduced the Northern Territory Emergency Response, citing the Little Children are Sacred Report of the Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse (Wild & Anderson 2007) as the reason for this radical action. The harsh NTER measures have been discussed in an earlier chapter (Chapter Three). At about the same time, the NT Government proposed the abolition of Aboriginal local government community councils in favour of Regional Authorities and then regionalised Shires (Sanders 2005; D. Smith, 2008). Chapman et al note that:

Most notably evident in the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER), the abolition of government policy frameworks for self-determination, and the dismantling of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and its regional councils by the Australian Government have had major impacts, as has the constant restructuring and recent replacement by the NT Government of community councils by amalgamated, regionalized, Local Government shires, the uncertainty of funding for local Aboriginal initiatives such as outstations, bi-lingual education, night patrol and women's refuges; all being carried out alongside the erosion of rights gained under the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act, 1976 (ALRA) (Chapman et al. 2017 P.7).

The Howard and subsequent governments, have continued to focus on overcoming the

gaps in socio-economic disadvantage by improving service delivery, inter-departmental coordination and community governance-building, as had been agreed in the COAG accord (2006 p. 7). The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery (2008) was meant to drive necessary reforms to close the gap on health, education and employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians in the 29 Remote Service Delivery communities (as discussed in the previous chapter). Government appointed a Coordinator-General to manage the implementation of the Agreement. This resulted in several new policies and programs being introduced in the Remote Service Delivery (RSD) sites (CGRIS 2009; Chapman et al. 2017 P.12).

Lajamanu was one of those priority RSD communities and as with the other sites it was agreed to develop a Local Implementation Plan (LIP) using a Local (Warlpiri) Reference Group (LRG) to negotiate and develop the plan in conjunction with representatives of the federal and Territory government and the Central Desert Shire. However, the Lajamanu LIP did not appear to produce any immediate change. Some believed that this was because government policies continued to devolve most Indigenous community decision-making power to government agencies and/or non-Indigenous Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) (Dillon & Westbury 2005; Morgan Disney & Associates Pty Ltd. 2006; Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) 2005; Shergold 2005; & Smith, 2007).

4.10 Local government

The third tier of government, local government was officially established in the Northern Territory with the passing of the Local Government Act in 1978. The Act provided for four municipal councils and community government councils, and fourteen community government councils for smaller communities in outlying areas of the Territory. Most of the community councils were small, single locality area incorporations (Sanders 2006 pp. 3- 4). Lajamanu established the first community council in the Northern Territory, led by a revered Warlpiri man, Martin Luther.

By the year 2000 the Northern Territory had 68 recognised local governing bodies, 6 municipalities, 32 community government councils, 29 association councils and one special

purpose town council. Subsequently, there were a few rearrangements and amalgamations. However, in 2008, local government, as previously mentioned, became part of government's regionalisation plan. Existing Aboriginal community councils in the Territory ceased to exist and were replaced by Shire Councils. Lajamanu was incorporated into the Central Desert Shire (later re-named Central Desert Regional Council). The Central Desert Regional council covers an area of 282,090 square kilometres and has an estimated population of approximately 4,700 people. It encompasses a large area of unincorporated land and the Indigenous communities that were previously managed by local government bodies. These included the Anmatjere Community Government Council; the Arltarlpilta Community Government Council; the Lajamanu Community Government Council; the Yuendumu and Willowra Community Government Council; the Nyrripi Community Incorporated; and the Yuelumu Community Incorporated. Only two of the twelve elected members represent Lajamanu.

There are also nine elected Local Boards. A Northern Territory Local Government Association (LGANT) document explains that:

[the] local board is part of the whole or part of council...Where a wide range of activities and functions are decided for which a council is responsible, councils may establish committees or local boards to assist the council in its work and to increase community input in policy development (LGANT 2019).

Their purpose is to bolster representation of each community. These local boards, which have latterly been renamed Local Authorities, meet bi-monthly and have been given additional powers and funding. Sanders and Holcombe report that:

Within its boundary the Regional Council has established nine Shire Service Centres, each of which has a Shire Services Manager who, among other things, services an unpaid elected Local Advisory Board (2010 p. 16).

This vast Regional council has a central office in Alice Springs, 100 kilometres outside and south of its southern boundary. All the senior management staff is situated in Alice Springs, as is a substantial amount of the financial/accounting and asset management employees. Internet technology is managed, for all Regional Councils in Darwin.

Chapman et al (2014) observed that:

When Shires were promoted as the next NT Government version of regionalisation, it involved the wholesale abolition of the Aboriginal community councils. These councils

were also Aboriginal housing organisations responsible for managing remote housing...remote communities were confronted with profound changes which largely transferred control and power from local Aboriginal people to government and non-Indigenous NGOs (Chapman et al. 2014 p. 12)

The initial years of the Central Desert Shire, now Central Desert Regional Council have been fraught with problems (Sanders 2011 pp. 13-16), and I suggest it continues to have difficulties in operating effectively. Part of this problem may be because local government is a formal government construct that operates according to western administrative requirements and bureaucratic practice which usually necessitates the employment of non-Indigenous CEOs and other officers grounded in these sophisticated procedures (Dilena 2012b). Its size and isolation from its constituents may also limit its effectiveness.

4.11 Other Programs and measures

The Community Development Unit (CDU) of the Central Land Council (CLC) was established in 2005 to work with Traditional Owners and the communities in the area to more effectively use third-party land use royalty funds, and other related funding, for community development. CDU has initiated and supported the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust (WETT), the Tanami Dialysis Project, the Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation project (GMAAAC), the Northern Territory Parks Rent Money Project, the Community Lease Money Project and the Lajamanu Community Governance Project. The latter is of interest because it was specifically targeted to 'strengthen legitimate and effective decision-making and implementation processes in Lajamanu' (CLC 2014 p.14), specifically the Kurdiji leadership group in Lajamanu (which is discussed in later chapters).

The Lajamanu Community Governance Project commenced under the auspices of the CDU of the Central Land Council in 2011 and has substantial community support. Because of its symbiosis with the Lajamanu Implementation Plan (NT Gov 2010) and the National partnership Agreement (NPA) it has received federal and Northern Territory Government approval and financial support. This project has shown considerable promise and is discussed in more detail in later chapters.

4.12 Investment in Lajamanu

In recent years, government funded substantial infrastructure developments in Lajamanu. There have been: a new multi-purpose hall and new teaching and learning facilities at the Lajamanu School; a 40-year housing precinct lease agreement and subsequent construction of 17 new community houses; establishment of a women's safe house; a crèche; \$2.5m to continue improvements the Lajamanu airstrip and a new health clinic. A dialysis unit partly funded through Kurra Corporation and the Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation Project (GMAAAC) has also been installed (Roche, Ensor & Planet 2014 P.57).

The CLC has also taken on several major community and infrastructure initiatives in Lajamanu in recent years. Examples include obtaining additional development funding for the Lajamanu Library, and sponsorship for the Wulaign Rangers,⁷ the Warnayaka Art Centre, women's cultural expeditions, and the CLC (Lajamanu) Governance Project.

During my research trip to Lajamanu in 2014, I also noted several significant upgrades to the Warnayaka Art Centre; a covered basketball area; a new building for the CLC; some, but not enough, new houses; a much better refuse dump; and a new Bodhi Bus service. Housing continues to be substandard and inadequate. Saethre comments on the state of housing in Lajamanu:

In Lajamanu, the acute housing shortage resulted in several extended families inhabiting a single home. It was not unusual to have ten to fifteen people living in a three-bedroom home ... homes were not well-maintained or kept in a sanitary condition ... Front doors seldom latched properly, allowing dogs to have free access to any food lying around. ... Bedding, dishes, cups, and utensils were frequently shared and seldom cleaned. Toilets were not consistently flushed or sanitized. Consequently, the condition of Aboriginal residences has been recognised as an important factor impacting high rates of poor health (2013 p. 154).

⁷ See Glossary.

4.13 Cultural Interface at Lajamanu

Some examples of how failure to understand or appreciate cultural differences observed in Lajamanu are:

- The government decision to move Warlpiri people into urban environments such as Lajamanu is a clear indication of ignoring cultural and heritage needs of the people.
- The intrusion of a Police vehicle, carrying a non-Warlpiri woman, into a Lajamanu boy's initiation ceremony area. This intrusion was an example of the failure of government to educate personnel into the understanding of Warlpiri culture (Lajamanu Elders 2004).
- Previous non-Warlpiri Housing manager, Kerry Marsham explains that the failure of government to understand the cultural and every-day living needs of the Warlpiri community in Lajamanu has led to disastrous housing misuse and failure to maintain [see Chapter Seven].
- My experience with the Lajamanu Local Government Council left me with the realisation that government were failing to understand what the community required from that body. A senior officer in the Central Desert Regional Council remarked 'Is the Shire meant to be a local government body or an Indigenous employment agency?'. Again, this can be interpreted as government not understanding the needs and wants of the community...a failure to appreciate that the Lajamanu community places more value on family and cultural needs than of physical infrastructural ones. This is clearly demonstrated in the comments made by many Warlpiri people in chapter Six.
- Another problem occurred because of government's failure to take note of Indigenous historic boundaries. Lajamanu was developed for Warlpiri people on traditionally owned and occupied Gurindji land. This was to create problems for government, Gurindji and Warlpiri and was only officially settled when government arranged a formal agreement with the Gurindji people. However, on a more positive note I was informed by Warlpiri Elders and one Gurindji Elder (now a Lajamanu caretaker) that Warlpiri had privately negotiated a cultural agreement with Gurindji who had been sympathetic to the position the Lajamanu Warlpiri people had been placed in. This was hearsay but some indication of cultural appreciation between Indigenous groups.

- A former CEO of ASIC, Pat Turner, an Indigenous Australian, found that the barrier of language and cultural variation limited their ability to obtain more unifying power to leverage more local control (P.160). she was talking generally this can be clearly seen to apply to the Lajamanu community (Chapters six, seven and eight).

4.14 Summary

This chapter has provided a great deal of information of Government programs and policy that is meant to supply a better appreciation and understanding of Warlpiri people, of their now Lajamanu home and of their changed environment Perhaps the most important piece of information is that historically, like most Indigenous Australians the Warlpiri people of the Tanami region have been poorly treated and administered by the Nation.

The Lajamanu settlement is an artificial construct, established by an alien government as a means of more conveniently controlling and managing the Warlpiri in one specific area, Lajamanu. Warlpiri people have been greatly affected and disadvantaged by the colonial foray into their lands, but the violent colonial legacy of killings, mistreatment, rapes, and removal of their children have not destroyed Warlpiri cultural beliefs and kinships systems. Folds reasons that Government and mainstream Australians appear to have failed to understand the depth and strength of Warlpiri beliefs and of extended family bonding (Folds 1994, p. 10). McClay sums up the difficulties that Warlpiri people face when relating to mainstream:

The relation of tribal Aborigines to capitalism is structured on contradictions. Aborigines are dependent upon capitalism for their survival yet are in opposition to it in almost every point. ... Their productive relation to the land as hunters and gatherers was destroyed...their direct relationship with the land is now a purely spiritual one in contradiction to their growing dependence on mining ventures [and welfare]. They survive within a capitalist system without being a productive part of that system (1988 p. 133).

Historically, the Lajamanu Warlpiri Community has developed and largely retained a diverse and intricate leadership and management structure which has adequately suited their needs in the past. But it is apparent that they need to adapt and improve their leadership capacity and management potential. Warlpiri culture demands that matters are decided by discussion and consensus (discussed more fully in the next chapter). While this has proved to be an effective method it requires much time to consult everyone and

to arrive at agreement. Training in new methods, and capacities is required if the Lajamanu community wish to negotiate effectively and successfully with government.

There are signs, as indicated by the Ngurra-kurlu plan of Wanta Jampijinpa Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu (Steven Patrick (Patrick, Holmes,& Box 2008)⁸, which is described in Chapter Five, that the Lajamanu community are prepared to positively approach these matters.

This chapter has also highlighted the complexities and difficulties that both the community and government face when they seek to lessen disadvantage and plan the future. De'Ishtar has put it succinctly:

All Whites confront issues of cultural misunderstandings in their interactions with their Indigenous hosts (Folds 2001 p. 60), and this causes shock for both Whites and Indigenous residents. The clash of cultures is as real for the hosts as it is for the visitors (De'Ishtar 2005 p. 68).

Elkins and Pedersen (2005) also argue persuasively that:

Settler colonialism cannot be seen as an essential fleeting stage but must be understood as the persistent defining characteristic, even the condition of possibility of...[a] new settler society (2005 pp.2-3).

The historic evolution of government policies and practices, as defined by Sullivan (2011 p.1) as 'conflict and appropriation; protection and segregation; assimilation and integration; and self-determination and self-management' 'and subsequently the Australian interpretation of neo-liberalism have all impinged on the livelihood of the people of Lajamanu. These government policies and practices, intentionally or not, can be seen to have focused on Lajamanu and other Aboriginal communities accepting and adopting the cultural precepts of the Australian state. There has been little consideration of cultural interaction by government. Warlpiri culture and heritage has been largely ignored and/or disregarded. While these policies and attitudes have affected the way in which Warlpiri live and where they dwell, it is also apparent that they continue to maintain and value their culture and their heritage.

⁸ The Ngurra-kurlu plan offers a unique understanding of the complexities of Warlpiri culture and how an appreciation and application of its content can be used to foster symbiotic relationships between Lajamanu and the government-see chapter Four (Patrick, Holmes & Box, 2008 p. 2).

CHAPTER 5

INDIGENOUS/SETTLER DIFFERENCES IN THINKING ON CULTURAL RIGHTS, SOVEREIGNTY AND COMPATIBILITY.

This chapter seeks to examine the Indigenous/ Settler differences in relation to cultural rights, sovereignty and living within the Australian nation-state. There appear to be on-going complexities and problems in attempts to satisfactorily reconcile and accommodate Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in post-colonial nations such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the U.S.A. This is perhaps to be expected since the cultural heritages of Indigenous peoples have developed in markedly different environments to those of peoples of Western European cultural heritage. This section delves into the distinct divergence in thinking between Indigenous peoples and the settler colonial peoples as to how or indeed if they can equitably agree to live in one nation. It examines both Indigenous and non-Indigenous views seeking to compare and to understand why the differences in thinking appear to offer so few opportunities for compromise positions, and partially investigates if any compromises may be acceptable to both parties. The complexities of acceptance and the reconciling of inter-cultural difference are apparent but perhaps not impossible.

Austin-Broos (2011) suggests that the divergence in thinking arises from the differences between the cultural heritage and identity of each society; from their very different origins and historical learning paths. Kymlicka, a liberal-democrat who is sympathetic to the recognition of indigenous rights in multicultural societies, agrees and argues that:

Our capacity to form and revise a conception of the good is intimately tied to our membership in a culture, since the context of individual choice is the range of options passed down to us by our language and culture. Deciding how to lead our lives is, in the first instance, a matter of exploring the possibilities made available by our culture (Kymlicka 1992 P.140).

This chapter seeks to examine the thoughts of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers to understand the differences and perhaps to contemplate if those differences can be accommodated or alternatively to see if they are irreconcilable. It is intended to appreciate how their cultural background and other environmental factors may have influenced their thinking.

Firstly, dominant liberal western philosophical thinking is examined because Australian settler-colonial society (mainstream) lays claim to be a liberal-democratic democracy. Western thinking has a long traceable cultural evolution through western thought stemming from Socrates through to Locke, with the developing liberal theme being individual freedom of thought and action (Ishay 2004 pp. 63-107).

5.1 Liberal philosophy

Locke (1632–1704) is regarded as a founder of liberal thinking which advocates, ‘a state...of equality, wherein all the power is reciprocal’ (1980 p. 8). Liberal philosophy has four basic themes: individual liberty; respect for all persons, limited government with respect for human rights; and the right to own property. Liberal philosophy is premised on an individual’s right to the basic principles of freedom. Crowder explains that:

Liberals place a special emphasis on the value of individual liberty...the importance of individual liberty is that they see human beings as capable of making their own decisions about how they live... A third basic principle [is] limited government...a fourth liberal theme [is] private property (Crowder 2013 p. 39).

Rawls (1971) further advises that to be truly liberal there should be a fair distribution of individual rights and freedoms and that this should be arrived at by means of what he calls the ‘veil of ignorance’. The veil of ignorance means that one imagines a hypothetical situation in which individuals decide upon the principles of justice that will govern their society from what he calls an ‘original position’, a position where the individual must imagine that there is no prior experience or knowledge of their position, wealth, or status in society or of their assets or any pre-conceived conception of the good. In his view, this method, he says, ensures there will be no unfair bias in a person’s choice of principles of justice, and therefore provides her with a greater, more neutral opportunity to achieve fairness and justice for all (Rawls 1971 pp. 17-22). Unfortunately, freedoms and rights are not easily accessed by many individuals in the real world. As Sen (1999) and Nussbaum(2000) have stated that rights and freedoms mean little unless an individual has the capacity and capability to access them. The history of Indigenous peoples whose lands have experienced the impacts of colonisation shows that their capability of accessing individual freedoms and rights has often been limited. How then do liberal thinkers believe that Indigenous peoples can be fairly accommodated in colonised nations like Australia?

5.2 Can liberal theory accommodate Indigenous minority cultures?

Egalitarian liberal theory is complex in the way writers have attempted to balance liberty with compensating arrangements for those that have lesser opportunities. There are conflicting liberal views as to how best 'to reconcile liberal-democratic values of individualism, freedom and equal treatment with Indigenous claims that emphasise collective rights, cultural identity and special status' (Robbins 2007 p.324). Poole (2000) explains that:

For mainstream liberalism, the scope of our special responsibilities extends no further than the reach of our individual existence and memories. However, the sphere of culture provides an identity and storehouse of social memories – and also repressions- which go beyond the individual (Poole 2000 p.10).

Sanders suggests that Kymlicka (1995) seeks to broaden the way in which liberalism can be interpreted.:

Will Kymlicka has explained, many liberal thinkers since World war II have reverted to being 'abstract...universalists' who are focused only on individual rights and who argue that, in relation 'cultural' groups, governments or states should adopt policies of 'benign neglect' (Sanders 2006 p.6).

Kymlicka (1995), an influential liberal-multiculturalist writer, disagrees with such thinkers arguing that their liberal concept of benign neglect does not provide enough protection for Indigenous minority cultures. Kymlicka has been chosen because he is an advocate for Indigenous groups. He reasons that Indigenous cultures require a more active policy of toleration, recognition, self-determination and state assistance. He is explicit in stating that there is not enough toleration. Options and decisions have no bearing unless the people concerned have the right and the capacity to make them. Kymlicka argues that:

We need to ...take steps to prevent any resulting injustices. These steps might include...self-government rights to enable autonomy for national minorities alongside the majority nation. Without such measures, talk of 'treating people as individuals' is itself just a cover for ethnic and national injustice (Kymlicka 1995 p.194).

He argues that a multicultural liberal state besides supporting the concept of universal rights should enable 'certain group-differentiated rights or 'special status' for minority cultures' (Kymlicka 1995, p. 6) and maintains that:

justice requires removing or compensating for undeserved or "morally arbitrary" disadvantages, particularly if they are "profound and persuasive and present at birth (Kymlicka 1992 p.140).

O'Sullivan strongly supports this concept stating that:

Group rights are preliminary to individual freedom as freedom requires access to language, customary use of land and resources, and culturally cognisant schooling and health care, for example (O'Sullivan 2011 p.88).

Notably, Kymlicka advocates the granting of special cultural rights, which he separates into two categories. National rights which are specific to Indigenous minorities and Polyethnic rights which relate to immigrant groups. National rights would not normally be applicable to immigrant groups. He maintains that immigrant groups may be entitled to lesser 'poly-ethnic rights in certain circumstances but are not entitled to national rights because they differ in that they have generally 'accepted the assumption that their life-chances, and even more the life-chances of their children, will be bound up with participation in mainstream institutions operating in the majority language' (2002 p. 353), whereas, Indigenous people have been given no such choice.

Kymlicka has critics(e.g. Kukathas 2004, Barry 2001) but his active rather than passive reading of liberal thought appears to meet both the equality and freedom tenets of liberalism (Crowder 2013 p.44) and to provide a credible linkage of liberalist ideals and multiculturalism (Crowder 2013, p. 38).

Many colonising European societies, now mainstream societies, (Australia, Canada, and New Zealand) have adopted liberal-democratic tenets and many make claims to having adopted some form of multiculturalism. Australian government is committed to liberal individualism and has accepted a multicultural stance at least as a matter of official government policy (Australian Government 2017 p. 3).

Kymlicka (2005) states that:

Over the past fifteen years, ideas of multiculturalism and minority rights have been 'internationalized' in two distinct ways. First, a discourse of multiculturalism is circulating amongst elites who participate in international networks of activists, scholars, and policy-makers. Through these networks, a certain way of talking about ethnocultural diversity is being diffused around the world premised on principles of tolerance and ideals of justice. Within this discourse, minorities are seen, not as a problem to be solved or a threat to be neutralized, but as legitimate members of the state whose identity and culture must be respected. Second, formal international standards of minority rights are being adopted by international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, and

the International Labour Organization (ILO). These organizations have attempted to codify minimum standards for the behavior of states in relation to their minorities, and to establish mechanisms to monitor state compliance with them (2005 pp.22-23).

Many western thinkers like Kymlicka and Rawls consider liberal thinking to be the most practical way to encourage rights and freedoms for all, including Indigenous peoples. Others have different views. The basic premises of liberalism are agreed but interpretations vary. Recent governments have interpreted the recognition of special Indigenous rights in ways that appear to differ from those of Kymlicka and others.

Both Indigenous and settler-mainstream seem to be in favour of human rights and of people being able to access those rights. This seems to be a common theme, but it was probably not officially stated as a worldwide until it was highlighted at the United Nations. Individual and citizenship rights came to be more universally accepted on 10th. December 1948 with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Its preamble recognises that 'the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world' (United Nations 1948). This declaration insists that human rights are the universal rights of all people, regardless of status, race or geographical location.

The 2007 [UNDRIP] the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations 2007) heightened the moral obligation of the Australian government to ensure the provision of human rights to Indigenous Australians. This was further enhanced because the Rudd government had accepted the UNDRIP. Notably, neither declaration is legally binding, rather the onus is on member countries of the United Nations, including Australia, to comply with both concepts. Robbins (2010a p. 262) argues that this latter declaration has set new international benchmarks for the recognition of Indigenous rights. Nevertheless, it remains clear that many people have not been able to access, fulfil or act on these rights.

Part of the problem of rights is that people require the capacity and capability to gaining access to them. Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2000) place importance on the actual capabilities of people to access the human rights to which they are entitled. Sen (1999) also reasons that, while everyone should be given the opportunity to realise rights and freedoms their

capabilities of doing so are ‘qualified and constrained by the social, political and economic opportunities that are available’ (Sen 1999 pp. xi-xii). He suggests that:

Responsible adults must be in charge of their known well-being; it is for them to decide how to use their capabilities. But the capabilities that a person does actually have (and not merely theoretically enjoys) depend on the nature of social arrangements, which can be crucial for individual freedoms. And there the state and the society cannot escape responsibility (Sen 1999 p. 288).

Both he (2001) and Nussbaum (2000) argue that the most important aspect of any human rights centres on the need to concentrate on ‘the expansion of the “capabilities” of persons to lead the kind of lives they value – and have reason to value’ (Sen, 1999 p. 18). Nussbaum has constructed a ten-point list of human capabilities that, she argues, should be attainable by all people: life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; relations with other species; play; and control over one’s environment (Nussbaum 2000 pp. 78-80). While the specifics of her Human Capabilities List have been criticised, the important point is that it shows that cultural values and practices can determine whether people actually have the capabilities. Sen and Nussbaum’s work has substantially contributed to the debate over the rights of individuals and groups. Nussbaum’s list highlights the limitations that can be encountered in multicultural and other nations that have communities with socio-economic differences that are not able to enjoy all human rights.

5.3 Alternative Philosophical Perceptions

Indigenous peoples have cultural heritages and histories that have derived from very different pathways to those of the classic European sources. These pathways have their origins in their histories and their ‘Dreamings’⁹; pathways that have differing conceptions to those of the liberal ‘western’ paradigm.

⁹ Dreaming ‘governs every aspect of [Indigenous] life. It accounts for the world and creation’ (Nicholls 2016, p. 1). Korff also explains that: ‘English can never capture what “Dreaming” or “Dreamtime” is all about. The Dreaming and its stories are linked to the creation process and spiritual ancestors’ (Korff 2016). This is further explained in the previous chapter.

In addition, many Indigenous theorists' views are focused on righting the wrongs of colonisation and the usurping of their rights and their lands. Coulthard articulates this concern:

For more than two centuries the manifestations of this [colonial] relationship have run roughshod over the rights of Indigenous peoples, which have resulted in a massive stockpiling of power and privilege by and for the dominant society. Land has been stolen, and significant amounts of it must be returned. Power and authority have been unjustly appropriated and much of it will have to be reinstated. This will inevitably be upsetting to some; it will be incredibly inconvenient for others. But it is what needs to happen if we are to create a more just and sustainable life in this country for the bulk of Indigenous communities, and for the majority of non-Indigenous people as well (Coulthard 2014 p. 168).

Indigenous writers from many nations approach the Indigenous-colonial settler cohabitation in different ways. Contemporary Indigenous theorists want rights, justice and equality but have some difficulty in explaining exactly what the goals are, and how reconcilable change for these things can be practically engineered. There is a resounding rejection of the classic notion of [European] sovereignty as the framework for discussions of political relations between indigenous peoples and the state (Taiaiake Alfred 2009 pp. 77-78). Unfortunately, the views of those Indigenous writers discussed in this chapter are somewhat ambiguous when proposing alternative models of sovereignty.

In an analysis of Canadian politics, Coulthard rejects the dominant state policy approach which is geared to reconcile Indigenous claims of nationhood to those of the settler-state sovereignty; policies that seek to negotiate land claims, encourage economic development and foster self-determination. Instead, Coulthard attempts to use Marxist theory to understand how 'colonial dispossession has affected the colonized'. He considers that colonialism is the 'overarching lens of analysis.' (Reinhardt 2016 p. 11). In doing so, he rejects the nation-state 'politics of recognition' (e.g. Kymlicka's view) arguing that that they are designed to contain Indigenous peoples' identity and self-management within the settler-state sovereignty and are political policies 'committed to the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determination authority' (Coulthard 2014 p. 151). Coulthard argues that these settler-state policies continue to 'reproduce the very configurations of colonialist, racist, patriarchal state power that Indigenous peoples' demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend' (Coulthard 2014, p. 3). He argues that:

Without a massive transformation in the political economy of contemporary settler-colonialism, any efforts to rebuild our [Indigenous] nations will remain parasitic on capitalism, and thus, on the perpetual exploitation of our lands and labor (Coulthard 2014, p.171).

In his view, residency and direct action are necessary factors in seeking to remove 'colonial, racist and patriarchal legal and political obstacles' (Coulthard 2014 pp. 171-173). However, Coulthard:

acknowledge[s] that significant political leverage is required to simultaneously block the economic exploitation of our people and homelands while constructing alternatives to capitalism will not be generated through our direct actions and resurgent economies alone. Settler colonization has rendered our populations too small to affect this magnitude of change (Coulthard 2014, p.193).

He urges a resurgence of subsistence-orientated economic activities, but then assumes a rather contradictory position to his thinking by suggesting that contemporary economic possibilities should be investigated concurrently. It is not clear whether he is presenting a binary goal (one or the other) or suggesting more than one form of activity?

Taiaiake Alfred advocates a similar Indigenous resurgence concept to that of Coulthard. He argues that the indigenous peoples of Canada should 'challenge our current existence by providing an Indigenous theory for envisioning our future' (Stark 2007 P.508). They should reject settler state-indigenous relationships, cease negotiations, reconciliation plans and attempts to compromise within the current settler government parameters and find their own ways to decide what they need and how they plan to get those needs. He states that:

we must recognize that we can never achieve the goal of peaceful coexistence as long as we continue to accept the classic notion of sovereignty as the framework for discussions of political relations between indigenous peoples and the state ... "Sovereignty" as it is currently understood and applied in indigenous-state relations cannot be seen as an appropriate goal or framework, because it has no relevance to indigenous values. The challenge before us is to detach the notion of sovereignty from its current legal meaning and use in the context of the Western understanding of power and relationships. We need to create a meaning for sovereignty that respects the understanding of power in indigenous cultures, one that reflects the sense embodied in such Western notions as "personal sovereignty" and "popular sovereignty" (Alfred 2009 pp. 77-78).

Unfortunately, Alfred, like Coulthard, fails to define what form the re-invention of sovereignty should take, and how it is to be re-interpreted as one that 'respects the understanding of power in Indigenous cultures' (Alfred 2009 pp. 77-78). He does argue that meaningful

negotiations can be achieved by using 'morally grounded defiance and non-violent agitation combined with the development of collective capacity for self-defence' (Alfred 2005 p.27) and considers this 'strategy of withdrawing consent and not cooperating with [government] institutions' to encourage the dominant settler society to negotiate for a 'respectful coexistence' (Alfred 2005 pp. 27-28). Alfred also maintains that Indigenous communities should reject the present arrangements and should restructure community governments in traditional ways; foster the use of traditional languages; seek to achieve economic self-sufficiency; and 'assert their right to govern their own territories' (Alfred 2009 p. 172-173). In his view, these actions are necessary because:

structural changes negotiated in a colonized cultural context will only achieve the further entrenchment of the social and political foundations of injustice, leading to reforms that are mere modifications to the pre-existing structures of domination (Alfred 2009 p.180).

In addition, Taiaiake Alfred considers that these actions must also be accompanied by assertive practices within Indigenous communities. He states that:

we need to alter the patterns of governance in our communities and achieve four basic objectives; structural reform, reintegration of Native languages... economic self-sufficiency...rejects the claimed authority of the state... [and] assert their right to govern their own territories (Alfred 2009 pp. 172-3).

He particularly emphasises that the key to all these actions is education, stating that 'We [must] collectively develop the ability to argue the justice of our position in a universal logic and language [English]' (Alfred, 2009 pp.177-8). Alfred, like Coulthard seems to wander through action, assertion, negotiation and development of an undefined Indigenous sovereignty

Daniel Sale'e, another Indigenous author, is perhaps the most hostile to recognition of liberal western thinking. He emphasises what he considers are the limitations and contradictory nature of the politics of recognition within a liberal state framework:

The points of contention between First Nations and non-Aboriginals do not simply consist of irritants that might be overcome by mere goodwill, or territorial claims that might be satisfied if one or the other party showed flexibility or compromised. As the conceptual differences over land partly revealed, the two parties operate within institutional parameters and sociocultural systems which have nothing in common...The contention between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals rests in fact on a paradigm contradiction of which the poles are a priori, logically irreconcilable...The

laws and institutions imposed on Aboriginal communities from the outside have no resonance in their own cultural premises and social experience (Sale'e 1995: 291).

His thoughts are in marked contrast to those of Kymlicka who sees Liberal multiculturalism as an opportunity. Sale'e sees little hope for reconciliation or even reconsidered sovereignty, and yet he does allow that Indigenous peoples 'will have to engage the state's legal and political discourses in more effective ways' (Sale'e 1995 P. 5). So, it seems that while he is pessimistic, he eventually seems to allow that the '*a priori*, logically irreconcilable' paradigm he has described may in fact be reconcilable or in some way negotiable.

Another Indigenous theorist, Dale Turner (1997) envisions some possible opportunities for reconciliation. He acknowledges that Kymlicka's multicultural liberal theory recognises minority rights and, in doing so, opens the 'conceptual space for the inclusion of Aboriginal voices' (1997 pp.4-5). He appreciates that Kymlicka does allow for a possible inclusion of non-liberal communities within the state and that this suggests that some Indigenous control and aspects of Aboriginal sovereignty could be accommodated and notes that Kymlicka indicates that efforts should be made to convince Indigenous people. However, while expressing some sympathy for Kymlicka's thinking, Turner warns that the 'conceptual space' is limiting because Kymlicka 'fails to consider Aboriginal ways of thinking within his own political system' (Turner 1997 p. 21). Turner suggests that Kymlicka's multicultural concept is biased toward the assimilation or at very best integration of Indigenous people into the mainstream without consideration of the cultural needs and desires of the Indigenous peoples. Turner argues that the state dominance has by default, extinguished Aboriginal sovereignty (2006 p. 4). However, Turner appears to accept that some compromise remains a possibility if Aboriginal people embrace the 'language of legal-political discourse' of sovereignty in more imaginative ways:

The relevant issue for Aboriginal peoples is not whether we ought to rectify past injustices in order to balance the scales of a liberal distributive justice system, but how governments can come to recognize the legitimacy of Aboriginal sovereignty in order to renew the political relationship on more just foundations (Turner 2006 p. 69).

He sums up his argument by saying that any workable reconciliation 'has to evolve out of a dialogue between Canadian and Aboriginal peoples' (Turner 1997 pp. 4-5). As a practical suggestion Dale Turner (2006 p. 119) proposes that indigenous 'word warriors' are needed to confront and affect the current colonial political systems. These 'word warriors' are to be well-educated and schooled indigenous leaders, supported by elders and community leaders,

who would forge a more just relationship between the First Peoples and the settler society. In his view, word warriors are needed to introduce indigenous concepts and theories into the political and legal system of the existing settler society, and to facilitate changes that will eventually produce partnerships that are fair and acceptable to both indigenous and settler societies (2006 pp. 119-20).

Russell (2003), although non-Indigenous, attempts to explain that Indigenous peoples wish to overcome the dominant settler mentality and to establish a mutually agreed partnership that acknowledges difference. Indigenous people have no desire to assimilate or to integrate. They desire a partnership not a 'ward ship', a partnership that encourages indigenous self-determination and decision-making (Russell 2003 pp. 62-90). Indigenous Australian Patricia Turner, a former Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and senior public servant in Canberra, is enlightening on Indigenous identity and how it relates to mainstream society:

Aboriginal people want to acknowledge that we have a multicultural Australia; I think we are quite comfortable with that. But we are not a part of [it]... because we are the First Australians and we have specific identity, specific cultural differences, and because we were here first our status must be maintained and recognised as such.¹⁰

From a New Zealand perspective, Maaka and Fleras described these efforts to recognise and assert the differences associated with Indigenous peoples as a political indigeneity movement, 'a political ideology of challenges, resistance, and transformation' (2005 p. 293). Accordingly, this movement allows provision for strategic alliances and 'circumspect participation' with settler-state governments and offers the potential 'to live in the modern world while at the same time preserving one's ancient cultural heritage' (Fleras & Elliot 1996 p. 191). O'Sullivan further explains the thrust of Indigenous thinking:

Like democracy, the politics of indigeneity asks questions and makes assumptions about where power ought to lie and how it ought to be shared in relation to political inclusion and national sovereignty. The interaction of indigeneity with democracy highlights the limitations of liberal theory as well as the opportunities it provides to meet indigenous claims and conceptions of justice (O'Sullivan, 2011, p. 86).

¹⁰ Interview with the author, Alice Springs, 6 June 2014

5.4 Sovereignty

Sovereignty seems to be at the heart of Indigenous thinking. Veracini explains the essence of Indigenous writings as being:

Calls for recognition and enactment of indigenous sovereignties have characterised the activities of what has in recent decades become a true indigenous international (Veracini 2010 p. 52).

This Indigenous (Australian and International) thinking is to be expected given the history of colonial oppression, loss of control of their Indigenous lands and the general failure of the states to negotiate or to honour treaties. Nonetheless, Australian Indigenous scholars Behrendt and Watson (2006) have also noted that most Indigenous writers acknowledge that Indigenous societies have come to recognise the permanence of the contemporary settler-colonial nation. This suggests that many Indigenous writers accept rather than reject the need to negotiate. However, they are concerned that negotiations are fraught with the danger of possible Indigenous identity loss. Bearing this in mind, there appears to be a willingness to search for some compromise or alternative approach that would satisfy minority groups if they are in some way to obtain some form of Indigenous sovereignty.

Dr William Jonas (2002), the former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, has thoughts on the form that Aboriginal sovereignty should take. He suggests that:

we [Aboriginal peoples] need to re-conceptualise and define Aboriginal sovereignty. It needs to be understood by the broader community that it is not a threat to State sovereignty, but in fact an enhancement of that sovereignty and something of mutual benefit. It must be accepted that Aboriginal sovereignty is inter-related with State sovereignty rather than in opposition or competition with it (2002).

Behrendt (2003) sees the need to 'unlock' Aboriginal thoughts on sovereignty and self-determination, suggesting that they should reveal:

a different political agenda from 'Sovereignty' and self-determination' as it is used in international legal context. 'Sovereignty' and 'self-determination' need to be defined in this context so that the proper parameters of the rights debate in Australia can be established to complement and facilitate the exact rights that Indigenous people are seeking. It is here that the complexity of political terms can be de-constructed, and the co-existence of seemingly conflicting agendas reconciled; autonomy within the state coupled with inclusion through substantive equality; respect for individual identity in tandem with the protection of group identity (Behrendt 2003 pp.18-19).

Behrendt further argues that:

the notion of sovereignty goes to the heart of the restructuring of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia and that the 'recognition of sovereignty' is linked to the recognition of uniqueness of individual identity and history (Behrendt 2003 p. 96).

Poole (2000 p. 12) confronts the concept of justice for Indigenous people arguing that its main thrust is to enable them to 'exercise their capacities for sustaining , changing, developing, and perhaps even repudiating, their traditional ways of life'. He sees self-determination of not being a re-creation of traditional lifestyles but 'the formation of the kinds of structures through which indigenous people can meet the political, social and cultural challenges of living in the modern world' (Poole 2000 p.12).

Compromise possibilities

At a local level there are indications that some in the Lajamanu community are taking a positive view regarding possible reconciliation involving self-determination. One example is Steven Jampinjinpa Patrick, a Warlpiri man who believes that Ngurra-kurlu plan offers a unique understanding of the complexities of Warlpiri culture and how an appreciation and application of its content can be used to foster symbiotic relationships between Lajamanu and the government (Patrick, Holmes & Box 2008 p. 2). He reasons that the Ngurra-kurlu way explains and teaches the crucial interconnection of the elements of Warlpiri culture, land, law, ceremony, and kinship, and he argues that these bound relationships can be used by Warlpiri people to work and to liaise more effectively with the mainstream settler-state. This can be done in such a way as to show the dominant settler-mainstream population that Warlpiri wish to be a part of the Australian state while retaining their unique identity. Patrick suggests that they can add to the tapestry rather than to be assimilated into it (2008 pp. 5-6).The Ngurra-kurlu concept is shown in Patrick's diagram below.

Patrick explains that in Warlpiri life, kinships (skin names), law, ceremony, and language are all tied to the homeland (or country). All are interrelated and interconnected. Patrick confirms that the system is strong and that it has endured for as long as Warlpiri people can remember. He argues that these intertwined Warlpiri relationships can be applied in a symbiotic way to the relationships that operate in the dominant Australian mainstream society. Each has positive attributes to offer. He argues that to lose these

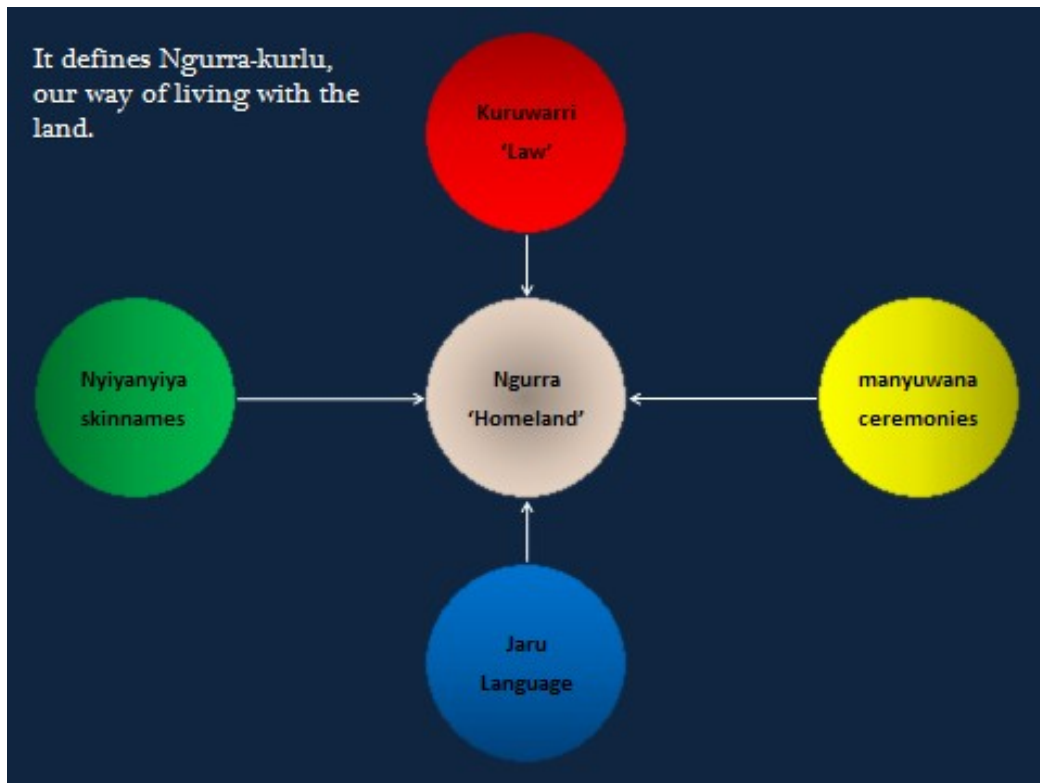


Figure 5-1: Ngurra-kurlu diagram (Patrick, 2014)

N.B. The labelling is in Warlpiri (on top) and English (below).

learnings from vastly different backgrounds is to lose the opportunity to acquire knowledge and understanding. He argues that there is an opportunity for each culture or society to learn from the other. He advocates that:

While the social institutions of the Northern Hemisphere remain grafted onto our country following British colonisation, and continue to trivialise our law, our sovereignty, and the wealth of knowledge recorded in our sacred songs, it is nonetheless our duty to teach our law [to all] despite these challenges and to find new ways to teach it in this time of radical social change (Patrick Unpublished 2014).

Patrick established the biennial Milpirri Festival at Lajamanu.¹¹ The purpose of Milpirri is to present ancestral law in new ways, 'to bridge young and old, to teach our law across cultures, to encourage youth enthusiasm for law and to reinforce our social and ceremonial structures'

¹¹ This remarkable festival is a joint venture with the Tracks Dance Company based in Darwin. The purpose of Milpirri is to present ancestral law in new ways 'to bridge young and old, to teach our law across cultures to encourage youth enthusiasm for law and to reinforce our social and ceremonial structures' (Patrick et al. 2008, p. 2)) in a ceremony which creates a healing interface between traditional custodians and the contemporary milieu.

(Patrick et al. 2008 p. 2) in a ceremony which creates a healing interface between traditional custodians and the contemporary milieu. He uses Milpirri to explain the importance of Ngurra-kurlu and how it can use the 'timeless' principles of Warlpiri culture and apply them to contemporary community living.

The Milpirri Festival gives Warlpiri people the opportunity to pass on an understanding of Warlpiri culture and tradition and to show visiting non-Indigenous Australians (and government representatives) how it can be used to adapt and survive. Patrick also seeks to reinforce the following lessons to his people, and to demonstrate the resilience and strength of the Warlpiri community, both to government and to mainstream Australians. The message of Milpirri is:

Do not forget home and the law of this land ... Despite the reluctance of Australia's public institutions to take our law into account, the law of the British Crown and the law of the Southern Cross (cultural law) do not have to be mutually exclusive. They can co-exist in Australia...Embrace your traditional songs/dances/designs as systems of documenting and practicing law ... Be proud, do not disgrace or depreciate yourself in your own country...Open to anyone who lives under the Southern Cross who wants to learn (2014 unpublished).

Ngurra kurlu concentrates on showing how the Lajamanu community could position itself as part of Australian, now and in the future. Patrick's work is a positive indication of the intent of the Lajamanu community to plan for a better future. While Ngurra kurlu may not have the full-support of the Lajamanu community it does make a positive statement about Warlpiri willingness to work with government and to be a part of the Australian nation. This suggests that the Lajamanu community may be prepared to negotiate a form of sovereignty that can symbolically exist within the Nation state.

Indigenous writer Steven Jampijinpa Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu Patrick's concept relates in some ways to the 'Belonging Together' thinking of non-Indigenous Patrick Sullivan (2011). Sullivan's ideas are discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine.



Figure 5-2: Milpirri Festival dancing (Photograph by Patrick 2014)

5.5 Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to better understand the different views of minority Indigenous cultures to those of a dominant colonial-settler state. This chapter examined these differing views in order to better appreciate their basis, their differing origins, to better understand why and how the differences exist and how they inform different policy perspectives and choices. Importantly, it also explored the possibility of arriving at acceptable compromise positions. Views were chosen from prominent International and Australian Indigenous thinkers and from non-Indigenous thinkers who were subscribers to liberal views commonly associated with demonstrated Australian government democratic practice.

Chan (2018) makes a point when she explains that 'Our families and cultures create our frames of reference, the filters through which we see the world' (2018 p.57). Some Indigenous writers believe that there are opportunities for a symbiotic relationship with a Kymlicka-orientated multicultural state while others are more circumspect. Sale'e (1995) initially argues that that the two cultures are irreconcilable but then suggests that discourse

can be possible. Maaka and Fleras (2005) focus on the recognition of sovereignty but would seem willing to consider an acceptable alternative. Alfred's views also seem to have inconsistencies which would lead to difficulties in application. However, he does say that he wishes to achieve a 'respectful co-existence' (2005 p.27) which seemingly allows for compromise. In my view, Coulthard's argument is the most radical and impracticable, but notwithstanding his rhetoric, even he realises the necessity to continue 'to engage with the state's legal and political system' in the search for reconciliation (Coulthard 2014 p.179).

The threads of distrust appear to be at the forefront of Indigenous thinking with the historic loss of land and sovereignty, mistreatment, limitation of freedoms, rights and cultural pursuits and of equal rights being of ongoing concern. Thus, it is understandable that the International and Australian Indigenous writers discussed in this chapter are focussed on decolonisation and on regaining some form of Indigenous sovereignty when considering any form of agreements or reconciliation with the state.

On the other hand, what is the position of the Australian state? Is it prepared to reconsider its relationship with the different Indigenous Australian communities? It lays claim to be a multicultural liberal democracy (Australian Government 2017 p. 3) yet has in recent history (1975) suspended the Racial Discrimination Act (McCrae 2012), continued to maintain neo-liberal¹² policies and to focus on its designated *Closing the Gap* socio-economic policies. To date, government policies have been more focused on eliminating Indigenous poverty and disadvantage than on observing individual freedoms of choice and determination (Sanders, 2009).

The intercultural differences between Australian Indigenous traditional 'Dreamings' and non-Indigenous liberal evolutions are apparent. Attempts to understand the reasons for

¹² Neoliberalism is often characterized in terms of its belief in sustained economic growth as the means to achieve human progress, its confidence in free markets as the most-efficient allocation of resources, its emphasis on minimal state intervention in economic and social affairs, and its commitment to the freedom of trade and capital.

differences in Indigenous and non-Indigenous thinking may explain why assimilation policies have and will be resisted by Indigenous Australians.

This chapter has provided a review of some of the reasons why Indigenous societies have difficulty in reconciling their goals and with acceptance and inclusion with European originated mainstream societies. There does however, appear to be a general desire by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to coexist in an equitable manner. But the complexity of the situation is apparent. This perhaps suggests that there may be value in considering the redefining of sovereignty in a way that provides Indigenous local self-determining rights (Behrendt 2003).

The most important point to come out of this chapter is that the intercultural and cultural differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies have been shown to be great and therefore the bridging of cultural interfaces should be expected to be complex and very difficult. This chapter highlights the need for governments and communities to actively seek to more clearly appreciate and understand these differences and be prepared to accommodate them in a way acceptable to all parties. Notably, education is seen to be needed by both Indigenous and settler-colonial peoples.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCHING THE VIEWS OF THE LAJAMANU WARLPIRI COMMUNITY

The Warlpiri people that make up the Lajamanu community are a very small minority with a considerably different cultural background to most of the Australian nation. The future of their homeland and their community is obviously of vital importance to Warlpiri people. A knowledge and appreciation of their views, hopes and plans is information that is seen as essential research for this thesis. An accurate researching and recording of the views of the Lajamanu Warlpiri people could lead to better understanding of this minority group. It is intended that this research adds to previous knowledge and understanding and that it may assist both government and the Warlpiri community leaders in determining the future for Lajamanu.

This chapter set out to research the views of the Lajamanu Warlpiri Community in as non-inhibitory way as was possible. I listened to what participants from the Lajamanu community had to say and wrote and recorded what they told me. This meant much time and over twenty five group informal discussions, not questioning but instead listening. In many cases, unlike much research, comments were audio recorded or written down immediately after the meeting. In group meetings. The findings were noted as being a majority or minority view. I considered that this would result in more responsive and authentic views being presented in the analysis. All views were recorded and noted. The views of male, female, young and old were included. It was recognised that none of these views should be judged or reported in any biased way, except that a binary majority vs minority coding was used. However, it must be acknowledged that I am not a Warlpiri person. Therefore, I sought to verify the views expressed in the research with the translators (when present) and/or the persons interviewed wherever possible. A genuine attempt was made to ensure an accurate and complete researching of views.

The data was summarised to show the priorities, values, views and misgivings of the Lajamanu Warlpiri community as they expressed them to me. As previously mentioned, much care is needed when planning qualitative method research if accuracy is to be safeguarded, to

acknowledge researcher bias, to accommodate gender, age and avoid selectivity. Every attempt was made to ensure that this did not occur.

The data was predominantly of a qualitative nature, collected using a combination of ethnographic and phenomenon methodologies (Creswell 1998 pp. 38-40). Because of the specific cultural and minority nature of the Warlpiri community it was decided that the Dadirri method would be particularly suitable for this data collection chapter research.

Atkinson argues that Dadirri offers an opportunity for researchers to more fully understand and appreciate how Indigenous people 'reflect on and experience their lifeworld' (Stronach & Adair, 2014 p. 126 citing Langdrige 2008).

Ethic research approval 6212 was obtained from the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Sciences Committee on 18 December 2013 for research of the Warlpiri people. I also obtained permission from the Central Land Council (CLC) and the Lajamanu community to enter Warlpiri people's land and the Lajamanu community. I contacted previously befriended Lajamanu residents, explaining my intention to research their views in relation to the present and future prospects for the Lajamanu community. Having gained acceptance, formal and informal, I arranged for posters notifying of my impending visit to be displayed on the various community notice boards. Qualified, locally based, male and female Warlpiri interpreters were paid to be used on an as-needed basis.

All discussions and interviews were entered into willingly by the participants, and the answers they gave were treated as strictly confidential, with the exceptions of any that interviewees have given written permission to release. Conversations were recorded with the permission of the interviewees or noted post-discussion. Care was taken with recordings, notes, and permission authorisations and these have been lodged securely at Flinders University. Quotes and references were only named with the specific permission of those giving them. Persons that have since died have, according to Warlpiri tradition, been designated the name Kumanji¹³ instead of their usual first name, according to Warlpiri culture.

¹³ Kumanji, the Warlpiri term used to replace the name of someone who has died. The Christian name may not be used after death.

Some individual interviews were held but most responses were obtained through informal individual and group conversations at the Bough, at the Warnayaka Art Centre, in the town square meeting place and throughout the community. It should be noted that questions were generally not formally framed and issued but were introduced as subjects for discussion if the people were interested. In this way I used the Participant Observation research technique. This situation was made simpler because of my previous experience with this community. Some of the conversations were an extension of topics covered when I had been employed in the Community. People were encouraged to talk about their place of birth and early experiences growing up in the bush, outstations, and Lajamanu. Some of the subjects that arose from informal discussion were as follows: the future of Lajamanu; the perceived disadvantages of living in Lajamanu; local leadership capacity and capability; views of government and the bureaucracy; changes, reviews, ideas; and any comments that the interviewees wished to make. Details of suggested subjects for discussion are shown in Appendix D.

The initial Lajamanu research field trip was conducted over a residential period of nearly two months (May–June 2014). A second information and report visit occurred in May 2015. On both occasions, I resided in a room adjoining the wholly Warlpiri-owned Warnayaka Art Centre, which provided ready access to talk informally with the women and men artists, Elders, and others, and to be near to the school and store. This facilitated direct association with Warlpiri residents and located the research away from the non-Indigenous community residences.

The Warnayaka Art Centre cooperative is frequented daily by many of the female artists and a few senior males. Highly regarded Elders, these artists are, with their younger protégés, putting their traditional stories on canvas. My being with them daily at the Art Centre encouraged a more sustained contact and understanding. I would also occasionally drive the artists to the store and to their homes, which helped to develop a relaxed atmosphere that encouraged community residents to more freely communicate their information and views. As mentioned, most of the research information was obtained in the Dadirri informal discussion format rather than through formal interview procedures. Two of the Elders, Geoffrey Barnes and Agnes Donnelly, well known to me from previous visits to Lajamanu,

were employed as interpreters and paid on an as-needed basis. Both interpreters were approved and registered by the Aboriginal Interpretive Service of the Northern Territory.

There were many 'sit-down' informal discussions with a cross-section of the community, particularly on the annual sports weekend, at several funerals, and on holiday occasions. Officially, sixty-two Warlpiri residents were interviewed. Adults, youth, male and female. Interviews were in the main random and as participants became available and volunteered. Several male and female elders were targeted because of my prior knowledge of their standing in the community.

It was anticipated that interviewees would have differing views and ideas according to their sex, age, and experiences. This did occur but to a much lesser extent than expected. The data suggested common agreement on several issues that were of major significance

- that the Lajamanu Warlpiri community residents are determined to maintain their identity;
- Warlpiri believe that they have no control over the real management and decision-making for their community and that they have no power to influence the community's future;
- the Lajamanu community is not heard by government and associated agencies;
- Indigenous people, particularly Warlpiri people, are not recognised as equal and free citizens or as the First Australians (in and outside of the Community) and this is much resented and
- the government does not recognise the Lajamanu community's capacity and capability to manage themselves in the Warlpiri way.

Their conversations and statements were articulately and forcefully argued. These concerns are discussed individually below in 6.1.

6.1 Cultural retention: A united and passionate desire to retain the unique Warlpiri identity, heritage, and culture

The Lajamanu Warlpiri people were unanimous and united in the desire to retain their identity, their family structures, their traditions, their conceptions of their origin, and their

protective kinship structures. This is not new data or finding but was reinforced. Earlier chapters have sought to explain the complexity of kinship and heritage and the depth of meaning that culture has to Warlpiri people. Social bonding, togetherness, and group support mechanisms are integral to the Lajamanu Warlpiri society. Most Warlpiri consider that these societal needs are difficult for non-Indigenous people to understand. However, they believe that if government and the rest of Australians were able to appreciate their need to retain their identity, it should be possible for their differences to be accommodated within the overall Australian national framework. They made it clear that they are amenable to working with governments and their agencies to assist this process.

6.2 Governance and management

6.2.1 Lack of control over the management and decision-making for the Lajamanu community and no power to influence its future

Elders Kirk Herbert, Willy Johnson, and Geoffrey Barnes all adamantly stated that the current community standing committees of health, shire, school, store, Central Land Council (CLC), etc., are considered by the Lajamanu community to be only government concessions, token committees in which Yapa (Warlpiri people) have no real decision-making power. They confirmed that all these committees are controlled by 'white' managers/bureaucrats. In another discussion, Elder Jerry Jangala expressed the wish of the community:

We want to look after our community and doing what we want for our community. Warlpiri are all looking to control our community...not the big things like hospital, health, and school studies, just the ability to be on boards and influence what happens in our community and ensure that it goes the way we want it to.

Kumanji Jigili, an Elder and former chairman of the Lajamanu Council stated that the Lajamanu Warlpiri community have their own very sophisticated governance systems and methods. They have always had the Bough, the senior traditional controlling body, which delegates and empowers others to carry out specific tasks. He maintains that this is the 'Yapa way'. The Bough was overwhelmingly acknowledged in discussions and by the people interviewed to be Warlpiri people's most powerful traditional leadership body. The community confirmed that although the Bough has been weakened by settler/colonial influences, it still exercises considerable control over all the mid-tier Warlpiri management groups, including Kurdiji which is a potentially powerful law and development body. The

Bough also wields background power over the members of other community committees, including the regional, school, health, art, and shire committees. Various community residents also related that specific skin groups, kinship relationships, are designated to monitor traditionally designated areas. Jigili suggested that it is not so much governance training that is required but training and education in how to link and coordinate effectively and productively with government. Willy Johnson supported these thoughts by saying that:

We need government for health (qualified doctors, nurses) and education. These are the two main ones. Even if we had all qualified Yapa [Warlpiri] we still need people to inform us what is going on the outside. But we want to have some control over this process.

Johnson stated that the Lajamanu community realises the challenges it faces but that the community members wish to address them using their own form of self-determination and self-management. He maintains 'that is what we had before the first governments. He and Jigili believe that Yapa should decide what is best for Lajamanu, reiterating that Warlpiri have had their own government 'all along'. However, he also believes that there is a general community realisation that 'things are changing' and this means that the children need to be educated and the adults require training if they are to effectively liaise with government and manage the Lajamanu community in these changing circumstances.

Many in the community expressed disappointment and dissatisfaction that outsiders, predominantly non-Indigenous persons, are employed in positions that they believe should be occupied by local people. Others seemed indifferent and/or hesitant to express any views on this subject. The majority were of the view that local people have enough knowledge and training for many of the jobs. They also believe that there should be more apprenticeships and relevant on-site training. There were no opposing views to these thoughts. However, Jerry Jangala was eager to portray the situation fairly and commented that the Lajamanu community 'gets good Kardiya [non-Warlpiri people] but we also get not so good people ... Warlpiri would like to have a say in who gets chosen'. Jigili insisted that this situation could be overcome through negotiations and that there could and should be a 'win-win situation' for Yapa and Kardiya. Some community members, present at the time, agreed with him.

6.2.2 The Warlpiri people of Lajamanu are ignored by government and associated agencies

In an interview, Steve Jampijinpa Patrick articulated the community's disillusionment: 'They [Warlpiri people] have become defensive because Kardiya [non-Indigenous people] do not listen and are constantly changing law and policies. Kardiya does not give Yapa respect'. Andrew Johnson, Willy's younger brother, demonstrated his knowledge and appreciation of history and of the contemporary Lajamanu situation, stating that:

Vincent Lingiari¹⁴ went to Canberra and Canberra listened at that time. The Whitlam government was keen to listen to Yapa, to support and to take action. I would like to see nowadays the government listen to us on our own ground...listen and fix it for once and for all. But government is always there making a nuisance of itself. Too many rows among themselves...they are more concerned with the people in the big cities. We need government to come down and listen seriously to our issues.

Kevin, chairperson of the local school board, also expressed frustration with government:

Why does government continually change laws? ... different governments like to play politics. They change without asking. Whoever gets voted in think they can do a better job than the last one. But they never ask us. They do not think of local people that live in communities.

At one of the Bough gatherings, the male Elders and at the Art Centre meetings, the female Elders (female Bough) argued strongly that the Lajamanu community must be united if they wish to successfully negotiate with government and to convince it to listen and to understand the people of Lajamanu and their needs. Andrew Johnson made a plea to government:

Do not ignore us ... listen, understand. We want help, assistance. In blackfella way, we do have a code of conduct. ... We do respect ourselves and accept responsibility for who we are and what we can and can't do as Yapa.

Johnson was particularly emotional when saying this, and the rest of the Bough meeting strongly supported his remarks. In assessing the situation, Elder Jerry Jangala stated:

Just as you have professors in your university, I am a professor in my culture. We have learning in our culture, our ceremony and law. If government listened to what we want to do, it would work. We are little people still and there seems to be no room for us according to government.

¹⁴ Lingiari was the revered Gurindji Elder who led the Walk-Off at Wave Hill station in 1966 that resulted in better wages for Aboriginal stockmen and others.

Similarly, at a women's Elders meeting at the Warnayaka Art Centre, it was suggested that colonisation and its influences have resulted in the deterioration of women's status in the Lajamanu community. In their opinion, Kardiya are not interested in Lajamanu, and they have ignored the heritage and culture of the Warlpiri people. They all agreed that the 'Kardiya government and Kardiya people do not listen'.

One particularly upsetting example of the government not listening to or demonstrating understanding was made clear to me during my time at the Art Centre. A younger Warlpiri woman, whose name has been withheld,¹⁵ came into the Arts Centre one day and informed the manager Louisa Erglis that she would not be able to work most of the day because she had to see the social worker at the school. Her two children were only attending school less than half the time. She was very upset because the school was threatening to cut her Centrelink payments. Her total income comprised part unemployment welfare and some allocated arts fund 'top up' money originating from the Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation Project (GMAAAC). She is married but her husband had been suspended from Centrelink payments for three months for failing to attend appointments. Her husband is not viewed favourably within the community because of his problem with alcohol. She has been assaulted by him many times and has been forced to take out restraining orders on occasions. Because of his poor health, he has been granted parole from prison for these offences. The woman was very distressed because her children tell her to 'fuck off' when she tells them to go to school or when she tries to force them to go with her. She is not allowed to hit or punish them because she knows that they will go to the police station and report her. She is under additional stress because she only receives the GMAAAC payment for the number of hours she works at the Art Centre, so attending interviews at the school would cause her to lose income. She considers this to be unfair because she believes that Kardiya are not threatened in this way. She loves her children and wants them to get an education. She is regarded as a good worker by the Arts Centre and I am reliably informed that the Centre would employ her full time if they had enough funding. She has since become an established artist. This woman also fears that social workers may take her children into care, away from Lajamanu, as she has already lost one child in this way. Some of the women

¹⁵ See Appendix A.

Elders at the Warnayaka Art Centre cited her plight as just one example of government failing to listen. They pointed out that there is very little consideration for women in the Lajamanu community, and few jobs made available for them.

At another male Bough meeting, Kumanji James,¹⁶ a former policeman and a voice of reason, said:

Why not [devise] an agreement between Black and Whites [as] they did in other countries? Why are we not recognised by government? Our mob is still fighting for recognition ... Why does government not listen? ... We need to be treated as equals.

6.2.3 The Warlpiri people of Lajamanu are not respected as equal and free citizens or as First Australians

During my 2014 Lajamanu field research visit, I continuously recorded statements from Warlpiri people of all ages and sexes in which they stated that they are not shown respect by governments and that many non-Warlpiri people fail to extend Warlpiri people normal recognition and acceptance as fellow human beings. Kumanji Jigili passionately voiced a plea stating that 'We don't want the world, just justice and a fair deal'. Willy Johnson sought to remind non-Indigenous people that Yapa were the first Australians, and that Kardiya arrived later. He suggested that the 'intruders should offer respect to the original owners. Andrew Johnson took a much firmer line:

We are proud Aboriginal people and government just don't get it ... look at me I am black, and you are Kardiya I have my way and you have yours. We are different ... You will never change my way of living and you will never ever change my colour. We have different family relationships and practices.

Most of the community suggest that Kardiya do not understand the depth of capability or capacity of Yapa governance and government. Geoffrey Barnes stated that 'every way we do things is related to our land, kinships, and law/lore'. Many Warlpiri people explained that they find the fact that Kardiya laws and government policies are always changing challenging as it is not the Yapa way. They see Warlpiri law and culture as well-defined and permanent. Warlpiri people fervently wish to retain these ways and retain their identity and heritage. However, the community recognise that they must make some changes to their traditional lifestyle to accommodate changes; some forced upon them and some occurring because of

¹⁶ Kumanji indicates that the person is now deceased.

the need for goods such as cars, television, store food, welfare, mobile phones, etc. But there is an insistence by the Warlpiri majority that their identity, with its extended family, ceremony and obligations, is of paramount importance to their Warlpiri world. They consider it essential to retain the bulk of Warlpiri culture and their lore to keep their identity intact.

Kumanji Johnson commented 'Canberra is a sacred place for government and for people to meet. People with authority, and we respect that'. He went on to request that reciprocal respect be given by government to the sacred Warlpiri places in Lajamanu (Lajamanu Elders 2004). The *Lajamanu and the law* video was produced by the Elders with the help of the CLC, to express the Lajamanu community's dismay at the intrusion of a white policewoman into a Warlpiri boys' place for initiation ceremonies, a very sacred and defining Warlpiri traditional practice that forbids the presence of women. They complained that in that case there was only a belated minimal apology by the Northern Territory Police authority and no discipline or re-education of the woman officer concerned.

Steve Jampijinpa Patrick believes that the Australian government aims to convert all Indigenous Australians to western ways. He suggests that all government policies are aligned to the Kardiya mainstream economic way of living and not to that of Yapa. By doing so, he believes, the government is failing to seize opportunities to learn from the Warlpiri people and their ways of teaching and learning. He suggests that these ways can add to their Western way of life. Patrick referred to a news report in which Prime Minister Abbott supported a Western Australian government plan to close more than one hundred remote communities and move more than 1,000 people. He noted that Prime Minister Abbott's comment was 'what we can't do is endlessly subsidise lifestyle choices' (Griffiths 2015). Patrick rejects the idea of subsidies and suggests that Warlpiri and other Indigenous cultures should be regarded as assets to be added to the Australian panorama.

Adding to the discussion, Jerry Jangala considered that government has continually failed to appreciate that with mutual respect there is a way for the Lajamanu community and government to progress. He stated that:

Nelson Mandela realised that the only way was to work together. Two systems ... win-win. Same with Martin Luther King having a dream. However, Kardiya have taken our land, raped our women. We are all human beings, equal.

As can be seen, issues over control, listening, and respect were seen by the Lajamanu community to be major concerns. This may seem unusual to governments and others that have been primarily concerned with closing the socio-economic gap that remains between Indigenous communities and mainstream ones. The Lajamanu Warlpiri community do regard education, health, employment, housing, and alcohol misuse as major problems. However, they consider that respect, listening, and increasing community decision-making powers are key to successfully and permanently addressing the socio-economic gap they endure.

Lamon Tasman, a Lajamanu Warlpiri man who is the assistant to the Lajamanu Government Business Manager, offered an additional perspective. He considers that the NTER (the Intervention) has resulted in gains which include the dialysis centre, the new health clinic, the upgrade of the school's facilities, and the new sealed airstrip. Lamon was critical of the slow development of the Lajamanu community, suggesting that it is hindered by being too fractionised, and that groups are too busy arguing among themselves rather than uniting to express their views to government. He believes that the twenty- to thirty-year-olds think differently from the middle-aged, the aged, and the Elders. The younger people are looking for modifications and change, and he believes this to be healthy and needed. However, despite the changes that they would like to occur Lamon believes that most still will wish to retain their strong family/skin/cultural way of life.

Geoffrey Barnes supported the belief that Warlpiri people will continue to fight to retain their identity and kinship heritage but offered a word of warning 'I think Elders are losing respect. Elders need to re-assert authority. It's not a government thing, it is us ... We have our own governing system and we must keep it strong'.

6.2.4 Government does not recognise the Lajamanu community's capacity and capability to manage themselves in the Warlpiri way

The capacity of Warlpiri governance and the future of Lajamanu was another major subject of discussion. Richard Dixon, who was visiting from Robinson near Borroloola and whose wife is Warlpiri from Lajamanu, stated that his father had compared Kardiya and Yapa planning in the following way:

Kardiya planning is for five- to ten-year periods and can be described as planning between here and that hill you see in the distance. Yapa planning is for the other side of the hill. It has always been there, and we know where to go.

It became quite apparent in the many discussions that the Lajamanu community desire some control over the management and governance of their community. This would seem to be a reasonable requirement. Community leaders appreciate that it is necessary for them to convince federal, territory and shire governments that they have the capacity and capability to do so. However, considering past government actions such as the NTER and the amalgamation of the Lajamanu Community Government Council into the Central Desert Regional Council (discussed in previous chapters), it is obvious that government believes that the community are not equipped to manage themselves under the legislature of the Nation state. The Lajamanu community strongly disagree with government on this issue and believe that they have, or can develop, the required skills to manage their community. Andrew Johnson voiced the community attitude: Our development must come from people up, not government down.

We want to stand up and manage ourselves. We want a chance to show government what we can do.

But the Lajamanu community are of the firm belief that governments are unlikely to be easily persuaded. As has been previously mentioned, the Bough is unquestionably the most powerful leadership body within the Lajamanu community. Its control is discreet and, in my view, is largely unrecognised by government. Nevertheless, there is a community consensus that this traditional Warlpiri leadership body currently exerts covert control over mid-tier management bodies, including the Kurdiji, school, health, art, and shire committees.

The Kurdiji Committee was formed around 1998 as a law and justice project funded by the federal government. It has had a rather chequered history and nearly became defunct at once stage. However, it has been reactivated by the 2011 CLC (Lajamanu) Governance Project, a government initiative to 'address the aspirations of the Commonwealth Government for strong community governance in remote service delivery sites' (CLC 2014 p. 86). The CLC (Lajamanu) Governance Project has been fostered and expertly tutored by Robert Chapman under the guidance of the CLC. The Kurdiji committee has recently grown in status and is largely involved in cultural education, resolving local conflict and preventing violence and engendering cooperation between kinship groups. CLC and Chapman are seen to be assisting the Kurdiji with governance training and in techniques to liaise with government (CLC 2014;

Hunt 2013a). The community consider Kurdiji to be a potentially important community governance authority:

Kurdiji is seen by Aboriginal people as beginning to address elements of the governance vacuum ... of disempowerment as a consequence of the combination of the NTER and the abolition of Community Councils as part of the Shire reform process (CLC 2014 p. 92).

Geoffrey Barnes stated that the Lajamanu residents 'want our community to be as we decide, that is why we have Kurdiji'. He explains that 'it is composed of sixteen people both sides of kinship', with equal male and female representation. However, it may be that Warlpiri people are still a little wary of the government influence on Kurdiji because of the suspicion of government influence and perhaps interference. Nevertheless, Kurdiji, because of its cultural origins, would seem to be potentially a major asset.

Senior Elder Jerry Jangala voiced his support for Kurdiji and stated his views as to how it can assist the Lajamanu community to better use the money that is available:

We have used Kurdiji to solve problems with school, store, etc. But government is worried that monies will be wasted ... is there a way to use money properly for community ... have the Elders the power to do this? We are the ones that are not using the monies the right way. Yapa are not thinking about the future. Yapa should find a way to put GMAAAC [Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation], royalty monies, and other money into community, not all, but some of it. We must convince the families to use it properly. Kurdiji could help ... get big money and split four ways, east-west-north-south [relating to kinship groups]. We could use some money to educate the kids at school and other people who do not know. That money could also be solely allocated to do those functions associated with ceremony and sacred sites. This could be one pool or four pools¹⁷. Save arguments ... [A bit like ward accounting¹⁸]. We don't like to hear from government that we can't control our community, and our own land. We should be able to work together. Government should work our way too. We do not want to boss them. They should not boss us. Yapa has its own way of governing its people ... different to Kardiya. Different cultures have different ideas ... need to put together ... to work together.

It was overwhelmingly confirmed by the community that the Bough is the principal policy and decision-making body and Kurdiji is one of its vehicles for management and implementation. There were no negative comments made about the Kurdiji committee. Steve Jampinjinpa

¹⁷ As mentioned in Chapter Four there are four Warlpiri kinship groups.

¹⁸ Ward accounting in local government means that the funds in budget estimates are divided and distributed for each ward rather than the for the overall council area.

Patrick supports the retention of a traditional framework and made an interesting suggestion that any strengthening of this framework would perhaps encourage development.

Building on Ngurra-kurlu principles, as described in Chapter Four, Jampinjinpa Patrick suggests that all physical facilities; the school, the shire office, the dialysis and health centres, the library, etc. should be allocated skin (kinship) names, so that people of that skin group would become the caretakers, responsible for the effective functioning of that facility. As has been mentioned, in Warlpiri practice, each skin group has a reciprocating opposite group that becomes the auditor of that group. This, he argues, would ensure that all skin groups are welcomed into each facility and that there would be no bias or favouritism. Patrick suggests that this would engender a spirit of community ownership of schools and other facilities, which would result in a greater acceptance. This is an interesting insight into the very different thinking of Warlpiri from that of government.

But while governance and the right to determine their own future was the dominant topic of concern within the Lajamanu community, they voiced many other concerns, including education, employment and training, law, health, alcohol/drug control, economic development, the Warnayaka Art Centre, housing and philosophy. These issues were also regarded as being important but were considered secondary to the Lajamanu community being allowed to determine their future in their own way. These are discussed in some detail below.

6.3 Employment and Training

There was a general community consensus that there were insufficient jobs and not enough relevant training in Lajamanu. Neil Cooke, an Elder who trained as a plumber but now works in the Art Centre, stated that the 'Lajamanu mob should have more 'blackfellas' working and less 'whitefellas'. He cited several Warlpiri community members who have skills in plumbing, bricklaying, painting, operating plant and machinery and labouring. Most consider that the previously functioning CDEP had been a good concept, but that it did not offer real or relevant training. They maintain that the CDEP training was usually in grass cutting, post hole digging and picking up rubbish, and were essentially only basic menial jobs. However, they did allow that some opportunities were given to a few for trade training. The community express the

hope that the Remote Jobs and Community Program (RJCP) will offer more opportunities. One noteworthy comment came from Geoffrey Barnes:

When W [Willy Johnson] was Chairman of council we had over one hundred on CDEP. Community were happy, proud, getting up in morning and going to work. Now hard to get jobs.

ATSIC and the CDEP program were generally accepted by the Lajamanu community. However, as Jerry Jangala commented, the CDEP was not fully appreciated at the time. However, in retrospect, Neil Cooke stated that in the period of ATSIC and CDEP:

We had more power, were stronger ...the community had more say. Yapa were trained as tradesmen but [after ATSIC] we were never given opportunity for real work...it was bullshit...we were just used to clean up the town, rubbish, etc.

Neil's complaint was supported at a male Bough meeting and by many other community voices. A meeting of women Elders also indicated their retrospective approval of CDEP and the Batchelor College training schemes. In recent years, previously trained Warlpiri teachers, plumbers, carpenters, and mechanics have been required to retrain and to requalify to meet the newer Australian standards. This has resulted in resentment and rejection. Sharron Anderson stated that some teacher assistants, including her, were at the school for up ten years as casuals, but none were made permanent employees. However, non-Indigenous teachers were quickly made permanent and given benefits. The community was also aggrieved that Warlpiri employees are generally not paid on the same scale or treated to the same conditions as non-Indigenous employees. One pertinent comment arose at the Bough men's meeting:

We have no power to do anything. The government says you stay down, stay down. In the past, we had Aboriginal police aides and they are now gone. Now, we do not have police aides but some in other communities. How are we going to look after our community without a police aide, or a parole officer?

Previously, the Northern Territory Government Corrections Department stationed an Indigenous Warlpiri Parole Officer at Lajamanu to facilitate and encourage parolees' rehabilitation. It is believed that this scheme still exists but that there have been few applicants for the position because of kinship difficulties. It seems that the employment of a non-Warlpiri Indigenous person has not been considered.

In a three-way discussion, Kirk Herbert complained that:

Ever since the Shire has been here, there has been no long-term employment ... even CDEP, only temporary training. What we need are employers to give training to upgrade skills and get national qualification ... professionals, technical. This has never happened in this community ... only token ... no real management or planning for this. Government are not giving Yapa the motivation to do the training which would lead to real management. Sorry business [funerals and grieving periods] can be managed and will be managed. Nothing happens ... we need change to happen in this generation.

When asked, Kirk replied that if he gained a decent responsible job, he and others would and could overcome the pressures of the Warlpiri kinship system and work regularly on five days a week regime. He maintained that sorry-business and ceremony could be managed. 'Sorry-business' refers to funeral and traditional grieving requirements. 'Ceremony' refers to obligatory duties that must be carried out by designated people during traditional cultural rituals. Both are demanded within Warlpiri culture. Elder Jerry Jangala explained that government needs to understand that Yapa want to work but have to consider cultural responsibilities and needs because 'if they do not obey, they will get into trouble...[and] be considered to have become Kardiya in their ways'. Sharron Anderson commented on the Australian Aboriginal leader and former National President of the Australian Labor Party, Warren Nyunggai Mundine's statement that Indigenous Australians should forgo culture and sorry-business and work five days a week (Mundine 2014). She insists that he is another urban Aborigine who has lost his culture.

Andrew Johnson summed up the community view of the present situation:

The problem here is that our people get contract employment for say six months then when work finishes, we have to wait until the next contract comes ... maybe ten years. There is no permanent or continual employment even when you have certificates. But in the days of CDEP you signed up and got steady employment and steady income. For ten to twenty years, it worked. Now the white card is only good when contracts are available.

6.3.1 Economic development and the Warnayaka Art Centre

The Warnayaka Art Centre is the most successful business enterprise in Lajamanu. This Centre, the Wulain Outstation Resource Centre, and the Lajamanu Community Store are the only three potentially viable businesses. The Warnayaka Art Centre is well supported by the community, particularly by the women Elders who commented as a group that 'the Warnayaka Art Centre is good because we control it. It brings in money, employs people'. This

art business operates in a very cooperative and non-competitive manner for its artists. Elder Lily Nungaryai Hargreaves is the premier artist in Lajamanu. Her paintings earn a lot of money, most of which goes to the community. She is over eighty years old and she paints for at least four hours every day.

The Wulain Outstation Resource Centre was set up to maintain and provide physical, environmental, and financial support services for the many small outstations surrounding Lajamanu. It continues to do this but has diversified into contract road maintenance work in recent years. It also forayed into ranger management, but this has now been largely taken over by the CLC (Central Land Council). It employs a few Warlpiri machine operators but has a non-Indigenous manager whose wife handles the administration and finances. The Warlpiri community has divided views of this establishment. In past years, it was seen to be aligned with one kinship faction with the local council being more aligned with the remaining factions.

The Lajamanu Store has a reputation in the Northern Territory for being one of the best healthy food community supply outlets. It is community owned, but its management and administration are non-Warlpiri. Until recently there has been a preference to employ non-Indigenous staff, with the manager advising that the Lajamanu committee had instructed him that they preferred efficient, honest service without kinship favouritism. Discussions with Elders and some committee members suggest that they disagree with the manager's statement. Others who do not wish to be named have stated that they wish to know what the manager and his wife are paid for their services and whether this can be changed. Nonetheless, the community are appreciative of the food quality, the mechanical services, and the service station outlet. They indicate that there are few opportunities for training and employment in this area. The store management has changed since my visit in 2014.

6.4 Education

Both the women and men of the Lajamanu community regard education as being necessary in ensuring a future for Lajamanu. Several people strongly favoured a return to bilingual education at the Lajamanu School. Agnes Donnelly voiced the thoughts of many of the women:

School was better when bilingual. There was more Yapa working, the kids learned language and culture. More people went on to college. Now not many. Before, we had a big mob of kids going in bus to Alice Springs. Before, we taught each other. Kardiya appreciated Yapa culture and vice versa. Now all the teachers at school are Kardiya, not Yapa.

Kumanji Jigili also stated that the community was very much in favour of English–Warlpiri bilingual schooling. He argued that local people are sufficiently capable of teaching the Warlpiri language but in the recent past those few assistants who were employed were only permitted to listen and to assist the children. He and others agreed that learning English is most important for the children’s future, but that Warlpiri learning is essential for their identity. Jerry Jangala pointed out that ‘it is not fair all Yapa have to learn only English...it should be Warlpiri first and English next. I am not happy when government say you can’t learn your language’.

Most agreed that the teaching quality would be improved by employing better trained and more understanding Kardiya teachers who could be assisted by Warlpiri support teachers. One of the women Elders commented that currently the ‘kids learn more from TV’. They agreed that teacher quality and curriculum should be the same as in places such as Katherine, but that it must be appreciated that English is the children’s second language. Geoffrey Barnes had support when he mentioned truancy officers:

Truancy Officers have had an impact already...more kids going to school ...Our kids need a good education (IT, technology) so they can fight fire with fire. What bothers me is that our people must change. As soon as they go through ceremony, they say I am a man now and so I don't need to go to school. It was stronger in my time.

From 2011, amendments to the Northern Territory Education Act have given greater powers to Truancy Officers to operate in and work closely with schools in ‘growth towns’ to target students who are not attending. Failure to comply can result in a substantial fine.

Sharon Anderson reminisced about the ‘good days’ when she and Steve Jampijinpa Patrick were teachers at the Lajamanu School. Agnes Donnelly talked about how ‘before, we went and taught dancing and culture in the morning but not now’.

6.5 Health

There were remarkably few comments about health. It appears that the community believes that it has more ownership of this service than it has of others. Possibly this is because it is nominally an Indigenous service provider, and even though it has a non-Indigenous CEO, a non-Indigenous doctor, and several non-Indigenous nursing staff, it is an acknowledged Aboriginal-owned organisation. When asked, the community residents usually commented favourably on the Katherine West Health Service. There were a few complaints about the lack of non-Indigenous employees' cultural appreciation, and on the lack of training and employment of Warlpiri assistants. One comment that met with general agreement came from Geoffrey Barnes:

I like Katherine West Health service because government gives money to their Board ... sometimes tied, sometimes untied. Before when it was untied, we could use it for what we believed priority. But now there are more government ties with more time frames.

Barnes explained that he saw potential danger because in recent years the government tightening of control and determination of grant monies to Katherine West health services had weakened community powers of control and determination of that organisation.

6.6 Alcohol and drug control

The community indicated concern over the out-of-control use of alcohol by many of the Lajamanu residents, particularly over alcohol-related vehicle accidents. The township has been declared a 'dry zone' but there is regular drinking at the town boundaries, and alcohol is regularly smuggled into the town. The Elders, particularly the women, expressed great concern over the excessive consumption of alcohol because of the violence and irrational behaviour that results from it. This concern was clearly demonstrated at a Liquor Commission Meeting, convened in May 2014, at the request of the Lajamanu community. Three members of the Commission met with the Lajamanu community in the Library to discuss a formal request to limit the sale of take-away beer from Top Springs Hotel, a request that had been made by the Kurdiji committee in 2012. Located 300 kilometres away, the Top Springs Hotel is the closest alcohol outlet for Lajamanu. Norbert Patrick, the Shire President, representing Kurdiji, requested that liquor sales be limited to three cases of normal or light alcoholic content beer, per car, per day, with the car registration and number of occupants in the car to

be recorded. Kumanji Jigili spoke eloquently and convincingly in favour of this, stating that too many young people had died, that there was no intention to close the Top Springs Hotel but merely a community wish to limit the amount of take-away beer. Jerry Jangala, Elizabeth Ross, and others strongly supported this proposition. Next, Geoffrey Mathews was in favour of leaving the licence as is, suggesting that the proprietors of the Top Springs Hotel had always supported

Lajamanu and surrounding towns, and that, if the licence was limited, more people would go to and from Katherine, approximately 600 kilometres away, and there would be more likelihood of vehicle accidents.

Mike Doolan, a younger Lajamanu resident, eloquently stated that the young and old should realise that it is their responsibility to protect themselves and others in controlling their alcohol intake. He considered that limiting alcohol sales would achieve little. A suggestion that perhaps a hotel serving food and light beer be established in Lajamanu was rejected by nearly everyone. In discussing the problem, Steve Jampijinpa Patrick stated that 'alcohol is a huge problem in maintaining culture'. He agreed that the idea of a hotel like the Kalkarindji Hotel concept,¹⁹ 'initially sounds good but when ceremony is on, too many people want to stay drinking'. He suggested that a liquor outlet in Lajamanu is not the answer for Yapa. A notable point in all these arguments was the concern for the community and the need for family to stay strong in their culture and to try to avoid losing any more loved ones.

The subject was discussed again in a later discussion, where Elders Kirk Herbert, Willy Johnson and Geoffrey Barnes all indicated their view that control over the consumption of alcohol and gunja (marijuana) is the responsibility of the Lajamanu community. However, the majority were of the view that the limited sale of beer at the hotel would assist with this. The tribunal eventually agreed to do this.

6.7 Housing

Quite surprisingly, housing accommodation and repairs were not considered to be as high a priority as many of the other issues. That is not to say that people were not concerned about

¹⁹ The Gurindji community have a hotel at Kalkarindji that serves only limited quantities of light beer each day to each customer. The drinking area is fenced in and entry is only permitted to residents who have not infringed behaviourally. (See the Glossary.)

the number, current state, and ongoing maintenance of houses, but the majority of those who expressed issues of concern considered other things to have a higher priority. Nevertheless, all stated that housing was substandard and maintenance extremely poor and inefficiently managed.

There was consensus that there had been additional housing supplied through the Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development Program (SEED), but not nearly enough to provide adequate housing for all. Houses continued to be overcrowded. Maintenance of houses was also judged by the majority to have dramatically deteriorated since the Shire Council, now the Central Desert Regional Council, had taken over. Agnes Donnelly complained:

I went down to Shire, [which contracts as a housing agency for the Northern Territory government] and submitted a form request for a stove ... three years and nothing. So, in the end I bought one myself from town. They promise but nothing happens.

Others complained that the rents were too high, considering most houses were 'forty to fifty years old, never painted, and are poorly maintained. Kumanji James stated 'We need locals so that things can be fixed quickly. Too many people must share. We have people that can do this or train to do this with CDEP and/or proper wages.' Willy Johnson agreed and maintains that:

Housing should not be a problem. A long time ago we had a housing association. All Yapa fixed houses and it could happen again if government gave us the responsibility back. If they gave us the funding instead of bringing Kardiya in, we can train our own carpenters, plumbers. We don't need outsiders. They should realise that we are in the bush ... not everyone needs to be qualified. We have a couple of expert electricians. Before, we made our own mud bricks. We can do that kind of thing. Give us the power back and we will do it.

Elizabeth Ross agreed that housing repairs should be undertaken by local tradesmen from Lajamanu rather than Alice Springs, Katherine, or Darwin: 'We have empty houses not allocated because of keeping for incoming tradesmen from Alice, Katherine...we need people here. Before we had Yapa housing manager, plumbers, but lost him'. There was previously a manager employed by the Lajamanu Community Council, but the position was abolished by the Shire.

Kumanji Jigili offered an interesting opinion; he believed that Yapa must change their skin group/family house sharing arrangements so that they are more in accord with mainstream, 'so that food can be retained for each family'. Currently, each skin group is required to share and support, financially and physically, every member of that group when called upon. Food and accommodation are available to all members, which eliminates the need or possibility of individual budgeting and weekly meal planning. Jigili also expressed interest in redesigning houses to coincide with the traditional Warlpiri lifestyle, and suggested that perhaps prefabricated housing would be cheaper.

Kirk Herbert, Willy Johnson, and Geoffrey Barnes surprisingly said that they would like to own their own house. Generally, house ownership was not regarded as a priority.

As previously mentioned, the most surprising outcome of this research was that housing supply and maintenance are not considered to be one of the major problems to the Lajamanu community. This is surprising because it is one of the major concerns of government, and often referred to in any *Closing the Gap* policy. This anomaly is perhaps best explained by Melinda Hinkson:

in the present, houses and camps are rarely distinct options and more likely coexist and permeate each other—people erect camps in the vicinity of houses. They sleep, cook and eat outside houses, using rooms designed as bedrooms predominantly for storage and safekeeping, while living areas are given over to accommodating large numbers of sleepers with mattresses laid out in rows. People move between and abandon houses in favour of temporary camps, especially in the wake of the death of a resident, but also for myriad other reasons (2014, p. 77).

6.8 Law

Many Warlpiri people, young, old, male and female said that they are confused by and distrustful of Australian law, finding it to be at variance with traditional Warlpiri law (lore). The overwhelming majority stated that they wish to support Warlpiri law because, as they say, 'it has always been there, and it does not change'. They see Australian law as confusing and constantly being changed. They also consider Australian law to have been formed with little or no understanding of Indigenous traditions and culture. Nevertheless, the Lajamanu community accept that Australian law is here to stay and are somewhat grudgingly prepared to abide by it. Neil Cooke explained the reason that Warlpiri appreciate their traditional law:

Yapa law is unchanging. It is not like Kardiya law. Our law is about shame, not killing and maiming. The ritual spearing and any minor physical punishment are about shame, not about injuring or killing.

Others were quick to confirm that shame, not punishment forms the greater part of Warlpiri law. I was able to witness an example of how Warlpiri law is based on the principle of shaming rather than that of incarceration or of real physical punishment. On 23 May 2014, I was invited to go to the town park, opposite the store, to see the ritual punishment of four or five boys who were approximately thirteen to fourteen years of age. These boys had been caught on the previous evening breaking into the school. In traditional fashion, the uncles and some other family members had the responsibility of giving their wards a public disciplinary shaming. This punishment consisted of bringing the boys, one by one, in front of most of the gathered Lajamanu community and delivering a couple of firm but not injuring, smacks to their bodies. No child was physically injured. However, each of the guilty boys was shamed in front of their Lajamanu community. I was reliably told that the likelihood of them reoffending, was unlikely.

I also witnessed a similar incident some years before when two boys and a young girl were caught petrol sniffing. The Elders arranged for them to be immediately transported to Mount Theo Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre in Warlpiri country some 800 kilometres away. There they were subjected to six weeks of living off country in the traditional cultural ways. They have not returned to 'petrol sniffing'.

Willy Johnson further commented that ritual spearing is a better alternative to prison maintaining that it is a way to resolve problems rather than continuing them. There is no killing or maiming only temporary physical impairment, but the effects of shaming are permanent. He stated that killing was frowned on because it only causes more problems and payback. Willy opined that Warlpiri law had also instilled discipline into the young. The prohibition of these practices makes it more difficult to impart. He gave a personal illustration of this:

I did not want to go to school. My father hit me with a big nulla to make me go to school. He wanted me to get educated. He knew that one day I would be a strong leader. And I did learn discipline from him. My age group were all taught discipline, and these are the ones that you see at work and working hard. But nowadays people from forty down go to town, run amok, etc. But our age group were taught discipline.

6.9 Local Government

Kumanji James, Kumanji Jigili, Kumanji Johnson and Willy (W) Johnson, all past Lajamanu council Presidents all lamented the amalgamation of the Lajamanu Council into the Central Desert Shire (now Regional Council) and the passing of the local Lajamanu Council. The general view was that although each recognised that the Lajamanu Council was far from perfect it had provided the Lajamanu residents with some limited opportunity for input into the governing of their community. The community owned and had some control over assets and equipment. Both have now been absorbed into the larger body of the Regional Council. The equipment has, in the main, been relocated from Lajamanu and the assets are now controlled from the central headquarters in Alice Springs.

Willy Johnson observed that while the previous local government council had limited local decision-making with its bureaucratic and financial governmental control it was local and did permit some self-governing decision-making with potential to develop it further. He also wished to remind everyone that the Lajamanu council had operated effectively in its formative years with a capable Warlpiri CEO.

The CDEP scheme was mentioned positively by many as being of value when it was under the auspices of the Lajamanu Council. No one was supportive of the Regional Council.

6.10 Philosophy

Philosophical views and concepts have been discussed in some depth in Chapter 5. However, several comments from discussions held in Lajamanu are appropriate to mention here. Willy Johnson commented on Steve Jampinjinpa Patrick's Ngurra-kurlu plan:

Yes, that's the way we want to teach our mob. He should be here teaching our mob. Him [Patrick] and Elders working together. Yes, he is doing the right thing in showing Kardiya and making them listen. Culture, belonging.

The Independent Evaluation of the Central Land Council's Community Development and Governance Programme (2014) also reported that the Warlpiri people of Lajamanu prepared to relate with the western world but intent on retaining their culture while attempting to do this. Kurdiji appears to be their chosen avenue, in that:

People of all ages see Kurdiji as an important way of doing things in a strong yapa way. Everyone we spoke to, including young people, knew about Kurdiji, and what it did to keep traditional law and culture strong, as well as to address community problems (CLC 2014 p.89).

Both Ngurra-kurlu and Kurdiji are concepts that relate in many ways to the general philosophical thought expressed in chapter Five.

6.11 Summary

The views of the Lajamanu Warlpiri people have been researched as deeply and honestly as was possible given the limited funding and time restraints. Dadirri listening and hearing methodology was used in a qualitative manner. The analysis came from collation of the various views and in providing quotes when considered to be positively contributing to the understanding of the Lajamanu community. Notably, quotes were often, but not exclusively, obtained from the community Elders. This was to be expected because the community seemed to expect them to be the spokes-people. However, every effort was made to check the veracity of statements when they were attributed to be the majority community views. Traditionally the Elders, male and female are the spokespeople, and this is the reason that many of the quotes in this chapter come from them. However, as mentioned earlier, young, old, male, female, elders and non-elders were researched in interview and discussion and analysis confirms that the views expressed in the quotes are representative of the Lajamanu community.

Views and comments have been presented without comment or critiques to present an accurate as is possible compilation of how the people of the Lajamanu community view the present situation and what they would wish for the future. Their views are summarised as:

- Warlpiri people of Lajamanu are intent on retaining their cultural heritage and their kinship attachments. Their belief in community support and community protection was convincingly argued and demonstrated.
- Warlpiri want the power to have a say in the day to day management of their community, and in determining how and what development occurs. They wish to be respected and socially accepted as a unique and valued Indigenous culture in the

Australian national tapestry. However, they believe that the government is not genuinely consulting and not listening.

- They appreciate the need for better education and learning and realise that they must work harder if they wish to relate effectively with government, business, and the rest of the world. But they would be more supportive if the education was bi-lingual.
- The Lajamanu community prize social attachments far more highly than material possessions. Ownership, financial wealth, and business acumen do not appear to be considered a big a part of their agenda in comparison to that of mainstream social-economic thinking. However, they do realise the need for a cash economy and the need of employment to earn those items that they require, such things as food, vehicles, musical instruments, etc., even though these things will usually be shared within the kinship group.
- They realise that housing, preventative health, local government, the alcohol and drug problems are important issues to be urgently addressed. Notwithstanding this, they wish to address them in their own way, choosing for themselves when to seek government assistance and expertise.
- There was an majority view that government will need to provide ongoing finance and support.

These research findings provide additional information and perhaps a more comprehensive understanding of this community's views. This research in many cases reinforces and adds new aspects to the previous research views and arguments that are documented later in the Literature Review. These additions may assist government and the Warlpiri community leaders to consider their present positions, rethink and renew policies, practices and efforts in regard to Lajamanu.

CHAPTER 7

RESEARCHING NON-WARLPIRI LAJAMANU RESIDENTS' AND EX-RESIDENTS' VIEWS

This chapter turns its attention to the views of those who work with the Lajamanu Warlpiri community, the non-Indigenous people who live in the community and have first-hand experience of the needs, problems, and the frustrations of the people and of government.²⁰ These non-Warlpiri residents are current or previous employees of the local, Territory, or Federal government, of associated agencies, or of the few Warlpiri community organisations. Sanders (2006 p.2-3) notes that:

the role of whitefella institutional bosses in Pintupi settlements, who are the primary local manifestation of government and who, as Folds notes, are 'held accountable on both sides' of this relationship between Pintupi and the state (Folds 2001: 41).

This also holds true for Lajamanu. Because of their close contact and interaction with the community, they have been given a unique opportunity to be more informed and understanding of the Warlpiri people, and of the effectiveness of government and agency policy and practice. The views expressed by these people are their own and not necessarily those of the government or agencies that employ them, unless specifically stated. They were asked to give their views on matters that relate to the Lajamanu community, its future, and its relationships with government and the rest of Australians. Appendix E lists a few examples of the subject questions. Their views are valuable because they add another dimension, a grass-roots appreciation of the Lajamanu Warlpiri community. They have a unique opportunity to observe the interface between Warlpiri and government/commercial service providers.

Closeness to a community does not ensure accuracy, but it does produce experienced longer-term observations rather than casual interactions and theoretical views. It has been said that 'When professionalism is taught, it should be related to the different cultures and social contracts, respecting local customs and values' (Cruess, Cruess & Steinert 2010 p. 357). I suggest that cultural understanding and an appreciation of difference are more likely to occur when one is resident and engaged within a community.

²⁰ Please refer to Appendix B for the details and descriptions of interviewees quoted in this chapter. For the reader's convenience, the interviewees are ordered alphabetically.

he various views that have been elicited from non-Warlpiri residents were tempered in the knowledge that they have come from different cultural origins to that of the Warlpiri people. Most of their views can reasonably be considered to have a Western economic contextual flavour, which relates to their non-Indigenous heritage (Chapter 1). Interviewees were usually expected to base their views in relation to that area in which they were employed, health, local government, employment, store, school, etc. But this did not preclude them from general views that could be expected to be obtained from general interaction with the community.

Interviews were generally more formally structured than those with the Warlpiri community, and were usually limited to approximately one hour. It should be noted that there are limited numbers of non-Warlpiri people (past and present) that reside in Lajamanu. Most are employed by government or agencies usually in managerial positions. Most, but not all, were male. Attempts were made to interview all rather than to select. However, some informal discussions were held with persons with whom I had previous acquaintance.

Views were obtained through a research methodology that was predominantly qualitative in nature, using a combination of phenomenology and ethnographic methods (Creswell 1998, pp. 38-40). Structured interview questions varied. Each interview was structured to obtain the interviewee's personal views on the current and future state of affairs; that is, the circumstances of the Lajamanu community in relation to her/his sphere of employment.

For simplicity, the resultant views have been documented loosely in headings that indicate non-Warlpiri individuals' views on competence, management and governance, and following this with issues involving the socio-economic closing of the gap. There was a much greater variation of views by this group in most areas of discussion. The views expressed by the Lajamanu Warlpiri community were more united. However, there was significant consensus by both parties about management policies and practices of the three tiers of government—Federal, Territory and Shire.

7.1 Cultural retention

A previous Warnayaka Art Centre Manager, Nic Marsham believes that the Lajamanu Warlpiri people have accepted the dominance of mainstream-settler Australia, and want to be associated with it, but still wish to retain and maintain their own separate and unique identity. She says that in her experience, 'They [Warlpiri] don't allow whites in. It is selective. They only let you think you are part of the community, but you are not really accepted'. Marsham's comment reminded me of a conversation I had with the Chairperson of the Warrawi Community Council on Goulburn Island. The discussion involved a rather wayward and rebellious non-Indigenous resident who had been initiated into the Warrawi community and had married a Warrawi girl. The Chairperson stated that 'he thinks he is one with us, but the truth is he may have got in the front door, but he will never get into the bedroom.' The rationalisation of this seems to be that Warrawi people (and by cultural association Warlpiri people) are passionately determined to retain and protect their identity and prevent it from being diluted or contaminated. They wish to be socially accepted as a part of the Australian tapestry but do not wish to become a part of mainstream culture if it means losing their own.

However, although Nic Marsham believes that cultural identity is paramount to the Lajamanu community she considers that in some circumstances the traditional kinship biases can be ignored or over-ridden by the community. Nic observed that, particularly with the women Elders, the betterment of the community can take priority over kinship and personal betterment. She suggests that this was:

most noticed when we had obtained GMAAAC [Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation] money to buy 'schoolgirl' art. One of the conditions was that the schoolgirls could only come to the Art Centre if they attended school and kept a diary. The old women loved this because it brought the kids in and while they were painting, they could teach them cultural stories, and songs. Kinships were largely ignored. They viewed this as far more important than running an art business and obtaining money for the artists.

7.2 Governance and management

Most non-Warlpiri residents agree with the Central Desert Regional Council's Lajamanu Services Manager Tim Parslow's comment: 'They [Warlpiri] want to be what and who they

are. Not pandered to by government. Currently, there is a learned inability over the years created by changing government policies.’

The Warnayaka Art Centre manager Louisa Erglis agrees with Parslow and maintains that ‘the over-governance by Kardiya government is insane’. She suggests that the Warlpiri community is not given information, stating that ‘government departments think it is our [government] information and we are not giving it to you’. She cites the Lajamanu Health Clinic and the School as examples of this thinking.

The previous Art Centre manager, Monicka (Nic) Marsham emphasises her frustration:

You have government, bureaucrats, then you have the community and nothing in between ... you have the seagulls²¹ that have never been into the community. The result is distrust because of a total failure to communicate. An example is the intervention card with Warlpiri fearing that their money was gone. However, when they found that it prevented scamming, they liked it.

She further considers it vital that government policy and information-sharing meetings should always employ Warlpiri translators or that they be conducted in the Warlpiri language. She states that ‘Yapa people have trouble with our accents’, and therefore care should be taken to prevent uninformed decisions being made from a lack of understanding and/or a lack of being fully explained.

Kerry Marsham, a previous housing manager in Lajamanu, expresses the generally accepted view of the non-Warlpiri residents that:

Governments have not consulted properly with community...it is easier to find a political remedy rather than one that respects culture. Governments change according to election...constant change. Need to come up with a consultation and strategy experience...need to be a long term...generation thing.

Jim Butler, the Lajamanu Store manager, cites the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) as a good example of the deficient approach used in applying government policy. He states that although it may have been introduced with good intent, it was poorly researched, impracticable and guaranteed to fail:

²¹ The term ‘seagulls’ is used to describe government (and agency) officers: they fly in, crap on you, and then fly out.

At the start, they [the army] arrived in bulk in troop carriers,²² and with men to fix the problems. After six months, they all left because they realised it was more difficult than they expected and that it would take years. So, they disappeared.

There was consensus by those interviewed that government burdens its officers and employees with excessive reporting, meetings, and statistical and accountability requirements, giving little focus to practical output or resolution of projects. They see a need for government to be more transparent, to avoid duplication, to improve coordination, and to foster genuine cooperation. The general opinion was that government needs to clarify its policies so that the current overlaps and duplication can be minimised. Many non-Warlpiri residents also indicated that they would like more time to mix more freely with the community to improve trust and understanding between them.

When asked if governments (federal, Territory and local) appeared to have learnt from past practices, it was generally conceded that they have not. It was further recognized that until governments move away from politically based, non-community-specific policies, that positive change and sustainability will not occur in remote communities. Many newly formed policies are considered to have been constructed to impress voters of the incoming government's intention to rectify the previous government's mistakes and failures. Most policies originate from Canberra or Darwin, or Alice Springs with little genuine consultation with the community or the resident officers. Few policies are retained for any length of time without change. Most people interviewed suggested that new policies need to be thoroughly considered, better-researched, and pre-trialled before implementation, and to be given time to be evaluated properly. And the overwhelming majority of those interviewed believed that Indigenous people should be more genuinely consulted for input and consideration prior to any new policy implementation. However, it was also agreed that government is unlikely to accept radical change because the Indigenous political area is not a priority agenda in federal politics. Erglis warns that:

If government policies of integration and forcing people into towns continue, then the problems will be dramatically compounded. People will be unhappy in town. The youth will want to go to town. In future, any town in the Northern Territory won't be worth living in for anyone, because resentment for white people is building. Adults are telling me this. So, what are they telling their kids?

²² 'Troop carriers' refer to Toyota four-wheel drive vehicles designed to carry about eight people.

Other interviewees suggested that governments, politicians, and bureaucrats sometimes have agendas that serve their own purpose rather than that of which the intended policies. One person who wished to remain anonymous²³ who has had considerable management experience in Lajamanu and other communities asserted that 'It's all about self-glorification, sometimes power, sometimes look what I have done'. Another maintains that the skill level of public servants is low.

Nic Marsham disagrees with the government's view that the leaders of the Lajamanu Warlpiri community need to be taught governance and capacity building. She argues that the community have this knowledge already, and that they just need instruction in how to liaise and negotiate in the Western format. Marsham maintains that Warlpiri culture is such that matters are always decided by consensus and concedes that the traditional consensus mode is incompatible with and too time-consuming for government. She explains that:

Warlpiri management structures are different. We [mainstream] are used to a tiered system, from the top working down. Their [Warlpiri] management systems are more of a flat system. There is no CEO, no Board at the top, senior staff tiering down to a junior staff. Rather the Warlpiri community have a flat system where all the groups balance out so an owner group and then a checker group, must work together on a management level. Most Kardiya organisations could not afford to pay for the number of managers required in the western system.

As explained in Chapter 4, the Warlpiri kinship or 'skin' system is the controlling influence in the flat system that Nic Marsham refers to. Each skin group has been designated a task or role, and another skin group is then assigned to oversee the performance of the first group (Patrick et al. 2008). The system thus arranges for each kinship group to have certain responsibilities in designated areas and a checking role in other designated areas. This would seem to be a well-planned arrangement that attempts to be fair and equitable to all parties.

Jim Butler has varying point of view. He states that although Warlpiri have a good local governance system, they have great difficulty in adapting it to Australian mainstream ways. He considered that the Lajamanu community will not be capable of managing things by themselves for a 'long, long time'. He suggests that the need for consensus, which is an integral part of the Warlpiri culture, is not conducive to Western management and leadership models. Butler is of the firm belief that the Warlpiri community appreciates these differences

²³ The person wished to be unnamed but is verifiable.

and is prepared to accept the guidance and supervision of Kardiya. He cites an example of how kinship obligations impede Lajamanu Warlpiri people's ability to adapt to the Western system of business:

For instance, in the checkout [cash register] we can place a good Yapa girl operator, suitably trained, on the front checkout and she will perform well ... until her family fronts, then we subtly say to her 'would you like us to take over for a while?' and she is genuinely relieved because this allows her to avoid family pressure to give free goods and to scam [cheat] the store. The family gets upset a little but there is no shame, either way, and pressure is off.

He states that Warlpiri favour limited self-government of local councils and of ATSIC because they feel that they can rely on Kardiya support if necessary. However, with the NTER and council amalgamation into the Central Desert Shire (now the Regional Council), they now believe that their chance to manage Lajamanu in the limited way that they want has gone because they have virtually no input in decision-making. He states that Warlpiri people of the community appreciate that they need Kardiya expertise, but they would like to be given the opportunity to select the Kardiya personnel of their choice to assist them. Butler says, 'they know it must start somewhere...it may take generations...they also appreciate that some may fall by the wayside, but it can happen...long term'.

Kerry Marsham approaches the problem in a different way. He considers that it is possible for Warlpiri to locally manage their own community, but that it needs to be on the understanding that 'the dollars [government financing] must be limited in each period'. He argues that it must be understood that once the annually budgeted monies are spent there will be no more funding until the next financial year. Unlike others, he suggests that there will be disadvantages if the expenditure of money is controlled by the Elders. In his view, Elders are not elected, and that the current Warlpiri system is not democratic. However, he also argues that the Lajamanu people need to have the power to decide for themselves what they want, whether it is democratic or cultural. He believes that it is up to them to decide how they are going to negotiate effectively with government.

Rob Chapman, the non-Indigenous project coordinator of the local Kurdiji committee (discussed in Chapter Six), states that many of the Warlpiri and non-Warlpiri residents of the Lajamanu community see Kurdiji as being a potential instrument of great importance in the

future governance and development of the community. When interviewed, he made an interesting and revealing comment:

Do we live in a democracy? Why criticise Warlpiri practice? In terms of Warlpiri running things the way, they want to...But I don't think [Warlpiri] people have a clear idea of how they want to do things in the real world. They often say the government should do this or that but not so much about what they should do themselves. With the Kurdiji project, we decided early on that because there were so many external demands on Warlpiri people in terms of time and little output in terms of people having control...So, they focused on internal governance. Kurdiji is the group that help sort out fights and prevents the escalation, and therefore avoids the need for police...Kurdiji makes the community safer and helps people out. The community moves on quickly after a fight, says sorry and moves on. Kurdiji is trying to bring back culture. Kinship (skin) lines seem to be less used in forming committees. Kurdiji is supported by all the Lajamanu community, and so respected... they don't always agree but they do believe it is a good institution. And it is strongly supported (Chapman interview 2014).

The Independent Evaluation of the Central Land Council's Community Development and Governance Programme (2014) concludes that:

Kurdiji's role is widely understood in Lajamanu. People of all ages see Kurdiji as an important way of doing things in a strong yapa way. Everyone we spoke to, including young people, knew about Kurdiji, and what it did to keep traditional law and culture strong, as well as to address community problems (CLC 2014 p.89).

The Kurdiji committee and its potential for governance have been discussed in previous chapters and its contributions are undoubtedly significant. Those interviewed state that the Kurdiji project is held in high esteem by the Lajamanu community. Robert Chapman and all of those associated with the CLC (Lajamanu) Governance Project have undoubtedly made a major contribution to this project. Chapman is of the view that the development of Kurdiji represents a change in the community from seeing themselves as being totally defeated and negative to beginning to believe that they may have some decision-making powers. Chapman considers that most people do not get everything they want, and often do not really know what they want. Bearing this in mind he believes passionately that:

Warlpiri should have an improved level of control and support to get what they want. But they have been disempowered for so long, used to Kardiya treating them like rubbish...I think they mistake their freedom for more money rather than other sorts of freedom. It is very complex. They think that if they suddenly were to get everything, they want it would mean staying in a paternalistic relationship but with more resources and less strings attached. But some of the older people realise this is not really what they want (Chapman, interview with the author, Katherine, 10 April 2014).

Chapman, Nic Marsham, Kerry Marsham, and most others interviewed maintained that the Lajamanu Warlpiri people are over-governed, and that most decisions are made for the community rather than by the community. However, they also had differing views as to whether the Warlpiri have the capacity or capability to develop an effective contemporary system of governance. The community does have Kurdiji, the Central Desert Shire (now Regional Council), and various standing committees (health, school, etc.), but with the notable exception of Kurdiji meetings, most policy decisions are led by non-Warlpiri, 'whitefella' managers and senior officers. Both non-Warlpiri and Warlpiri residents of Lajamanu believe that the various levels of government control the agenda.

Chapman and the Marshams think that Warlpiri recognise the need for help in many areas, but they would like to be able to select the people whom they wish to help them, or at least to have a say in their selection. But they believe that Warlpiri are facing a *fait accompli* of government controlling the funds thereby maintaining power over the direction and implementation of education, housing, health, and employment in Lajamanu. Chapman argues that the non-Warlpiri personnel need to educate Indigenous staff and the community in the areas of capacity building and effective government communication processes in a partnership fashion and that this should be a long-term exercise; a period of perhaps five years. If this were to happen, the community would be better trained and have a better understanding of service delivery. He also maintains that the community should have some say in employment selection and retention. However, he warns that the success or failure of this exercise hinges on the Lajamanu community becoming convinced that government is sincere in this endeavour. Only when sincerity is confirmed will Warlpiri be persuaded to fully support the local Warlpiri trainees and the training organisations, and to avoid their developed 'scamming'²⁴ practices.

²⁴ Scamming is common among Indigenous people in the Northern Territory. It is the practice of using government vehicles, equipment and funds that have been allocated to the community for use other than for that which they been intended. Indigenous people do not see this as stealing or usurping but simply using such items in a way that is in their view more beneficial to the community. One example is using service vehicles for hunting and gathering. The term scamming is used commonly by both Warlpiri and non-Warlpiri residents of Lajamanu.

Butler is sympathetic to these ideals, but stresses the need the longer time frame:

They won't be able to run their own outfits (store, council) for a long, long time. They should have input into employment of managers, senior staff, and in policy making...but not be part of day to day management. And I think they understand and agree. They want to advance and have real input but not be set up to fail (Butler 2014).

In recent years, there have been many advisory forums and committees in Lajamanu, which have resulted in 'meeting fatigue' among Lajamanu community members. Chapman and others suggest that meaningful meetings are necessary but believe that Warlpiri are sick and tired of meetings that have no tangible outcomes. He states that if these practices continue unchanged, it will be most difficult to persuade Warlpiri people to attend government and agency arranged meetings. He re-iterates that meetings need to become meaningful. Erglis stated that it is her experience that the Elders clearly indicate that they want to work with Kardiya and for Kardiya to teach them, but more on their terms. She suggests that they are of a view that:

We [Warlpiri] want to do it our way without Kardiya, but we understand that we need to learn Kardiya ways of managing and negotiating, to talk honestly and directly, and then maybe government would be prepared to listen and to revise their thinking.

Others, however, took issue over the Lajamanu community's intent or desire to change their management mode and to adjust more readily to government requirements. Roger Teague, a previous Government Business Manager, states that in his view the Lajamanu Warlpiri people have no intention of losing their very complex kin/cultural system or their traditional, highly skilled and intricate cultural hierarchy. He firmly believes that Warlpiri people have established that they can retain their traditional systems while usefully continuing to manipulate and 'scam' the mainstream government system. He suggests that they are quietly happy for the present government arrangements to remain in place. Teague reasons that they get large sums of money from government and royalties, all of which is tax free. This thinking relates in some ways to Peterson's comment:

Rather, they are emplaced in a complex cultural trade-off between, on the one hand, their desire for ontological security and, on the other, their acceptance of limited material circumstances, which they can be reasonably confident the mainstream will continue to underwrite for many years to come. The existential question is, will this remain a desirable form of dependency in the long term (Peterson 2015)?

Ang Pasang Rai, a former accounting officer, is less judgemental, he believes that existing social security provision has made Warlpiri people heavily reliant upon government, very passive, and unaccountable to any of their socio-economic responsibilities. If this is prolonged, then generations of Warlpiri people will never be economically strong, nor can they protect their culture. Based on his experience, he concludes that both parties (Warlpiri and government) have failed to uplift the livelihoods of Warlpiri people.

Kerry Marsham expresses his failure to comprehend some of the community's unwillingness to take advantage of the facilities, the machinery, or the training that has been on offer from time to time. He gave the example of a brick-making machine that had been brought into the community many years ago and had been used to make house and building bricks. Apparently, it was used to build some of the old, now defunct, buildings, but had fallen into disuse when administrations changed. There was some possibility that the safety aspects of the machine have not been upgraded to present day requirements, but there was little interest in retaining or restoring this self-help resource. Kerry and others express consternation and frustration when trying to understand and to comprehend the 'thought patterns' of the Warlpiri people. Kerry commented:

Commitment...commitment...commitment. Did Warlpiri want the brick machine or was it brought in by the administration or the mission? Did they want it? Why didn't they keep it?

One interesting comment came from Roger Teague, who believes that the missions did a lot more good work than they are given credit for. He suggests that they learned, translated, and wrote down the language, thus saving it for posterity. He believes they assisted the community people into fostering a work ethic, and they taught 'useable' skills. He perceives that if the missions had continued, they would have had many more positive influences than government, with its indecisive policies. Pearson (2000) has expressed similar views. Neither have recommended a return to those days.

7.3 Employment and Economic development

7.3.1 *The Lajamanu Economy background*

Consensus amongst the non-Warlpiri Lajamanu residents is that there are insufficient co-operatives, industries, government agencies, or any other obvious employment opportunities

in Lajamanu. Their views strongly suggest that full or even part-time employment for most Lajamanu Warlpiri residents is not a realistic expectation. This conclusion is understandable given the geographic isolation of Lajamanu, the climatic difficulties and the small population numbers.

Aside from the Lajamanu Community Store, the Wulain Outstation Resource Centre and the Warnayaka Art Centre are the only recognisable business ventures in Lajamanu, and both receive substantial funding from government. The Wulain Outstation Resource Centre, as its name suggests, is primarily involved in the maintenance of outstations and with road works maintenance and construction. It also assisted in the establishment of the Wulain Rangers. It has had recent changes in management and committee control and is seen to have had factional problems and a turbulent history. It has always had non-Warlpiri managers.

The Warnayaka Art Centre, a cooperative, has also had a rather chequered history, but has begun to build its reputation and to increase art sales in recent years. It has GMAAAC and some government support and is currently providing artists with some income. There appears to be potential for this income to increase. The centre is well supported and attended, mainly by women artists. Louisa Erglis, the non-Indigenous manager, stated that the Arts Centre Board, which is composed of women and men Elders, has directed her to manage the Centre as a professional business. People are paid only by the hour when attending. All art sales are controlled by the Warnayaka Arts Centre and the artists are paid a nominal amount on completion of each painting and a final amount upon sale. Clearly, the Centre is currently a source of income for the Warlpiri people of Lajamanu, and this may increase in the future. But a non-Warlpiri manager has been essential to ensure that promotional, financial, day-to-day matters, employment, and distribution duties are effectively managed.

7.3.2 Views regarding the Lajamanu Economy

Jim Butler, the manager of the Lajamanu Community Store believes that he has been faced with a dichotomy. The prime objective of the store is to provide a good, healthy range of foods at reasonable prices, but he also understands that the community needs more Warlpiri people to be employed. In his efforts to maintain the standards the community requires, he firmly believes that he must employ predominantly kardiya workers for the business to run efficiently. Jim, a competent manager, has decided that a good, well-priced food supply is the

main priority of the store and of the community. He maintains that 'things can get done with yapa, but they must be measured in a different way'. He states that he has closely consulted with the Warlpiri store committee, and while they would ideally prefer Indigenous employees, they agree that their prime function is the supply of good quality food and goods at reasonable prices. He further maintains that:

This model works on communities and it works short term. But you have to pay for it. If you provide good facilities, you will get good kardiya staff, and kardiya staff are necessary for the key positions in the community.

Food stores and art centres are very different businesses with very different required outcomes. Erglis takes a different view from that of Butler. Because Butler's is employed to provide good foodstuffs at the best price, he is most concerned with efficiency, not the employment of Warlpiri. Erglis believes that the Art Centre must target the welfare and future for the Lajamanu community, and thus focuses on employment of Warlpiri artists and potential artists. She argues that, for Warlpiri people, the weekly or hourly wage is not the primary motivation to work, because in their culture monies are shared. Erglis pointed out that the Art Centre provides breakfast and lunch as motivation to attract and assist the artists. This has proven attractive to both the female and male elderly artists. She is of the view that while the Lajamanu community needs permanent involvement in the Western cash economy, it is faced with the problem that there is insufficient employment and therefore insufficient available income for much that the people desire. Erglis insists that Lajamanu Warlpiri people have been placed into a situation which is alien to their traditional way of life. They are not economically self-sufficient and have difficulty in providing group support to each other. They consider that they have no power to change this situation and are condemned to living with insufficient means and this results in family pressures. She refers to the inability of the unnamed woman mentioned in the previous chapter to provide for her family and suggests that this is not an isolated example. She says that there are many systemic problems, maintaining that:

I know[non-Warlpiri] people that have lived here for years that would not know the detail of someone's Yapa life. This is why she [the unnamed woman] lives under constant threat of losing another of her children at the whim of social security when they do not know the full circumstances. Will she be alive in the morning and will she want to be alive with all the pressures she faces...many supplied by her husband? People keep on with their behaviour, whether it is eating

the wrong foods, not attending dialysis or continuing their drinking knowing if they do so they are going to die. Many know that and purposely continue in that behaviour.

With so few businesses and limited opportunities for employment in Lajamanu, the situation is generally considered to be unstable. Most interviewees agree that the current Warlpiri kinship and cultural system is not geared to accept or even to encourage private enterprises that are so necessary to the Australian economy. Louth (2018) has perceptively noted that:

The nation building exercises that underpinned the establishment of the Australian state [have] ignored the complexity of alternate economies that operated within and between Indigenous communities (Louth, 2018, p.1).

Most think that both the Warlpiri community and the government need to address the problem of how to develop some semblance of a workable economy in Lajamanu. Erglis highlights the Lajamanu community's lack of understanding of the western economic system:

How many Yapa people do I know who do their own tax return, let alone a BAS statement? They really are aware that they don't have that expertise. Yapa just say they will just pay someone to do it.

Butler had perhaps the last word when considering the potential for developing business in Lajamanu:

I don't see it working well except in small things like lawn mowing rounds. I believe that the community should be run by professionals. Sounds hard, but I would have to employ five Yapa to do the same work as one kardiya if I wanted things to be completed on time, etc. But I set high standards...locals can sort of run stores but only very poorly.

Nic Marsham offered an interesting explanation of low socio-economic communities, noting the similarities between those that are Indigenous and those that are non-Indigenous:

This level of society is the same white or black. No home ownership, no material possessions, everything is on hire purchase, and everything is welfare. Everything is sit-down money. It is not indigenous culture but a culture of sit-down culture black or white...dole, telephone allowance, health, child endowment, child care, etc.

Kerry Marsham is one of many non-Indigenous observers that struggles to believe that economic viability is possible in Lajamanu. He considers that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous employment opportunities are minimal in Lajamanu. Marsham argues that the future for Lajamanu will need to rely on continuing government assistance. In his view even if

opportunities were to be created, there will need to be some form of genuine re-energisation and commitment by the Warlpiri people. He maintains that if the people of Lajamanu are not prepared to put more energy and effort into their community then Lajamanu will not survive. It is largely up to them. He states that:

You can't buy the will, they have to want to do it...but the government and private agencies have to also want it to succeed...need to work together for it to succeed...and in all of this you must consider the cultural aspect/social obligations.

7.3.3 Employment

Several interviewees testified that a few skill training and education schemes have been tried by governments and by ATSIC to provide some intermediate employment and basic training for community residents. The government supported Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) was the principal and most extensive project of this kind. In the view of most of the people interviewed CDEP had great potential, but that its potential was lost because of its poor structure, administration guidelines that were not adhered to, ambiguous management/teaching practices and the deep-seated Warlpiri welfare dependency syndrome. It was agreed that field officers were given insufficient support from off-site government supervisors. Many consider that the CDEP was misinterpreted and evolved into a poorly disguised welfare program, another form of the 'dole'; just more 'sit-down' money. This they consider was a missed opportunity, because CDEP had the potential to train and provide employment. Butler is an advocate of the CDEP scheme and states that:

It cost government but got Yapa back into ideas of work and not sit-down nothing. The old CDEP was community owned but unfortunately there was too much money spent on providers, technicians coming in, and it deteriorated.

According to Butler the CDEP would have been better doing simpler tasks rather than 'attempting the impossible', and many agree with his comment. He gave an example of 'attempting the impossible', a schoolteacher training project at Batchelor College. This training scheme meant that the girls were required to spend time in Batchelor, which is approximately 800 kilometres from Lajamanu. The scheme had merit, but the Lajamanu community culturally did not like girls leaving Lajamanu. It was poorly designed and destined to fail. In Butler's opinion, it would have been more effective to train people in more practical ways and in local situations:

to go to bed, not sit up all night watching TV, come to work clean and tidy instead of impractical trainers suggesting that they can train and provide six girls to work in the store effectively and efficiently within six months. The trainers found they couldn't get them to come at eight in the morning and stay until 12 noon.

Kerry Marsham considers CDEP to have been a potentially good program, but that it never lived up to expectations because it was not policed efficiently. Nic Marsham is also of the view that it usually failed to accomplish its objectives. However, she notes that there were exceptions:

I had three people that began as CDEP workers but within two weeks at the Art Centre, they did not consider themselves as CDEP but a part of Centre. They were never treated as CDEP. But at the Lajamanu School, they were treated like the little black boy who has come to work because he is on the dole.

Some projects were seen to have good intentions but poor application. CDEP training was applied to the needed areas of plant operation, painting, plumbing but was considered by many of those interviewed to have only had limited success in these areas because trainees were not offered employment after training and because outside contractors were usually given preference for these jobs.

Aaron Carroll, manager of the program, explains that Remote Jobs and Communities Development Program (RJCP) is like CDEP, but with much tighter requirements and that it is better monitored because it is controlled by Centrelink. The trainees are employed on an hourly basis and are only paid for the time worked. RJCP is applied to several areas in Lajamanu. Carroll cited one example, a scheme that is employing twelve people at the Tanami mine. The mine is situated approximately 500-600 kilometres from Lajamanu. Workers are required to work twelve hours per day for seven days, and then have one week off. This is difficult because most Warlpiri people miss their family. However, he says that he 'weeds out' people before sending them to the mines. Overall, he says he is happy with early responses to the scheme and the people seem enthusiastic. He says that he is 'run off his feet' with people wanting work. The general impression is that RJCP has community support.

On an optimistic note, recent statistics provided by Guenther and McCrae-Williams (2014, 2016) suggest that with initiative, drive, determination and lateral thinking it may be possible to provide enough employment in Indigenous communities to enable them to pursue a better future. Chapter Eight discusses their findings.

7.4 Education

Most non-Warlpiri residents, the Lajamanu Warlpiri community, the government, and academics agree that training and education are vital components in determining the future, or the lack of future, for the Lajamanu community. Despite this, the children's attendance rates and results at the Lajamanu School continue to be poor according to most of non-Warlpiri people interviewed. Opinions vary as to why this is so.

When the current field research was conducted at the Lajamanu School, it was noticed that there appeared to be no Warlpiri language books in the school library. In the absence of the Principal, the Deputy Principal Juliette Keefe offered the following information. She advises that there is no Warlpiri language taught or Warlpiri story-telling at the school and no formal Warlpiri teaching because there are no qualified teachers. Previously, this school had been a leader in bilingual education. One can only wonder what happened to the Warlpiri language books, and Warlpiri teachers-aides that Warlpiri residents declare were previously at the school. Keefe states that attendance continues to be sporadic, with students averaging attendance on only two to three days per week. It appears that students often alternate their days of attendance, that is, they attend only several days in each week. Yet, Keefe advises that statistics indicate that attendance is increasing two to three percent yearly. She states that achievement levels are poor, with girls usually leaving the school at puberty or pregnancy. Only forty-five students were, at that time, being taught at high school level and they were only achieving base levels at best. Only six have attained enough scholastic level to able them to enrol in boarding schools away from Lajamanu. Keefe explains that 'they need Year 7 standard, but usually are only at Year 4 level. She advises that there is a nutrition program in place to help attendance and to improve attention and concentration. It provides a hot breakfast, fruit, and lunch 'that they do not get at home'. This service is provided for five dollars a day, which is deducted from the parents' Basic Cards. Even so, she claims that apparently only five percent of parents pay the required costs. She did not explain how this could happen when this was a compulsory deduction.

Others were critical of the school methods, performance, quality of the teachers, and of the notable lack of Warlpiri interest in encouraging their children to attend school each day. Kerry Marsham stated that:

change comes from education, education, and education. Warlpiri really don't perceive the need to teach...those older people who have left school and are comfortable going nowhere. It is a challenge...part of the solution is maintaining the culture. I believe that bilingual education is essential. Warlpiri need a cohesive community. If they don't start educating the people, they will lose it altogether...using community people to teach Warlpiri because of the children.

Aaron Carroll also expressed the opinion that bilingual education is necessary. Many of those interviewed agreed with him. An example of the practical application of bilingual education was given by Nic Marsham, who had previous teaching experience:

Skin groups each had their own separate place in the Art Centre. Each took on a student...of their personal kin or responsibility. They had chosen the teenage girls, not the reverse, because the old ladies had to give the girls of their 'skin' group the knowledge to paint the 'story' that was exclusive to that 'skin' group. School attendance increased to ninety eight percent as did the Art Centre.

Teague argues that a good education system is necessary if there are to be any gains. He notes that most of the twenty to thirty-year-old residents are illiterate. It is only the older people who sometimes have writing and reading skills due to mission and government provided education in urban centres. He commented that most Warlpiri are more than competent with computer and mobile phone usage and this may be a learning tool to be used.

Louisa Erglis suggested that the high turnover of local area non-Indigenous school staff means that there is no known history of past school initiatives, developments, and failures among the current staff. This affects their view of the people they are supposed to be living and working with. She cites the nutrition program as an example:

all the white staff at the school have the impression that these people cannot feed their own children and they blame the community ... What really happened at the school is that it was the white principal who ran the tuck shop into \$20,000 debt and had to close it. He kept giving the tuck shop money to anyone that asked for it. I was working there at the time and I was asked by the principal to give out \$390 because some Yapa was broke and had asked for money. They were supposed to pay the money back, but they were never going to pay it back and no-one chased them. Most of that debt occurred after an Education Department officer was called in and had been informed that it was illegal to loan or give these funds. That was when the debt was only \$4,000 ... but it continued up to \$20,000. Common sense says that the children are normally fed because they are alive today. School breakfasts were and are now paid for by direct debit from parents' Centrelink payments. Previously, the parents gave cash to the kids for school breakfasts.

What frustrated Nic Marsham the most about the school administration was that new 'white' principals had a propensity to make uninformed changes without reference to past occurrences:

the latest [principal] came in and decided that the school needed new better buildings. So, he tore down the old buildings, but four of the Elders had painted on those buildings. The old ladies [Elders] went berserk. So, we retrieved the paintings as they were tearing them down, and we took them to the Art Centre. We saved them, and they are still there.

7.5 Health

There was general non-Warlpiri community agreement that the provision of health services in Lajamanu were of a standard that could be considered reasonable for a remote community. Most are of the view that the Katherine West Health Board has made some improvements in health. There is concern that the turnover of doctors and nursing staff at Lajamanu is too high. However, the lack of focus on preventative health was regarded as the greatest concern. The resident doctor, Samuel Gudsek, believes that there had been no real closing of the health gap because there is not enough focus on primary health care. As CEO of the local council, I had expressed similar views to the Katherine West Health Board management and government. Gudsek, I and others considered that a concentrated, locally run, Lajamanu preventative health program would result in improved health at a minimal cost to government. A simple educational community healthcare instruction program could be instigated using Warlpiri employees. However, both Katherine West and government policies were, and still are, more focused on clinical medicine. Nic Marsham also supports the concept of preventative health programs, saying that currently 'Health is beyond Warlpiri comprehension, understanding, and expertise. The people do not realise the benefits of preventative health etc...the whole issue is based on them wanting to do it'.

Louisa Erglis had other concerns in relation to health. She claimed that people are quite hungry in Lajamanu:

In the last two years, I have seen the number of people asking for money to help with food really rise and I believe that the reason is that rents have increased; people are not complying with Centrelink, so their payments cease. The shop takings have dropped. The manager thinks it is because people are leaving town, but the census does not show this. There is still the same number of children enrolled in the school as seven years ago. I believe it is because people are getting

substantially more things deducted from their payments. One pensioner has \$157 deducted per fortnight from her pension to pay for children at the school. Now if the children are having poor attendance, which I believe they are, then she is also paying for breakfasts and food that she is providing at home. So, she is effectively doubling her expenses. She no longer has control of her money, it is automatically deducted. She cannot afford it. And there are so many similar problems.

This situation, if it is as widespread as Erglis suggests, could have effects on the general health of the community and place extra burdens on the health services.

The provision of clinical services and support, hospital emergency, and other transfer services, on-site dialysis services, and visiting specialist services were of a good standard.

7.6 Alcohol and drug control

Lajamanu is designated as an alcohol-prohibited area. Drugs and alcohol are both illegal and actively policed in Lajamanu. There is however one exception. Residents who have no prior drug or alcohol convictions and are of good character may obtain a permit to drink within their private homes. Few Lajamanu Warlpiri residents can meet these requirements and most permits have been issued to the non-Warlpiri residents. Non-Indigenous residents of Lajamanu either choose not to use drugs or alcohol or, more usually, do so prudently in their residences. Alcohol is considered an ever-present problem in the community and overindulgence is regularly observed at the eight-mile town limit area. The women's and the men's night patrols are seen to be actively discouraging attempts at drug and alcohol smuggling and preventing in-town incidents.

Most non-Indigenous residents showed concern over alcohol abuse. Most interviewees consider that Warlpiri residents, particularly the men, provide 'only lip service' to stamping out excessive alcohol intake.

Fleming, the current Government Engagement Coordinator (GEC), expressed the view that it is better to ease the liquor laws rather than to continue the current practice of placing more limits on its use. Fleming's opinion is to copy the Kalkarindji Hotel model, which supplies only light beer, encourages dining, and maintains hotel entry control. He suggests that:

this encourages civilised and limited drinking rather than gutsching hot cans of beer at 10-mile [the legal town limit] and paying twice the price to sit in the hot sun in

uncomfortable locations. This is drinking to get drunk and educating the young to do the same as dad.

Interestingly, most of the Warlpiri residents reject this idea (Chapter Six).

Butler, police officers, Kerry Marsham, and I have all noted the success of sending young petrol sniffers to the traditional Mount Theo Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation facility, near Yuendumu, and suggest that a similar facility based near Lajamanu would be of benefit.

7.7 Housing

It was unanimously agreed that housing for the non-Warlpiri employees in Lajamanu is of a good standard. It was also unanimously agreed that the housing for the Warlpiri residents is unsuitable, grossly insufficient, and very poorly maintained by government. Both Butler and Chapman describe the Indigenous Lajamanu housing as a disaster. Louisa Erglis, commenting on overcrowding, states that:

There are about 600 to 700 people in Lajamanu. But more interesting are how many mattresses are there in this town? I would guarantee that there are not 600. At the moment, there are five people per bedroom.

Erglis estimates that there were many people sharing beds, particularly children but sometimes adults and children. It is common knowledge that many houses have between ten and fifteen persons residing in them. Erglis stated:

When I was associated with the Central Desert Shire Council, now the Regional Council, residents were instructed to come to the Council office and report necessary housing repairs, maintenance, and replacements.

At the Council office, an officer would take the details on the prescribed form and email the reports to head office in Alice Springs. There, an inexperienced officer would assess their urgency and importance and, depending on both factors, submit them to the Territory Housing Department where they would be further assessed. The required tradesmen and sub-contractors—that is, plumbers, carpenters, and electricians—would eventually be sent out from either Katherine, Darwin, or Alice Springs, usually on a job-grouped basis and only rarely for an individual job unless it was extremely urgent. Erglis explains how she views the situation:

They were flying the plumber in for housing repairs ... [paying] \$3400 for one-way. He cannot bring his tools. So, he would fly in, not be able to do anything and fly

away again. It was just absolutely insane. In the end, the process in Lajamanu was to telephone a civil lawyer to approach the housing authority, and then it may get on the list of things to do. The old ladies' house still has raw asbestos and it has been known for two years or more. One old lady has a mentally handicapped child who put a small hole in the asbestos walled building. From there it has just grown. Many people frequent that house. It has been like this for over two years in spite of numerous requests to get it fixed. I have heard that RJCP have decided that they will do housing repairs using unqualified RJCP trainees. Yapa cannot believe the hypocrisy. They [the housing authorities] fly/drive in a plumber and his wife. He works on his own and yet we have Yapa people here that can do the jobs.

During Kerry Marsham's employment as the Housing Manager in the Lajamanu Community Government Council prior to its amalgamation into the Central Desert Shire [now Regional] Council, he considered that progress was possible but failed to occur because of bureaucratic inefficiency, red tape, and lack of government understanding and support. He gave an example:

While I was there, I fitted deadlocks on every internal house door...for very relevant reasons...in a house with four bedrooms, there can be fifteen people. So, they need to keep the stuff that they prefer not to share in their bedrooms, hence the deadlocks. Where do the women go when they are getting beaten? To their room and lock the door. However, when the Intervention [NTER] was imposed, all deadlocks were removed because of newly imposed government instructions to contractors. This meant a loss of all cultural security that they had. Same with security screens. The insecure wire ones were put in replacing the true tough security screens. The Intervention also proposed gutters on all the houses for no reason. There needs to be different things for different communities that are considerations to individual communities instead of uniform regulations.

Marsham also mentions that although the town bore water supply contained calcium and other salts, all houses were fitted with solar hot water services without water filters. In a very short time, the solar tanks calcified, resulting in a huge expense to fix their hot water systems, not to mention a waste of capital outlay by government. He also bemoans that 'There are so many situations where housing plans and innovations are not thought through'. Marsham, Butler, and everyone else who was asked, commented that the designs of the houses are demonstrably unsuitable for Warlpiri people. Warlpiri practices are such that they prefer to cook and prepare their meals in an outside kitchen format, often sleep outside for climatic and special reasons, and use interior spaces for gathering and social situations (Keys 1999; Napangardi & Nakamarra Long 1995). Marsham states that he had explained repeatedly at three housing conferences that the houses were not suitable and said that people need to be consulted as to what they culturally need in housing. He explains:

Lajamanu people are desert people while Gurindji people are river people. Their cultural beliefs have a different grounding, and their needs are different. This affects needs for housing. Warlpiri have a belief that housing should face in compass directions, yet I would say that not one house in Lajamanu has been designed with this in mind just put in European-style blocks.

Most non-Indigenous residents interviewed were of the view that Warlpiri people do not really want to own their own houses because their culture obliges them to share with the family and to make welcome the whole extended family. It is not a part of their culture to own property. This may be explained by saying that they utilise or occupy property. Butler and others consider that given that it is not Warlpiri customary practice, ownership is not a sensible resolution for Lajamanu housing. For example, when someone dies in a house, all his or her family can no longer live in that house and must move out. Community ownership was suggested as an alternative, but even this could present problems.

Most also consider that the Warlpiri community do little to improve their housing plight. Community residents generally fail to keep their houses in a neat and clean state. Houses are neglected, often filthy, and present a real health hazard. Most if not all those interviewed are baffled by the fact that Warlpiri residents rarely maintain their houses in a clean, liveable state. Kerry Marsham exclaims, 'Why do Warlpiri people destroy their houses?' He hypothesises that it may be explained by the over-crowding, by the cultural permissiveness allowed to children and guests, or by other unknown circumstance. But, whatever the cause, he said it does not assist Warlpiri in their call for more housing. Marsham suggested that perhaps the solution to the housing problem is for 'whites to walk away from the community...but it will never happen'.

From my time in Indigenous areas, I have found the insistence of government to build costly fences around schools, offices, and other buildings—and especially houses in Lajamanu—disturbing. This seems to be particularly senseless in the case of residential housing, when one considers the Warlpiri's open house arrangements and their lack of interest in gardening. Gates are usually left open. There appears to be no valid reason for this additional expense for housing and other buildings in Lajamanu, particularly as there is remarkably little violence and criminal behaviour.

I am informed that fencing is standard around most Australian schools to deter robbery and arson, but the erection of high-cost aluminium fencing appears to be an unnecessarily expensive waste of funds that could be more usefully served in providing more needed requisites.

7.8 Law and police

There was a consensus among those interviewed that the Lajamanu community is a law-abiding and normally peaceful community. There are occasional kinship disagreements and minor scuffles, family violence issues, and a few major crimes. Alcohol is often seen to play a part. My wife Joan has often told her South Australian friends that she felt safer in Lajamanu than she does in Adelaide.

The GEC agrees that it was generally a quiet community. However, he considers that policing should be doubled so that a true twenty-four-hour response service can be provided. The current after-hours emergency service involves telephone call relocation via Darwin and, in his view, is hopelessly ineffective. The Darwin telephone receiving officers do not appreciate the layout of the town because it lacks street numbers resulting in time delays to responses and often a lack of appreciation of the situation. He would also like to see more Aboriginal Community Police Officers (ACPOs) appointed, advocating that they offer an opportunity for a better, closer liaison with the Lajamanu community and with the Indigenous Night Patrol service. All those interviewed were in general agreement with the views of the GEC.

As previously mentioned, I have first-hand experience of where better police understanding was very necessary. I refer to the incident in 2008 when an initiation ceremony was interrupted when a police woman entered a restricted ceremony area, chasing an alleged lawbreaker. In this case, the Warlpiri community was greatly offended and made a passionate statement via YouTube (*Lajamanu and the Law*), stating that Warlpiri respected and abided by Kardiya law and asked why reciprocal respect was not forthcoming.

Teague judges the Warlpiri customary law/lore to be remarkably like that of Western law in many ways. In his view, Warlpiri customary law is unfortunately largely misunderstood and misinterpreted by the government. Teague maintains that the Lajamanu customary law is essentially about shame and does not involve the extremes of brutal punishment that some

portray. The prime aim of customary law is to ensure that the crime does not re-occur. Teague argues that more effective decisions would be made if governments were to more fully understand the reasoning of traditional law and appreciate that it has many similarities to Western law. Understanding traditional law and permitting the limited usage of it could result in better Warlpiri rehabilitation rates. However, Teague also believes that Warlpiri need to rethink their conceptions of cultural law and to realise that it is neither fixed nor unchanging. He emphasises that Warlpiri are no longer hunters and gatherers and are now town dwellers. Consequently, the traditional law has by necessity required some practical adaption as a result of colonisation, just as it has been continually and subtly revised over time. Nothing is static; everything is in a state of change.

7.9 Local government

Kerry and Nic Marsham and most of those employed in local government in Lajamanu appreciate that the Central Desert Regional Council is in a development stage. They also state that unfortunately it has achieved very little to date and that there have been no appreciable improvements on the previous Community Council arrangements. In their view, the Regional Council, like so many amalgamations, has fallen into the trap of building a bigger bureaucracy. There are too many managers, at both senior and middle levels, all situated in Alice Springs; and there are too few on-site staff. Priorities and decisions are considered to originate from Alice Springs with little if any local input. The highly sophisticated financial, administrative, and management structures have produced and will continue to produce a need for highly skilled employees. This means that most employees will be non-Indigenous, which defeats the supposed intent of encouraging Indigenous employment in the disadvantaged communities in the Shire.

Another view expressed by Marsham and others is that the Regional Council has not clearly identified its purpose and reason for its existence. Is it meant to be a cost-efficient local council body or a body that fosters Indigenous employment and if so, is it prepared to sacrifice some efficiency to do this?

Most non-Indigenous interviewees were critical of the Shire development.

7.10 An interesting observation

Warlpiri are tightly bound to their tradition and cultural creation beliefs and yet seem to have readily accepted Christianity. This raises some interesting questions from non-Indigenous residents. Louisa Erglis suggests that the answer lies in the historic attempts of missionaries to erode or eliminate traditional religions and practices, which later led to a realisation that it was more successful to add Christianity onto traditional beliefs. While this remains a dilemma to some, it perhaps gives some indication that the Lajamanu Warlpiri have and are prepared to re-interpret and adapt their cultural and spiritual belief in accord with changing circumstances.

7.11 The Future?

Kerry Marsham comments that 'under the current circumstances, I am pessimistic about the future and believe that it will be a very expensive exercise to improve the situation in Lajamanu'. Roger Teague and his wife Mary both say they do not think remote Indigenous communities will survive. However, Nic Marsham made an interestingly different observation:

I am pessimistic for future of Lajamanu if governments continue in the same way. I am seeing this from Canberra, but when I look at Lily, Gladys and other female Elders, I am very optimistic because they are going to tell us to stuff off.

7.12 Summary

The views of non-Warlpiri residents give an interesting comparison with those views of the Warlpiri community (previous chapter). Their views on governance and management are remarkably similar in many but not all aspects. Both agree that government has failed to communicate effectively with the Lajamanu community, that it has usually not listened to the community and that government red tape and poor bureaucratic practices impede officer effectiveness. Many interviewees were extremely frustrated with the continuing failure of both the government and of the Lajamanu community to address the problems of Lajamanu. They consider that funds and more importantly people are being wasted.

While views on Warlpiri management capacity and potential varied somewhat, most consider that government had underestimated Warlpiri capacity and ability. The Kurdiji group is regarded to have the potential structural base for the furthering of Warlpiri leadership,

management capacity, and perhaps to become a key player in future communication and reconciliation with government. However, there was varying thought as to when and if this might take place.

All of those interviewed agree that culture was an integral part of Warlpiri life. All are quite adamant that the Lajamanu Warlpiri people want to retain their culture. Some believe that Warlpiri are prepared to modify it, others do not. All are of the view that government has failed to understand the depth and need of Indigenous people, and particularly Warlpiri) to retain their kinship networks, their traditions and their identity.

The differences between Warlpiri and western cultures are highlighted by the way non-Indigenous residents prioritise certain areas much differently to the Warlpiri community. Housing and health are examples of this difference in thinking. Much non-Indigenous comment on housing was framed in words such as appalling, a disaster, disgustingly unmaintained and often uncleaned. Similarly, there is some concern that Warlpiri are not bothered with the lack of preventative health services and that they often do not avail themselves of available health services. Some interviewees realise that both these and other areas are not considered to be as important in Warlpiri culture, as they are in mainstream.

There is considerable support of the view that there is potential for more Warlpiri employment in Lajamanu. Some consider that tradespeople and semi-skilled workers in the community should be given employment preference over non-Warlpiri. Other suggestions for increasing employment were given. The defunct CDEP is considered by most to have had potential. They believe that the CDEP concept was misinterpreted and misdirected by government and its potential for legitimate and purposeful training of Warlpiri people wasted. It was noted that preference is often given to imported contract labour rather than to those qualified Warlpiri residents and to those that had learning from CDEP training programs. Perhaps RJCP may better utilise those who it trains.

Some interviewees also expressed doubt as to whether the Warlpiri people really want or are available for permanent employment. Others consider that the Lajamanu community could adapt its cultural responsibilities sufficiently if suitable employment was available. They suggest that this process would be assisted if employment conditions could also be arranged

to make allowance for legitimate cultural duties. The Warlpiri traditional cultural structure has been discussed in earlier chapters and it has been particularly noted that the kinship system is structured to preserve and protect the group rather than the individual. This appears to cause problems for the Lajamanu community in structuring a stable economy. Business operations are seen to be particularly difficult to initiate or maintain because social sharing responsibilities outweigh individual profit motives. There is also a view that the Warlpiri kinship and cultural system is not considered to be 'geared' to private enterprise. Many were of the view that the potential for business development is poor.

Education and school attendance are seen to be a major problem. It is seen that the government educational program needs to be rethought and Warlpiri teachers and/or teacher aides favoured. Poor school attendance was severely criticised. The Lajamanu School's lack of provision for suitable bilingual education, its failure to employ Warlpiri teacher aides, and its high turnover of non-Indigenous staff in Lajamanu are seen to be a part of the problem. Many are dismayed and disappointed that while the Lajamanu community elders and parents repeatedly state that they believe that the children need to be educated, they fail to insist or encourage their children to attend school each day. There was a majority view that Warlpiri people's 'lip service' support needs to be converted into actions to ensure that children regularly attend school.

The views of the non-Warlpiri managers, advisers, and employees based in Lajamanu are particularly relevant because these people have been involved at the interface of where government policy interfaces with Warlpiri culture and are in the intercultural space as described by Martin (2003), Hinkson & Smith (2005) and Moran (2016). They have had extensive first-hand experiences with the Lajamanu Warlpiri community. In doing so, they have been given a unique opportunity to observe and evaluate the customs, problems, failings, and the values of that community over a period. Their views on the specific areas in which they are employed have been particularly valuable and have contributed to the appreciation of broader perspective of the community. Interestingly while these non-Warlpiri residents form the grassroots base of western governance and administration of various agencies in Lajamanu, but they are often critical of both. This confirms Fold's (Folds 2001: 41). belief that these managers are accountable to both sides and perhaps this allows them to appreciate the good and the bad sides of each.

CHAPTER 8 GOVERNMENT POLICIES, PRACTICES AND BUREAUCRACY

This chapter continues the thesis framework of seeking the views of the various people that have major influence and connection to the Lajamanu community and Indigenous communities. The views, in this chapter emanate from persons that have had some association with or influence on government policies and practice with Indigenous communities, whether federal, territory or local government.²⁵ Research interviews were specific to persons employed by government and associated agencies closely associated with policy making and implementation, or persons that were acquainted with the policies and practices, academically or professionally. The numbers interviewed were quite small due to limitations of research time, availability and willingness of recipients. Research interviews were conducted in Canberra, Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, and Lajamanu in the period 2013–14.

This research, similar to that of the other field research, was of a qualitative nature using a combination of phenomenon and ethnographic methodology (Creswell 1998, pp. 38-40). The interviews were obtained on a voluntary basis by appointment and followed a basic question and answer format; however, additional informal discussion often ensued. Questions (Appendix E) were similar in question content to those posed to the Lajamanu non-Indigenous residents (Chapter 6). The interviews were recorded or noted according to the wishes of those persons interviewed. The sequencing of the chapter is continued in a similar order to that of the previous two chapters.

8.1 Cultural Retention

The majority of those interviewed made it clear that they were supportive of Warlpiri (and all Indigenous groups) retaining their culture and heritage. Deanella Mack, an Indigenous mental health services consultant based in Alice Springs, has a philosophy that she refers to as ‘Remember the tree’. Mack likens Indigenous Australians to a tree and explains that: ‘We are trying to paste back all of the fallen leaves. While doing this we should also be feeding and

²⁵ Please refer to Appendix C for the details and descriptions of interviewees quoted in this chapter. For the reader’s convenience, the interviewees are ordered alphabetically.

nurturing the roots if we wish the tree to grow and become strong'. This refers to the need to concentrate on supporting the retention of identity, kinship/culture while also seeking to gain western education, learning and experience.

LGANT Chief executive Officer Tapsell states that if Indigenous people were to become more educated, they would have substantially more opportunity to maintain their cultural heritage because they would acquire skills which could assist this process. He gives camera and film media skills as an example suggesting that these skills would enable the recording of those things that they regard as culturally vital. It would assist in learning how to establish museums and in acquiring skills to compile a Warlpiri dictionary.

8.2 Governance and Management

The discussion of governance and management with this group resulted in more nuanced views than previous chapters. The focus often concentrated on the failings and/or shortcomings of government policies and practices and on how they might be improved. There was much discussion of the leadership and management capabilities of the Lajamanu community and of how training and assistance could be provided that would make them more applicable to western negotiation and decision-making.

An extensive interview with Patricia Turner (2014), former CEO of ATSIC, proved to be interesting and enlightening. This extraordinary Indigenous woman conveyed a great deal of illuminating information. Although historical information has already been discussed in earlier chapters I have chosen to include much of what she had to say because it conveys her view of these events as a senior Indigenous person who has been intimately involved with government.

Turner considers that successive Australian governments (on all levels) have largely failed Aboriginal people. A number of factors have led her to this conclusion. Historically there were decades of neglect by state government. Most of the states were responsible for Indigenous affairs prior to the federal government becoming involved after the 1967 referendum. However, the Northern Territory was different, because up until 1910–11, it was an adjunct of the South Australian government until the Commonwealth took over its administration.

Assimilation policies were generally state administered, but, because of the unique structure of the Northern Territory, the federal government administered similar policies there.

This remained relatively static in Australia until the 1960s. This period ushered in a great move for change resulting from the influences of the United States civil rights movement, women's rights activism, and the anti-Vietnam War movement, all of which created an environment conducive to social change in Australia. Turner believes that the Commonwealth realised, as indicated by the 1967 referendum, that it needed to do something about the plight of its Indigenous people. Aboriginal activists such as Charles Perkins,²⁶ and the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) became politically visible in the 1960s and 1970s. FCAATSI was led by volunteers and not funded by government. While there had been protests long before the 1960s, they had been unrecognised and poorly publicised. One example is the Day of Mourning, which was held in Sydney on 26 January 1938. Jack Patten²⁷ and the Aborigines Progressive Association formed a ten-point plan on the rights of Aboriginal people, which focused on equality and equal opportunity. Aboriginal people had little access to normal services because in most cases they had been put onto reserves and missions. Their movements and lifestyles had been very controlled by the authorities, by the church, or by government missions. Turner states that both their movements and lifestyle had the same restrictions. They were constantly monitored, banned, and restricted. Up until the 1960s, there was a very clear marginalisation of Aboriginal people. According to Turner, this marginalisation worked on the premise of 'out of sight, out of mind'. Aboriginals were more easily controlled and less costly to fund if they were confined on government or mission settlements. In her view:

The whole point of the Assimilation Policy was that Aboriginal people had to live like white people. There was no recognition of any value in Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander culture ... no acknowledgement apart from a few old anthropologists.

²⁶ In 1981, Perkins was appointed Permanent Secretary of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the first Aboriginal to become a permanent head of a federal government department. He was also Chairman of the Aboriginal Development Commission between 1981 and 1984. In 1994, he was elected Deputy Chairperson of ATSIC. Perkins is revered as an activist for his people.

²⁷ An Indigenous civil rights activist and journalist who co-founded the Aborigines Progressive Association with William Ferguson in 1937.

Turner considers that World War II changed Aboriginal thinking. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders had been accepted into the army and were treated as mates. When they came home, the non-Indigenous returned soldiers were offered land by the government, but Indigenous Australians were not, even though, as Turner notes, they had owned the land before the colonists arrived in Australia. It was the Commonwealth that moved first on Aboriginal land rights, driven by Wave Hill and the Gurindji people and assisted by Frank Hardy, author and activist, and the unions. Prime Minister Whitlam set up the Woodward Commission into Land Rights in the Northern Territory. Charles Perkins, as a senior bureaucrat, made sure that the Prime Minister and all influential politicians went to see the third world conditions in which Indigenous people were forced to live.

In 1990, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal Development Commission were amalgamated by the then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Gerry Hand, with the assistance of Charles Perkins, to create ATSIC. This new body had an elected board of commissioners, regional councillors and some control over the Aboriginal affairs budget of the federal government. ATSIC created a platform for Aboriginal people to agitate for improved service and conditions. Initially, there were some sixty regional councils, a number that was later reviewed and reduced to thirty-five. Turner asked herself 'Would ATSIC have been any better if it was not part of the Australian public service? Yes, I think ATSIC would have been more effective if they had not been public servants.'

For Turner, the biggest dilemma facing ATSIC from an Indigenous perspective was to find how it could reflect more of the cultural connections between communities and allow them to have more local control, particularly noting the many language and cultural variations. As former CEO of ATSIC, Turner said that she was continually frustrated when attempting to obtain reliable subject data on progress. She claims that:

The budget was always an excuse. I wanted a cooperative and collaborative approach from the departments. I still believe that Aboriginal Affairs, agencies, departments are essential for Aboriginal affairs. If I had still been CEO, I would have reformed not abolished ATSIC.

When questioned on whether Lajamanu is capable of self-governing or self-determining in the future, she replied, 'Yes, if the will of the government was there'. But she suggested that it will be necessary to recruit groups of men and women from remote communities, in this case

Lajamanu, to attend a tertiary training facility where they can be trained to be effective cross-cultural bureaucrats.

Turner states that she believes that each sizable Aboriginal community should have a traditional local governing body, but the core of an Indigenous community is the traditional authority. The landowners traditionally have the most authority, although there are many cultural and historical complexities. In Turner's view, government has never bothered to, peel back the layers and get to the core of the issue. Nevertheless, she maintains that we should be able to 'work it out'. She favours:

A council or committee (men's and women's) who are responsible for making sure country is looked after, ceremonies are carried out, that the knowledge, practices, language and customs are passed on to future generations.

Turner also argues that, whether intentionally or not, governments have largely failed the Aboriginal people. She sees a need for a cooperative and collaborative approach from government departments, combined with the establishment of elected regional authorities with major Aboriginal input and consent. These regional councils should be community based and have the capacity to apply for local funding sources in a manner like that of the Cape York Regional Authority. In her view, government needs to overcome its paranoia over accountability. She suggests that the way to overcome funding shortfalls and a lack of accounting for productivity is to use the Productivity Commission and the Australian Grants Commission to establish a taskforce to calculate a formula to fund remote communities. She advocates a formula that considers cultural differences, remoteness, lack of infrastructure, and services. Each sizable community should have its own governing body structured on cultural and historical factors acceptable to the specific community. She emphasises the need to appreciate and understand the authority of Indigenous leaders and the power structure (2012).

Turner further suggests that the Commonwealth be reformed to have three definitive Indigenous funding programs—economic, cultural or language, and social—'instead of all the bullshit grants.' She considers that government programs should not be on a whole-of-government basis. In her view, 'government is smart enough today to work out where funding or administration of social programs should go' (2012). There is a need to categorise the core services of each community at the local level, starting with cultural identity and language and

customs, etc. and then necessities, such as potable water, food supply, shelter, and protection from the elements of fire and climate. Community input should be sought on this. Items such as accounting could be run by a regional accounting service, with a similar regional approach to the supply of food. This, she argues, will produce effective supervision and a better standard of services. According to Turner, decentralisation, cultural sensitivity, professionalism, open communication, and reciprocal dialogue will bring the required results:

You cannot just dismantle everything but must build things up: must have a longer-term view. The reason that most government programs fail is because there are elections every three years.

Allan McGill, a former Chief Executive of the Northern Territory Department of Local Government and Regions thinks that Indigenous communities probably have the capacity to be self-managing, but he doubts if governments will let this happen. He considers that the ability of Indigenous leadership to govern their traditional Indigenous communities is well-developed but that Indigenous leaders need help with the interfacing of their skills with mainstream bureaucratic practices and models. 'They have difficulty in getting the job done...[there is a] time factor'. As he states, there are too many government and traditional leadership and management layers for a community of six or seven hundred people. There are people positioned in federal, territory, and local government, people employed in land councils, traditional owners/cultural powers and strong family groups who want community ownership. The administering of a small community with all these competing layers has resulted in over-governing, duplication, and wastage. It is, in his view, ineffective, especially when community and government leaders do not work well together.

Tony Tapsell, the CEO of the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT), has similar views to McGill in that he also argues that Indigenous communities are over-governed, and suggests that bureaucrats are primarily interested in retaining their power and avoiding change. He acknowledges the problems of bureaucratic towers, 'funding funnelling', political games, and political agendas, but argues that there is a need to retain the federal, territory and local tiers of government. However, Tapsell acknowledges the enormity of administrative costs and agrees that 'We need the three tiers of government to work better'. He is also of the view that 'limited government finance and fiscal imbalance contribute to the problem'.

Sean Heffernan, the CEO of the Katherine West Health Board, suggests that the government would benefit from reconceptualising its communication with remote communities by using a more 'community development-based approach', such as that proposed by the United Nations or AusAid. He argues that there is a need for 'a community building conduit with a ten- to twenty-year life'. He criticises the government's cessation of the CDEP, maintaining that it was the life blood of remote Indigenous communities. He is of the view that:

Having abandoned ATSIC and CDEP, the government is going to have to re-invent it all again in twenty years...go back and do it all again, rebuild that whole relationship with Indigenous communities. There is more checking now but [the] accent is on accounting rather than outcomes.

Heffernan believes that Kurdiji, discussed in Chapter 4 and 5, is an active Warlpiri body that is beneficial for Lajamanu. He notes that other places use councils or shires in a similar manner. Heffernan warns that it will be hard for communities to keep their identities and to survive.

Roger Teague, a former Government Business Manager for Lajamanu, considers that governments are unlikely to accept any radical changes to their existing policies for Indigenous communities. In his view, the 'Indigenous political scene is not a high priority in the scale of Federal politics'. He is of the view that the quality of public servants is poor, and this further inhibits effective change (Teague 2014). Like Heffernan, he is pessimistic when asked about the survival of remote Indigenous communities. He reasons that to ensure survival, there are two essential things that must take place. First, the government and the Australian public must somehow become more informed of the real history of Australia's Indigenous people; and second, there is a need for mainstream Australians to appreciate the tragedy of what really happened to Indigenous people.

Peter Shergold, who served as CEO of the department of Prime Minister and Cabinet for the Rudd, Howard, Keating and Hawke governments, admits that some of the government Indigenous policies and actions have proved to be ineffective:

I look back on those years as a period of failure, judged against the criteria of equal opportunity, economic and social mobility, human rights and civic responsibilities, control and empowerment (Shergold 2013, pp. ix-x).

He attributes three basic factors as being responsible for the failure of governments to make significant inroads into closing the socio-economic gap. The first factor is that there are far too

many government schemes and programs and they have increased the 'problem of passive welfare'. The second factor is that well-intentioned and reasonably executed policies and projects tend to become outdated and unproductive after a period. The third factor is that many programs are designed more for 'bureaucratic convenience', are macro-designed, and because these are unspecific 'blanket' programs they ignore the obvious differences of remote communities in regional centres and in urban and city situations, 'government programs tend to be designed for administrative convenience rather than centred on the needs of the individual' (Shergold 2013 pp. x-xi). Shergold indicates that there have been too many government initiatives that have inadvertently fostered Indigenous dependency and apathy. He agrees with Pearson's view (2000) that government actions have resulted in dependence and learned helplessness. Governments and the bureaucracy have rewarded need, rather than effort:

[Policies that compound] the problem of passive welfare and learned helplessness...the structure of bureaucratic programs tends to ossify over time...government programs tend to be designed for administrative convenience rather than centred on the needs of the individual...[problems] are taken as uniform (2013 p. x).

However, he believes that both sides of politics, Labor and Liberal–National Coalition parties, have been sincere in seeking to lessen the gap and continue to foster equality and opportunity for Indigenous people. He also notes that government has sometimes inadvertently assisted wasteful communities to gain at the expense of the more functional communities. In summary he concludes that:

People [Indigenous]—our fellow citizens—need to be given the chance to take full control of their lives...if we continue to do what we always did, we'll always get what we always got (Shergold 2013 pp. xi-xii).

8.3 Employment and Training

Both government and the Lajamanu community appear to be focused on the provision of more employment to improve the Lajamanu economy. Turner complains that the lack of understanding, training, and non-preferential treatment for Indigenous workers continue to limit available employment in communities such as Lajamanu. She cites the lack of circumstantial change:

When I started in Aboriginal Affairs in the 1960s in the Department of the Interior (Northern Territory Welfare Branch), people on reserves and settlements were all on training allowances. Yet they were grown mature grandfathers in the same work as I was. We had a works task force to do maintenance, alongside White people. Whites got award wages and the Aboriginals got training allowances.

Given a continuing lack of employment opportunities, McGill negates any suggestion that many Warlpiri people will leave their communities in the future seeking employment. He maintains that most (although not all) will remain in their communities for kinship and cultural reasons. He argues that government should accept that government-financed training and employment schemes such as CDEP or RJCP are needed because:

They [Warlpiri] are going to stay in Lajamanu and so we will have to pay one way or another. Why can't we accept that there is some sort of welfare support needed? There is no economy. Dole is not the answer. Perhaps they should be paid to continue to develop and perhaps amend their culture. Perhaps we should accept that.

8.3.1 Training

Training is considered by most interviewees to be an ongoing need. The past quantity and quality of training was severely criticised. Turner proposes that there is a need for a facility to train bureaucrats who can 'walk in both worlds', a facility that would require intensive government investment and the enthusiastic support of both the community and government for the first five years. In her view, a facility could be established either within or external to the community. Turner suggested that such a facility be a new specific institution like the now defunct Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA) in Sydney, which successfully provided intensive training for patrol officers (including myself) for work in the Northern Territory and in Papua New Guinea and in Australia. Such a facility would concentrate on basic numeracy, literacy, community development training, as well as on administration. It would be culturally respectful and specialise in community needs. Training in administration, in management and finance, health and nursing services are some examples of the training possibilities. Turner feels that the former CDEP was a good program but that it was handled poorly. While it was considered to have been much better than welfare, it would have worked better for the available local workforce if it had concentrated on:

accreditation, proper accreditation but...Let's get over continual upgrades and reviews of qualification standards. Training projects should be given sufficient time

parameters and let the local people plan and decide what training they need (Turner interview).

8.3.2 Economic development and other development

Rather cynically, Teague queries whether Warlpiri people of the Lajamanu community really desire change. Teague maintains that the Warlpiri people of Lajamanu have a well acknowledged and very complex kinship/cultural system that they have no intention of losing. Somewhat controversially he voices the view that:

Warlpiri have established that they can use the system and they are quietly happy for it to remain. They get large sums of money from royalties; all tax free.

In Teague's view, the traditional kinship structure of the Lajamanu Warlpiri community has and will continue to impede attempts by Warlpiri people to establish any business ventures. He argues that it should be appreciated that kinship advances the group and not the individual and this precludes business potential. Some Indigenous cooperatives have been successful but are rare in Australia.

Pat Turner²⁸ states that the main obstacles to employment and development have been the growth of welfare dependency and continuing policy and rule changes. These factors have caused community confidence to dwindle, and this confidence will need to be restored before economic development can occur.

8.4 Education

Tony Tapsell, the CEO of the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT) is convinced that self- government of any kind will not be possible until Warlpiri people improve their literacy skills. Education, in his view, is the key to future development.

As a former senior public servant, Teague also holds the view that a good education system is necessary for any meaningful and permanent gains. Tapsell and Turner agree that a dramatic improvement and focus on literacy and numeracy would greatly contribute to solving the management 'side of things' in communities. Tapsell particularly notes deterioration over the last several decades:

²⁸ Patricia Turner, a former Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and senior public servant in Canberra.

In 1960s and 70s, we were churning out educated Indigenous people, an example being Luther who was the first CEO of a Lajamanu council. I was staggered when I first went to Lajamanu because they were all sending their kids to Charters Towers and they were all getting a good education. I had one bloke who I taught to do payroll in one day.

Tapsell is a strong advocate of the Wilson Report (Wilson 2013), which is discussed in the next chapter, arguing that it is comprehensive, instructive, and that it particularly addresses the problems that have been expressed by the Lajamanu community, not only in education restructuring and improvement but also in the areas of employment, training, and community encouragement. The Wilson Report (Wilson 2013) recommends that there should be sustained teaching of the community's first language and should include the teaching of English literacy on the understanding that English is not the first language if a trained teacher is available. It further recommends the training of Indigenous first language speakers to teach the language both as fully trained teachers and on a limited authority to teach basis. English language learning should be provided from the start of school, with delivery of the curriculum being in English. However, there should be an active presence of trained first language speaking adults in the classroom where the curriculum is delivered in English to Indigenous students (Wilson 2013, p. 20). Tapsell agrees with all of Wilson's findings and maintains that the present approach to education is wrong. He also argues that:

The problem with education is that it is continually being experimented with. We throw out all the good things and lose sight of what we should be doing. If you want to empower a person teach them how to read and write.

Turner concludes that educational improvements are needed, maintaining that:

Half of Aboriginal kids in communities are not even enrolled. So, you only get the statistics for the kids that are enrolled. You need to get every kid enrolled and then report on their attendance. Teachers will say they don't have the facilities or capacity for all these kids. But rotate the hours ... do something more creative (Turner 2012).

8.5 Health

Sean Heffernan, the CEO of Katherine West health Board, recounted that every community has different health needs. He insists that health services must respond to the data evidence of these needs. He suggests that this concept also applies to other areas, such as education. However, he argues that for such a holistic approach to work, 'you have to have all tiers of

governments on board'. There is capacity for Indigenous communities to manage health boards, and other services, but they need to build on their strengths and work on the challenge areas. For example, when the Katherine West Health Board was established, nearly all the Board was composed of senior Aboriginal health workers who had knowledge of the health system and who knew how to make it work. But as these workers have retired, there is a need for new members who have base-line governance training at least. Furthermore, a longer-term outlook is needed. Heffernan states that, unfortunately, the government does not operate on a long term planned outlook. He believes that it takes three to four years to make an impact and by that time, governments are more focused on the next election.

8.6 Alcohol and drug control

Moira McCreesh of the Department of Health and Families Alcohol and Other Drugs Program in Katherine states that there have been continuing efforts and various programs to address drug and alcohol issues. Alcohol and drug use are a complex problem that is deeply related to the cross-cultural difficulties that remote Indigenous people are faced with. McCreesh referred me to one interesting program called 'The Cycle of Behavioural Change'. For illustration, it uses the wheel as its cycle (Figure 21). The Cycle of Behavioural Change is demonstrated first (at the top) by being 'Not worried'. While the person, male or female, who is represented by a horse-shoe shape, is close to the alcohol, drugs, and/or tobacco (in the centre). His family, who are shown as three horse-shoe shapes on the outer edge of the circle, are concerned and want him/her to stop. But the person refuses to listen. Moving to the right, the person begins 'Thinking'. They have started to realise and to understand that maybe drugs and alcohol are not good for their health and wellbeing and can bring 'sorry and shame' to themselves, and that they may need the support of the family, shown on the outer edge. Next comes the 'Trying', where the person is midway in thought between their urge for alcohol or drugs and their responsibilities to family. They want to change and start to try different tactics, from drinking less to light beer to hobbies and pursuits to distract from their excess usage. The person begins to realise that it will require a life change which needs a well-thought-out plan. 'Doing' is the next part of this cycle, and it involves making the change with the support of family and other people. Then comes the difficult part of to the plan, 'Sticking to it'. The final part of the program is the 'Oops' part, the danger of relapse. Both the person

and their family must be aware of this danger and be prepared for it to occur. Support is essential at this stage, though there is a need for family support throughout the cycle.

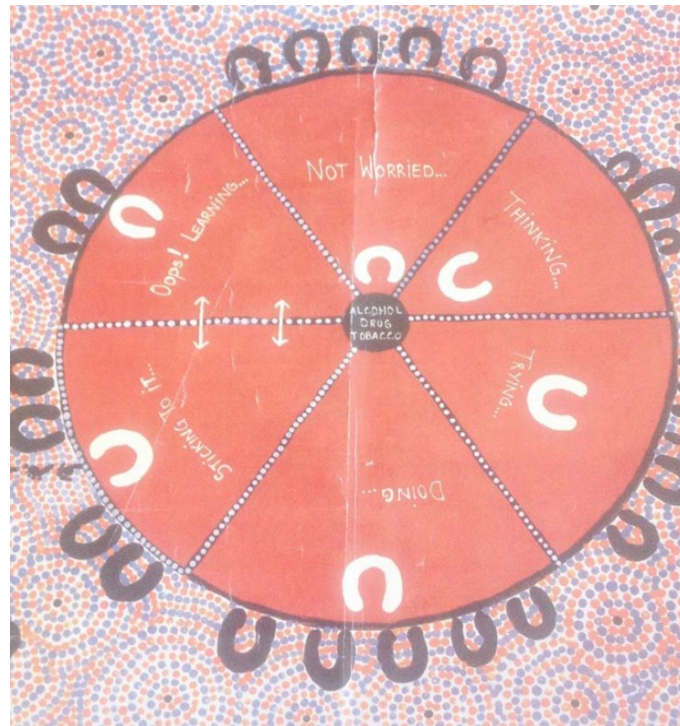


Figure 8-1: The cycle of behavioural change.

Poster produced by Northern Territory Government, Department of Health and Families Alcohol and Other Drug Program 2000. Note: The centrepiece states 'Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco'.

McCreesh states that this is an illustration of only one of the strategies that is being attempted by government to address this difficult problem. She advises that other agencies are also addressing the issue. However, to her knowledge, no Alcoholics Anonymous programs operate in remote communities, including Lajamanu. I found this to be surprising since it has proved to be a reasonably successful program worldwide and its group format would seem to be suitable for Indigenous communities.

Doug Kelly, in the same department, maintains that sport and family leadership are key factors that can be used to control drug and alcohol problems. As an Aboriginal man, with past football achievements, he believes that he can contribute because he understands the problems faced by people on remote communities. He talked about the confusion that

Indigenous people face regarding relocation, land, and cross-cultural barriers and suggests that these factors contribute to their alcohol and drug problems.

Patricia Turner has addressed the problem of petrol sniffing:

We have a system in Aboriginal families where there is responsibility taken by mother, father, uncle, aunties, everybody for the raising of a child so why aren't those people taking the petrol off these kids? You look after your kids, government will help with other programs we will give them something else to do ... stop boredom. But you have to do your bit because they are your kids. Stop and think.

Turner refers to the Mount Theo Program. This is a predominantly Warlpiri-managed, traditional-based rehabilitation program that places those with an addiction problem into a remote and isolated Indigenous facility for a period of weeks. The recipients are required to undergo rehabilitation that resembles a return to a hunting and gathering mode of living under harsh conditions. The program is highly regarded by the Warlpiri and other communities and has been noted in some government circles (Preuss & Brown 2006). It has a remarkably good success rate. A similar program called 'healing centres' instead of 'jail' has been proposed by former Queensland Government Corrective Services Director, Keith Hamburger (Horn 2017).

8.7 Housing

Tapsell states that housing is a major issue in Lajamanu and believes that the local community also sees it as a problem. He concludes that there is a dire lack of housing in remote communities and a major overcrowding problem. The lack of supply and maintenance of housing has been a longstanding predicament for governments. McGill agreed and states that the introduction of the NTER did little to solve the problem. Turner highlighted the magnitude of the problem by advising that 'in those days' when she was in ATSIC, the backlog in housing monies required was over \$90 million, and she forcefully states that it will need significantly more funding now. She also states another aspect to the problem of housing:

I get frustrated with design of housing on Aboriginal communities. They are never consulted over structure, design and mundane things such as what is the most appropriate shelter for the climate. Let's not talk about housing but instead talk about insulated sustainable structures.

These are interesting observations that show some contrast with the observed views of the Warlpiri residents who while they agree that there are not enough houses, they did not appear to see housing as one of their main priorities.

Turner suggests that it is time for government to encourage Indigenous people to use their initiative, 'always appreciating that there is not a bottomless bucket of money available'. She believes that Indigenous people should be given more input into the design of their housing while adhering to the 'obvious limitations on expenditure'.

On a somewhat different note, Teague suggests that there may be some value in re-visiting mission and government practices in earlier times, mainly for both Indigenous people and governments to consider how the self-development methods, in building and trade experiences, could be productively re-introduced into Lajamanu.

8.8 Law and policing

Teague agrees that there can be only one rule of law in Australia. However, he noted that Warlpiri law is remarkably like western or Australian law, and that it has been misunderstood and misinterpreted by government. He believes that it can be partially applied without offending the Australian rule of law. In his view, government has not appreciated that the essence of Warlpiri Law is shame and not brutality. But he also found fault with the Warlpiri people's belief that Warlpiri law is fixed or static and stated that they will need to realise that it has gradually changed as the Warlpiri mode of life has changed. He considered that both Warlpiri and government would benefit from these realisations. Turner has somewhat similar thoughts, and adds:

I agree that a sovereign nation must have one rule of law which is why Australia has always been a stable country. But people [non-Indigenous] do not understand and respect customary law. Problem is that the younger Aboriginal generation bastardise it and create problems, tribal murders, etc.

8.9 Local and Shire government

Elliot McAdam, an Indigenous former MP of local government, introduced and supported the amalgamation of the local councils into the shire. He strongly believed at that time that the shires offered more opportunity for better cost efficiency and outcomes. He holds to those views but now considers the development of this process has been too 'top-down', too

controlled by senior managers and too little by the community. In his view the Northern Territory Shire [Regional council] concept is structurally flawed. He and Veronica Birrell, a councillor for the Vic-Daly Shire, both express disillusionment over the poor implementation and outcomes of the amalgamation of local councils into shire (Regional councils). However, both express hope and a limited optimism for the future of these bodies (now called Regional Councils), particularly if the planned changes were to permit more community control and decision-making, and to provide enough government funding.

Arguably, the amalgamation of local councils in the vast Tanami Desert region is a mistake (Dilena 2012c). The economy of scale of the larger shire concept suggests that better equipment can be purchased, more fully utilised, duplication can be eliminated, and less people need to be employed. However, Lajamanu has exceptional circumstances that prevent this from being beneficial; namely because of Indigenous differences and the massive problem of distance. Lajamanu is approximately 850 kilometres from its Central Desert Shire headquarters situated at Alice Springs. The Regional Shire Council has only two Lajamanu elected representatives. These two representatives of the Lajamanu community are paid basic annual gratuities and travel allowances. They are expected to travel to regular meetings in Alice Springs. The remuneration is inadequate considering the time, travel, and effort required to adequately accomplish these duties. The channels of communication have proved to be ineffective. The Shire does however provide for a local subsidiary Lajamanu Board with limited finance and decision-making opportunity.

At one interview, a senior manager²⁹ in the Central Desert Shire (now the Central Desert Regional Council) posed the question, 'Is the Shire meant to be a local government body or an Indigenous employment agency?' She considered this to be a pressing question because Shires [Regional councils] are bound by government statutes and laws to perform effectively and efficiently as local government bodies in the manner so prescribed by those statutes. The shires currently focus on the core local government services; local roads, garbage collection and management and parks and gardens. Non-Indigenous employees are considered by the Shire [Regional council] management to be more qualified, reliable, and time efficient. The Central Desert Regional Council faces the same dilemma as the Lajamanu Store; does the

²⁹ The interviewee wished not to be named but can be verified.

community wish it to operate efficiently or not? But on the other hand, theoretically these bodies should be bound by the wishes of their governing committees or boards because the Shire is meant to represent the community, and it may be that the community regards Indigenous employment to be a higher priority than efficiency. Unfortunately, the prevailing government legislation leaves few opportunities for Regional councils to deviate from its legislated role.

Tapsell, CEO of the local Government association off the Northern Territory (LGANT) notes that within a very short space of time, the shires [Regional councils] were 'branded or seen as toxic'. The Indigenous communities complained that they had lost the power to manage their communities. In retrospect, the Northern Territory government had established the shires too quickly, appointed poor choices for CEOs, selected an untested information technology/computer system, and were substantially underfunded (Tapsell 2013). McGill tended to agree with this but considered that they have recently shown improved governance. Most of those interviewed did not agree with McGill.

Peterson (2013) is of the view that there are benefits to be gained in using local government as 'vehicles for community development' (2013 p. 343). By broadening the range of service provision to include such things as night patrol, safe house, aged care, post office, airstrip maintenance and management, CDEP (now RJCP) management, etc. it directly involves the community in governance and development function or as he says it enables local government to function 'not only as service delivery agents, but, equally importantly, as mechanisms for community development' (2013 p.349). Peterson argues that the current focus:

Is a mistake, because it fails to recognise the key factor creating the gulf between the new policy on community governance and the effective economic and social development of these towns. (2013 p.341).

Heffernan, CEO of Katherine West Health Service, doubts the effectiveness of the shires or regional councils, stating that:

The people did not like the European construct of local government councils, and they were far from perfect, but it still gave the people a venue where non-Indigenous and government had to listen. Greater Shires (now Regional councils) which replaced

councils have weakened that direct voice. Suddenly, their tractors were not there...taken.

McGill has the view that the former community government councils have not worked because of a lack of funding, of corruption, and because of 'dodgy' and poorly skilled white staff. He argues that the shires [Regional councils] offer an opportunity to eliminate this element and to provide a better operation. He advises that the government provides \$4 million per year to subsidise fifty percent of the employment costs of Indigenous persons in Regional councils as an enticement to employ Indigenous people. This did not seem to be apparent in Lajamanu. On the negative side, he notes that the Regional councils have lost most of their agency roles, including CDEP contracts, because they have not been financially competitive. This has meant that new agency bodies have been required in Lajamanu. The CDEP has now been restructured into the RJCP and this service is managed by a contracted private body.

8.9.1 Roads and infrastructure

Peter McLinden, the Manager of Transport and Infrastructure for LGANT, emphasised that main roads and major infrastructure is an ongoing requirement of communities that are distant from townships and cities. Understandably, these remote communities are dependent upon government funding, and governments must balance the small numbers of the community and the great distances with the huge costs involved. He stated that it costs approximately \$1 million to seal one kilometre of local Northern Territory road and \$25,000 to re-sheet a local gravel road. McLinden noted that many of these roads service very few people. This is true of Lajamanu. The 100-kilometre road from Lajamanu to Kalkarindji, the main supply road to Katherine, is a graded dirt road that is subject to flooding and intermittent closure. The road link from Kalkarindji to Katherine is a single bitumen sealed road, approximately 500 kilometres in length. The maintenance costs of the Lajamanu–Katherine road are huge and ongoing. McLinden's comments clearly highlight the government predicament given that funds are limited.

Greg Moxom, Administrator of the Roads to Recovery Program (operating since 2001) states that this program has been acknowledged as being highly successful in developing and maintaining local roads throughout Australia and has played an important role in remote Indigenous communities. He says that the program has allowed communities, through their

local government agencies, to improve their infrastructure needs and to prioritise them over a five-year period. He acknowledges the substantial limitation of funding and that councils must compete for the available grants. He also appreciated that there are differing levels of administrative competence within councils. Moxom states that efforts are made to provide a fair distribution of available monies. However, he also admits that his staff has limited opportunities to visit communities and to undertake prior inspections because of lack of funds. This means that they have had few opportunities to inspect the finished projects in remote areas. In 2013, due to limited funding, only ninety councils throughout Australia, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, were visited and inspected.

8.10 Historical context

Tapsell observed that until 1972, Indigenous communities were administered as mission or government settlements, and were managed with reasonable results. He acknowledged that missions and settlements had their failings but believes that there were some good aspects that have been overlooked. If Aboriginal people wanted money, they had to work. Although the wages were poor or non-existent, at least they had a job. They were not in charge. Tapsell also has some similar thoughts relating that:

In those times, there was an ad hoc arrangement with the traditional owners and their wishes when it came to [Warlpiri] development. Now they have to approve draft plans which although supposedly theirs are largely government driven and conceived.

Teague believes that the missions did a lot more to assist and develop Indigenous communities than they are given recognition for. He notes that some missions encouraged the development of the writing and translating of the Warlpiri language, thus saving it for posterity. They taught Indigenous people a work ethic and practical skills. Unfortunately, in his view, the introduction of equal pay and better conditions had the negative affect of unemployment which contributed to the loss of skills and to the emergence of a welfare mentality. He suggests that if mission and government settlements had continued, they would have had positive influences that would have been preferable to the indecisive government policies that have subsequently been implemented.

8.11 Summary

This chapter reveals some interesting and sometimes surprising observations. Shergold and Patricia Turner differ greatly on Indigenous policy and practice, but both are of the view that government results have been disappointing. Most of those interviewed chose to focus on development and on closing the socio-economic gap. Their thinking seems to be locked into western neo-liberal conceptions of how the Lajamanu (and other Indigenous) communities can survive. Mack, who is Indigenous, differs in that she gives an exceptional explanation of how a vibrant culture must be a part of any successful future development of Indigenous communities.

Government policies and practices are highly critiqued. There is consensus that government has often neglected to consult with Indigenous communities in creating policy. Criticism include those of over-governing, 'blanket', non-community specific Indigenous policies, overly-bureaucratic practices and an over insistence on efficiency and accountability. Limited government finance and failure to develop long-term policies and planning objectives are considered to be another problem. The regionalisation of local government is regarded as being disappointing but still in development. However, there is a general consensus that the expansion of local government into shires has compromised local decision-making.

Critical discussion also focused on Indigenous leadership, Indigenous governance capacity, the community's lack of initiative and willingness to adapt.

There are practical and informative suggestions on training, alcohol and drug rehabilitation that could be considered and a concerted view that a re-thought-out education policy should be given priority in any future community development.

These views offer additional understanding of the Lajamanu community because they give some unique insight into the perspective of administrators and policy makers. Their evaluations and appraisals are based on experience and observation in the field, in first-hand experience of government practice. Their positioning enables a macro observation and assessment of the performance government policies and practices.

CHAPTER 9

LITERATURE REVIEW

I am aware that usual practice is to introduce the Literature Review chapter earlier in a thesis of this type and then to compare research findings. However, in this case it seemed more appropriate to reverse this order because the purpose of the new field research is to independently compare, reject and/or to reinforce those views presented in the Literature Review. This original research has been presented earlier in order that the reader can firstly absorb the first hand views of those that live in and directly relate to Lajamanu and then relate and compare this new material with the extensive amount of literature relating to Lajamanu. The added value of the newly researched views adds to and cements the value of many of those views expressed in this scholarly Literature Review indicating and reinforcing some key factors that may assist Lajamanu (and perhaps other remote Indigenous communities) to obtain socio-economic equality and equity with mainstream.

Information and research provided in previous chapters shows that the Lajamanu community (and most Indigenous communities) are socio-economically disadvantaged when compared to the dominant mainstream Australian population. This is confirmed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS2018a) and the Prime minister's *Closing the Gap* Reports (Prime Minister 2014, 2015 & 2017). It is also noted that government has focused on lowering unemployment rates, promoting economic opportunity, growth, and fostering better education, health and housing (Prime Minister 2015 p.5), and 'is committed to ensuring that Indigenous Australians have the same opportunities as non-Indigenous Australians to share in the prosperity of our nation' (FAHCSIA 2011 p. 7). This is commendable but Dillon & Westbury (2007) notes that government policies often fail to seek or ignore the input of Indigenous communities.

The Literature Review chapter explores various writers' views and critiques of government policies and practices and of how they have and continue to impact on the Lajamanu community. It provides a composite synopsis of the acquired well-researched knowledge of scholars and experienced observers. The literature chosen is to the best of my ability representative of the varying views, arguments and theories that relate to Indigenous -nation

state socio-cultural differences and as to how those differences can be accommodated. Focus is particularly placed on the Lajamanu community. Chapter Five has also discussed some of the philosophical thinking from both non-Indigenous and the International and Australian Indigenous writers.

The Literature Review and the field research have similar focus, the literature being the known knowledge and views and the research providing new additional views, information and independent confirmation from relevant community members. The Literature Review critiques the factors that contribute to the failure to address the Lajamanu community's rights, equity, sovereignty, continuing socio-disadvantage, and many other matters that relate to the Lajamanu community and its future.

9.1 Addressing Disadvantage

Austin-Broos (2011)³⁰ critiques the government's perception of Indigenous disadvantage and the way in which it has sought to alleviate it. She notes that contemporary policies are targeted to *Close the Gap* but that policies have often been established without consulting the Indigenous communities as to how the gaps can best be closed, and if the designated gaps of *Closing the Gap* policies are the priority needs and wants of those communities. Austin-Broos argues that government has ignored the Indigenous people's desire to retain cultural identity in policies designed to achieve Indigenous socio-economic equity with mainstream. She is of a view that Indigenous communities are intensely concerned with the retention of their cultures and heritage. Yet current government policies focus on the unequal socio-economic balance and continue to ignore cultural difference. She argues that, by their nature these policies favour the integration of Indigenous people into mainstream society. Austin-Broos suggests that a balance between the views of government and Indigenous groups may offer a more reasoned perspective. In other words, the social and economic gap between remote Aboriginal communities and mainstream Australia (details of which are given later in this chapter) is more productively addressed when cultural difference and identity are recognised and accounted for (Austin-Broos 2011). Austin-Broos (2011) appreciates there is a dichotomy of views as to what constitutes Indigenous disadvantage and argues that a balanced compromise of these views is desirable. Others agree and suggest that compromise and some

³⁰ An Australian Anthropologist

lateral thinking could assist the process of lessening these disadvantages (Altman, Biddle & Hunter 2008a; Altman 2001b; Hunt 2013a; & Sullivan 2011).

Kymlicka³¹ (2011) takes a similar stance in suggesting (Chapter Five) that seeking to accommodate Indigenous communities equitably within the nation state must be 'a two-way street', in which the 'burden of integration' falls not only on minority Indigenous peoples but particularly on the state and mainstream institutions. The latter should seek to accommodate the 'identities, practices and aspirations' of the Indigenous minority communities (Kymlicka 2011 p. 22). One hiccup is Kymlicka's suggestion that Indigenous groups can integrate may be less than acceptable to many Indigenous peoples since Indigenous people have clearly demonstrated that they wish to retain identity and cultural heritage and fear any integration into mainstream. Perhaps a compromise living together strategy would be better received. Political anthropologist Sullivan's (2011) living together strategy, which is discussed later in this chapter, may be a more acceptable option.

The original field research findings suggest that there is support for Austin-Broos's, Kymlicka's and Sullivan's thinking on disadvantage. But perhaps we are getting ahead of ourselves. Surely there are several questions to be asked. What does equity and equality mean? What are the disadvantages that challenge Indigenous communities and who decides what those disadvantages are? What is an appropriate way to address these issues? Is government or the Indigenous community responsible? Should both share responsibility? These are the questions that perhaps the literature can explain and perhaps supply answers.

9.2 Responsibility

Do contemporary Australian governments and mainstream society have an onus to accept responsibility for the deprivations and disadvantages of Indigenous Australians, and to ensure their rights and privileges? Philosopher Thompson (2000 p. 339) argues that governments should accept responsibility for many of the deleterious effects and repercussions of colonisation and for the many oppressive policies that have been imposed on Aboriginal people by the Australian settler-colonial society. She believes that governments should act to rectify these created disadvantages. However, Thompson also considers that it is reasonable

³¹ Canadian political philosopher

to presume that Indigenous Australians should also accept some of the responsibility because they have had some, albeit very limited, opportunity to influence government and to determine the livelihood of their community (2000 p. 339). Former Prime Minister John Howard has a somewhat different view to that of Thompson. He avers that:

Australians of this generation should not be required to accept guilt and blame for past actions and policies over which they had no control. But we do have an obligation and responsibility to overcome their legacies for our fellow Australians (2000 p. 90).

Notwithstanding Prime Minister Howard's thinking, governments of both political persuasions have accepted responsibility to lessen poverty and deprivation in Indigenous communities. Peter Shergold, former Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and academic, considers that governments over the last fifty years have been sincere in their intent and attempts to 'improve the lot' of Indigenous Australians (2013 p. ix). While this is a reasonable assertion, it is apparent that government policies and actions, sincere or not, have not had the desired results. Government policies and actions have had only limited or negligible results, leaving the socio-economic gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies largely unchanged. Shergold³² is forced to admit that:

after two decades, the scale of relative disadvantage suffered by Indigenous Australians remained as intractable as ever. I can think of no failure in public policy that has had such profound consequences (Shergold 2013 p. x).

Meanwhile, the search continues to find ways to diminish the substantial economic and social gulf between Indigenous communities and mainstream society (Altman, Biddle & Hunter 2004, p. 19). Contemporary observers continue to question the government's under-utilisation of available knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures, their history, and the importance of the different Indigenous social relationships (Hunt, & Smith 2005; Sanders 2008a; & Sullivan 2008).

The question then re-emerges, why have government policies had so little success? This chapter examines various writers' thoughts on the origins, the thinking and the outcomes of government policies. To do this it needs to briefly discuss the evolution and some of the

³² Peter Shergold served as CEO of the department of Prime Minister and Cabinet for the Rudd, Howard, Keating and Hawke governments

reasoning behind these policies. Sullivan has described the historical evolution of government policies as those moving from bases of 'conflict and appropriation; protection and segregation; assimilation and integration; and self-determination or self-management', with a recent movement towards a neo-liberal movement towards integration (2011 p. 1).

Critiques of policies and practices are discussed in historic order to appreciate their relationships to the circumstances at the time and how change or lack of change has occurred. This requires some repetition of policies and practices that have been discussed in earlier chapters but is considered relevant to the understanding and assessment of the critiques.

9.3 Government Policies

9.3.1 Early thoughts

The lack of government enthusiasm or intent to appreciate Indigenous views and to seek Indigenous input is a longstanding practice. Over fifty years ago, Tatz³³ perceptively observed that this originates from a lack of understanding of Indigenous affairs:

In Canberra there are not more than five officers with recent first-hand experience of the Territory and Aboriginal conditions...The ignorance of Canberra staff about Territory conditions is perhaps one of the most vital elements in understanding the policy-administration gap...On the other hand, the information supplied to Canberra from the Territory is often inadequate and unreliable (1964 p. 273).

Some twenty-four years after Tatz made his observation, Gortimer observed that:

There is a dangerous assumption among whites, particularly at the official level, that they 'know the black man'. That sort of thinking is much resented by blacks, and rightly so. Even if you 'know' people, that doesn't mean you can make decisions for them or deprive them of all responsibility for their lives (McClay 1988 p. 401)

And as late as 2014, Peterson³⁴ and Merlan³⁵ commented that government should have learned that:

³³ Political scientist

³⁴ Director of the Centre for Native Title Anthropology:

³⁵ Professor of Anthropology, ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences

it [is] unequivocally clear that there is no room for problem deflation and that critique from the high moral ground uninformed by any glimmer of understanding of the lived complexity looks like what it is: gratuitous self-indulgence (2014 p. 88-89).

However, others suggest that Indigenous consideration of Indigenous identity and cultural heritage is less important than these writers have suggested and argue that assimilation or integration of Indigenous people into the mainstream is the most effective way of lessening Indigenous disadvantage.

9.3.2 Assimilationist policies

Assimilation has been described as a policy derived from an ideology that considers that a nation-state should be 'culturally homogeneous' with that of the culturally dominant group (McClay 1988 p. 341)³⁶. In general, past assimilation policies were poorly received by Indigenous minorities and they never demonstrably achieved their desired intent. Possibly this is because they ignore indigenous culture and heritage and urge acceptance of an alien culture (Haebich 2008 p. 11). Yet some writers are insistent that direct assimilation policies should be reintroduced. Johns (2011), a former politician argues that although previously tried assimilation policies had, and presumably still have, deficiencies, they are well-intentioned. He rejects all policies that offer any form of Indigenous self-determination because he considers that self-determination:

is a political strategy to idealise Aboriginal culture and use it as the glue to rekindle a sense of worth among Aborigines [and this] is the reason many Aborigines fail to embrace modern society...a recipe for dependence (Johns 2011 p. 15).

In his view, when the government chose to do away with assimilation policies in favour of those of self-determination, it 'condemned Aborigines to playing out a Whiteman's dream—Aborigines living in ancient ways in an ancient landscape' (2011, p. 15). Johns strongly advocates the reintroduction of assimilation policies arguing that:

Therein lies the solution to the wicked problem [of the ineffectiveness of Aboriginal policy]...if the problem is differently conceived—that is, that Aborigines must learn to adapt to their new environment—it will resolve itself more quickly and with less pain. The idealists suggest this solution is tantamount to killing the patient, but is the patient an idealised Aborigine or a person? (2008 p. 81).

³⁶ PhD Thesis, Graduate School of Education, The University of Queensland

In Johns' view, Indigenous cultural heritage and practices are a hindrance to Indigenous people's future development. He argues that Indigenous people will be best served by becoming a part of mainstream Australian society. By inference, he anticipates the destruction of unique Indigenous cultures and heritages (2008).

Similarly, Etherington³⁷ emphasises 'the demonstrable failure of the policy of self-determination that has prevailed over the past four decades' (2007 p. i-iii) and argues that Indigenous Australians living in remote communities should be encouraged to resettle in urban communities. This, he maintains would enable them to gain employment, education, better health facilities, etc. He seems to have overlooked that in many cases in which Aboriginal people have become fringe city dwellers, they have not merged well or been well-accepted into the urban community. Windschuttle (2009b p. 618) has similar thoughts. This pro-assimilation group of Johns, Windschuttle, and others from the now defunct Bennelong Society³⁸ are sympathetic to overcoming Indigenous disadvantage and argue that the best way to achieve this is to encourage the assimilation of Indigenous Australians into the mainstream environment. They argue that this can occur in a similar way to that which they consider has occurred with other conquered peoples throughout the world. However, they give no satisfactory examples of this. Johns has stated that 'All Australian Aborigines live in the modern world and most thrive in that world' (2009b, p. 618). This seems somewhat odd because there is scant evidence that Aboriginal people are thriving in modern Australia (Prime Minister 2017).

Another of Johns' views is that during the thirty-year period of assimilationist policies, the problems associated with a lack of successful outcomes were only transient and, given enough time, would have been more successful. He argues that 'permanent problems arose when programs were devised to stop integration of Aborigines into the modern economy' (2011, p. 618). Windschuttle³⁹ supports the re-introduction of assimilation policies, arguing that there has been a 'demonstrable failure of the policy of self-determination'. He considers it to be a 'genuine national shame' that more Indigenous Australian children were not

³⁷ Reverend Steve Etherington, an associate of the Bennelong Society

³⁸ See the Glossary for a definition of this group. Which is now defunct.

³⁹ Australian historian

removed from Indigenous communities. He justifies this by stating that Indigenous children would benefit greatly from the better education, health, and welfare services (2009b p. 620).

These arguments are difficult to support because these authors have never shown that assimilation policies have been effective, and there is no apparent evidence of this happening. Coombs and Robinson⁴⁰ suggest one contributory reason for the lack of success of assimilation policies:

Even the most reform-orientated State programs were aimed at the assimilation of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders into one single Australian community, yet Aborigines from the most diverse contexts placed the preservation of their separateness and distinctiveness high in their priorities and looked to the future in which their Aboriginal identity would be acknowledged (1996 p. 2).

By the middle of the twentieth century government had decided that assimilation policies were ineffective and began to look elsewhere for answers. Assimilation policies were abandoned by government. However, as will be seen later in this chapter, contemporary *Closing the Gap* government policies are designed to align Indigenous communities with mainstream and by their nature have an integration flavour.

But as Sullivan has observed, after abandoning assimilation policies government did, at least temporarily, turn its focus towards forms of limited Indigenous self-determination.

9.3.3 Self-Determination and Self-Management

The period 1967 to 2005 marks a period in which the federal government sought ways to provide Indigenous Australians with improved representation and a greater control over their affairs, but only in a limited way (Partington 1996 p. 1)⁴¹. But in doing so, policies were still designed to incorporate Indigenous Australians into the socio-economic structures of mainstream Australia. Outcomes of self-government and self-management policies were not considered to be a success. But there were some indications that better outcomes could perhaps be achieved using this thinking (OIPC 2016; Hunt & Smith 2006 a & b; & Hunter 2007). There were two notable events during this period that arguably have significantly enhanced the understanding of how Indigenous communities might arrive at a satisfactory and

⁴⁰ Australian economist and public servant Coombs and associate Robinson

⁴¹ Author and historian.

equitable relationship with mainstream. The first is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and the second is the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) trials (2002-2006). Both were government initiatives that leaned towards Indigenous self-determination and/or more Indigenous self-management of their communities. Both showed promise, but both were discontinued in favour of policies that have had, and continue to have, disappointing results; policies that appear to have less potential.

While both ATSIC and COAG trials were government initiatives they are mentioned here because they show that government has considered limited self-determination for Indigenous communities but has subsequently largely discounted these policies in favour of the current neo-liberal policies. However, a number of writers consider that both ATSIC and COAG trials have more to offer. They highlight faults, omissions and oversights. Some consider that ATSIC's powers were limited with government retaining much control (Dillon, 1996 pp. 92-93; Rowse 2000 pp. 200-224). The COAG report (COAG 2006 p. 29) deemed the COAG trials to be unsuccessful largely due to their being too complex, over-ambitious, and too short-lived in nature. But the COAG report clearly indicated that:

Positive outcomes are greater where negotiated expectations are realistic and clearly understood by all parties. Consistency in government personnel helps in building effective relationships both between government agencies and with communities (COAG 2006 pp. 1-9).

John Altman⁴²(2004 p.4) and Janet Hunt (2008 p.19)⁴³are of the view that there is potential to further explore these views regarding both ATSIC and the COAG trials. Notably, Cunningham⁴⁴ & Baeza ⁴⁵ (2005) consider that the demise of ATSIC 'effectively abandoned the policy of self-determination for Indigenous Australians' (2005, p. 47) and Altman (2003 p. 16), Hunt (2013) and Hunter⁴⁶ (2007) argue that most subsequent government policies have been established with little if any Indigenous consultation or input. They agree with Dillon and Westbury (2007) that government would be better served if there was more Indigenous involvement. When

⁴² Professor John Altman the foundation director of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research [CAEPR]

⁴³ Janet Hunt (2008 p.19) Associate Professor, CAEPR

⁴⁴ Professor **Joan Cunningham** is a social epidemiologist with a core focus on equity ... developing emerging research leaders, including **Indigenous researchers**,

⁴⁵ **King's College London**, [Management](#), Faculty Member, [Health Policy](#).

⁴⁶ **Boyd Hunter** specialises in labour market analysis, social economics and poverty research. Boyd coordinated the first longitudinal analysis of Indigenous job ...

interviewed (Chapter Eight), Pat Turner⁴⁷ Indigenous ex-CEO of ATSIC indicated that she believed that the ATSIC experiment attempted to create a platform for Aboriginal people to agitate for improved service and conditions. While, according to some critics, this period of limited self-determination and/or self-management did not dramatically advance the rights, equality and living conditions of Indigenous communities it did show indications that progress was possible given time (Altman 2005; Hunt & Smith 2006b; Robbins⁴⁸ 2010b; Sanders⁴⁹ 2014; Sullivan, 2011; and Westbury & Sanders 2000).

Nevertheless, while government maintained vestiges of the information gleaned from both ATSIC and COAG trials it preferred to look toward neo-liberal influenced policies for results.

The Neo-liberal AgendaThe Howard government (1996-2007) gradually phased-out self-management policies and instituted those with a neo-liberal emphasis. Pearson (2016) clarifies that the Federal Government ‘first swung right—with discrimination, assimilation and protectionism—then left—to rights and cultural relativism—before swinging right again to “practical reconciliation”. and personal responsibility’. However, Sullivan (2015) observes that while government policy thinking eventually moved away from self-determination in favour of a more neo-liberal approach it has tentatively continued to support the development of Indigenous leadership and governance capacity.

Recent work by Louth⁵⁰ (2018) suggests that there may be pitfalls in this approach. In his studies of the *Australian Government Financial Wellbeing and Capacity Program in remote Aboriginal communities* he concludes that:

It is a program steeped in the financial literacy and capability literature that has emerged from organisations like the World Bank and the OECD. These are neoliberal solutions that attempt to paper over the space that often separates distinct economic worlds...Indeed it is representative of the manifold systemic processes that drive

⁴⁷ Patricia Turner, a former Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and senior public servant in Canberra.

⁴⁸ Assoc. Professor, Policy and administration Political science, Flinders University.

⁴⁸ PhD CAEPR: political and social aspects of Indigenous policy,

⁵⁰ PhD, Australian Centre for Community Services Research based in the College of Business, Government and Law at Flinders University,

global inequality through the reproduction of a dominant economic worldview (Louth 2018a).

Povinelli⁵¹ (2002) and Lattas⁵² and Morris⁵³ (2010) note that in relation to Indigenous communities the neo-liberal agenda seeks to achieve social equality but ignores cultural differences. This agenda means that government is concentrating on such things as the proximity of Indigenous communities to labour markets, employment opportunities, and high levels of education, housing and health. They argue that the importance of Indigenous language, cultural and family differences are neglected, dismissed as unimportant or regarded as insignificant. While government logic is understandable and seemingly practical it is also understandable that Indigenous people can be expected to resist loss of identity and of cultural mores. Meanwhile government policies continue to focus on *Closing the Gap*.

9.3.4 Closing the gap

Closing the Gap policies have been discussed previously in Chapter Three. The specified Gap targets are life expectancy, child mortality, childhood education and employment. These policy targets have been government priorities over the past decade. And not the priorities the Lajamanu community (Chapter Six). The government decided Closing the Gap policies have continually failed to meet expectations (Prime Minister 2014, 2015 & 2017). Yet the Closing the Gap strategy remains. Closing the Gap continues to be a central element of national Aboriginal affairs policy working on the premise that there should be no gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. There have been a number of social science critiques of this dominant approach and Altman (2009a, p.7) provides some pertinent examples.

- **Post development theory** that would interpret the CTG framework as just an antiquated form of imposing a top-down modernisation approach on Indigenous subjects (Ferguson 2006). As an element of this theory, anthropologies of development would critique such universalistic top-down approaches as disruptive of local solutions and cultures, and fundamentally reflecting a discourse of power (Escobar 1995).

⁵¹ An anthropologist specialising in critical theory and filmmaker.

⁵² Professor, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen, specialises in religious and political dynamics and sociocultural processes including fieldwork in Papua New Guinea, Australia and Greece.

⁵³ Senior Lecturer, School of Humanities and Social Science (.)

- **Indigenous standpoint theory** that would just see this approach as a means to legitimise state intervention, to define Indigenous difference as in need of remedy, to mainstream non-Indigenous standards, and to avoid acknowledging Indigenous notions of outcomes that might include self-determination, autonomy and self-governance (Humpage 2005).⁷
- **Culturalist/relativist critiques** that note how such an approach only uses the social norms of the dominant society, and so fails to value different life worlds and social norms whether in remote (Peterson 2005) or metropolitan (Cowlshaw 2009) Australia.
- **Methodological critiques** that describe how social indicators can be culturally inappropriate. Statistics focus on *averages* of individuals, and so present a statistical fiction of subjects as independent of kinship or community social settings (Taylor 2008).
- **Political economic critiques** that emphasise how such a framework conveniently fails to acknowledge that poverty is a symptom of powerlessness, and hence fails to address politico-economic relationships, the structural sources of inequality, their evolution and how they might be rectified (Li 2007).

9.4 Critiques of Government Indigenous Policy Initiatives

Undeniably, the socio-economic gaps that government has targeted are real, significant and unfortunately, they continue to exist in Indigenous communities. Altman (2009a p. 14) and Hunt (2013a p. 2) support efforts to lessen Indigenous disadvantage but argue that government has erred in its policy focus and application in that it would be better served in firstly addressing the priorities of the community. It is noted that the current field research reveals (Chapters 6 and 7) that the Lajamanu community places a higher priority on the issues of identity, retention of their culture and of their kinship arrangements. Other contemporary observers also comment on government's apparent failure to appreciate the differences between mainstream and Indigenous cultures, history, and the social relationships, which differ from community to community (Hunt & Smith 2006b; Sanders 2008a; Sullivan 2011). Yet government policies continue to largely ignore these differences.

Savvas⁵⁴ (2012 pp. 95-97) refers to difficulties that government has, and will continue to encounter, when it ignores difference and seeks to impose western socio-economic concepts on Indigenous communities. He convincingly argues that if government wishes its policies to

⁵⁴ Senior Researcher, skills adviser, Flinders University

succeed it will need the input and cooperation of indigenous communities to close the gap He explains that this will mean that:

engaging with the debate and negotiating acceptable solutions is critical. For non-Indigenous writers [or policy makers] to simply create imaginary Indigenous communities is ultimately disrespectful towards Indigenous Australians (2012 p. 96).

In a similar vein, Sullivan argues that Indigenous development and elimination of disadvantage 'cannot be delivered by central planning alone' (2013 pp. 364-365). In his view the whole-of-government 'normalisation' of government Indigenous affairs administration is 'undermining of the Aboriginal community-controlled service sector' (2013 pp. 364-365). He explains that:

Normalisation is the term used in this paper, deliberately, though the policy is not officially called normalisation. The present government prefers '*closing the gap*', but this paper retains the term because it encapsulates the development dilemma for Aboriginal people. Normalisation is a positive goal if this means that Aboriginal people can expect a standard of living at the national norm. It is a challenge if it means that Aboriginal people are required to reflect socially, culturally and individually an idealised profile of the normal citizen established by the remote processes of bureaucratic public policy making (Sullivan 2011 p. 3).

Hunter and Jordan (2010) are also critical of whole-of-government social inclusion programs and are of the view that government policies designed to eliminate Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage encourage Indigenous communities to move into the mainstream economy; policies that are passively resisted by these communities. It is their contention that:

Theories of justice and rights suggest that this approach is inadequate if the goal is to accommodate both improved Indigenous wellbeing and a commitment to Indigenous people's freedom of choice (Hunter & Jordan 2010 p. 261).

Dillon and Westbury⁵⁵ (2007 p. 208) claim that centralised government decision-making, without adequate respect, understanding, and lack of significant cross-communication with communities, has almost certainly contributed to the continuing failure of governments to successfully incorporate Indigenous communities into the tapestry of the Australian nation. Robbins (2015) agrees and argues that current government neo-liberal normalisation policies

⁵⁵ Dillon and Westbury have decades of senior public service experience in Indigenous affairs, policy and administration.

and practice have usually originated from the cultural paradigm of governments and mainstream authorities and have too often ignored those of the Indigenous communities.

Altman, Biddle and Hunter (2008b) hold similar views but note that while there is a decided need for Indigenous involvement in decision making, it must be appreciated that 'the apparently intractable problem of *closing the gaps* or reducing socio-economic disparities necessarily requires mainstream solutions' (2008b p. 10). They indicate that some sort of economy based on producing goods and the employment of labour is required.

The understanding of how and why policies may have failed to achieve goals is complex. However, some writers have contributed understanding of why so few inroads have been made. As long ago as 1994, Folds has argued that a re-assessment of government thinking is necessary:

Real social justice demands a more sophisticated perspective of Aboriginal and mainstream society, which displaces notions of inequality based solely on cultural arrogance. That would require that the majority society more readily accept the differences between the two societies, not solely as inequality, but as aspects of very different cultures. Some of these differences are unpalatable and often politically difficult, but wall-papering over them will not make them go away (Folds 1994 p. 10).

Folds argues that for equitable change to happen, the 'majority society' and governments must reassess their thinking to appreciate the substantially differing Indigenous cultures and societal structures, and that as he says, 'wall-papering over them will not make them go away' (1994 p. 10).

Much later, Warren Nyunggai Mundine, executive chairman of the Australian Indigenous Chamber of Commerce and former National President of the Australian Labor Party, gave his view of the root cause: 'Poverty persists because we treat communities...like dependent children and smother them in bureaucratic mire. Let's start treating them like adults' (Mundine 2014).

Martin⁵⁶ also expressed concern regarding the nature of government Indigenous affairs policies. He suggests that:

the involvement of government in social change would carry its own risks, since despite rhetorical support for Indigenous self-determination; government is inherently incapable of moving beyond its own dominating rationale (Martin 2004 p. viii).

Taking another point of view, Hunt and Smith (2005a p. 11) cite government's poorly directed resourcing, lack of effective conflict-management mechanisms, and lack of workable systems to deliver readily accessible funding. They argue that these failings have inhibited and will continue to inhibit effectiveness and productivity. This suggests that government needs to re-assess and synchronise its policies and to somehow secure long-term Indigenous affairs funding if it is to establish more effective and coordinated Indigenous policy development.

Sullivan(2008) explains that government appears to have chosen to utilise two quite 'distinct sites of policy production' in which one site concentrates on connecting directly into ministerial power and the other takes a more meticulous route through 'parliamentary committees, ministerial councils, and bureaucratic meetings resulting in the formation of position papers' (2008a pp. 131-32). When highly complex policy decisions, such as the NTER, are devised using the former procedure, Sullivan argues that they can become 'symbolic capital in internal bureaucratic cultural exchanges' (2008a p. 131-2), with the result being that inefficiencies and misunderstandings are prone to occur.

Shergold (2013) somewhat addresses Sullivan's concern when he proposes the establishment of a 'culture of collegiality' (2013 p. x). throughout the whole-of-government policy-producing network. But Sullivan disagrees with Shergold's view that a 'tighter integration of the various arms of the bureaucracy through whole-of-government coordination of service delivery' (2013, p. 363) is necessary to achieve Indigenous development goals. Sullivan argues that this rejects rather than encourages local autonomy. He considers that Shergold's thinking will result in the continuance of policies that favour the maintenance of the 'long lines of control' (2013 p. 363). Instead, he argues that:

⁵⁶ Director of Anthropos and Senior Anthropologist, based in Canberra. He has extensive field-based experience with Aboriginal groups in rural and ... structures, native title and land rights, and addressing alcohol issues.

Information is at its freest when shared laterally. When shared upwards, it most commonly takes the form of reports, where it is necessarily structured and filtered...Information is rarely shared downward...It is most commonly shared laterally not because of trust in one's colleagues, but because of mistrust in others (2008 p. 136).

Regardless of their differences, both Sullivan and Shergold emphasise the complexity of changing government procedure and practice when developing policies and both offer some insight as to how government may better approach this task.

Government relies on its bureaucracy for much of the research, policy construction and implementation. The quality of the bureaucracy very much determines the effectiveness and efficiency and application of policies.

9.4.1 Bureaucracy

Blair⁵⁷ (1958) suggests that public officials, particularly senior public officials, 'have an important influence on matters of national policy', and that 'much of the activity of government vitally affecting the citizen must depend upon public officials who, as ordinary humans, are liable at times to be officious, over-zealous and occasionally to abuse their power' (Blair 1958 p. 64). Thompson too is decidedly critical of the Australian bureaucracy:

The picture drawn of modern bureaucracy is far from heartening. It is one of a massive employer whose activities cover a vast range of functions, all supposedly held accountable to a thin layer of politicians at the top. These politicians in turn are supposed to be accountable to the parliament...the departments of government are not held adequately responsible to their ministers; nor are the ministers held meaningfully accountable to parliament (1983 p. 191).

But despite such criticism, the Australian bureaucracy has been consistently rated highly by world standards (Stone 2013) and it is very unlikely that the government bureaucratic framework and its operating mode are ready to accept any substantial reformation. However, some suggest that this does not rule out the possibility of it making improvements (Shergold 2007; McClay 1988; Patrick et al. 2008).

Others are more sceptical. Sullivan aggressively describes Indigenous Australians as being the 'raw material' for a bureaucratic industry that is geographically distant from the people they are supposed to be serving, and that often ignores and/or fails to listen to them (Sullivan,

⁵⁷ Authoritative work on Commonwealth Public service.

2008, p. 128). Westbury and Sanders are less critical but reflect upon the size and complexity of government bureaucratic arrangements:

There are very complex funding arrangements that govern service delivery to remote Aboriginal communities. These are reflected in the sheer number of agencies; the overlapping Commonwealth, State and Territory fiscal arrangements...all serve to muddy the waters in developing agreed objectives and identifying lines of accountability in service delivery (2000 p. 22).

Hughes and Hughes are also critical of government bureaucratic performance and particularly contemptuous of government wastage, stating that approximately fifty percent of government funds allocated to Indigenous affairs are expended on:

salaries, houses and four-wheel-drives for the army of federal, state and territory bureaucrats, non-indigenous administrators and other remote community staff, contractors earning higher than private sector margins on government tenders, academic and other consultants and the staff of NGOs that receive public funding (Hughes & Hughes 2011 p. 16).

While there is some truth in this, they perhaps overstate the case. Head is more optimistic in believing that government can adapt if it has the will and motivation:

New strategic thinking needs to be championed within the public sector. This requires organisational learning and cultural change—perhaps a bridge too far for most government agencies, which are obliged to expend almost all their energy on immediate tasks to ensure delivery of their budgeted outputs. The public agencies cannot be expected to move to a different paradigm without the insight, support and long-term commitment of political leaders. It is too easy to blame the risk-averse organisational culture of public agencies for our lack of innovation. Public managers need to be encouraged by farsighted political leaders who are capable of working effectively with the business and community sectors in developing new approaches to major issues (Head, 2008 p. 105).

Clearly, there is much criticism of government bureaucratic practices and policies. However, most critics realise the complexity in re-analysing and re-construction of policies and practices in general, as well as with Indigenous matters. Nevertheless, many of the critics say that change is required. Perhaps the most important factor of note in determining future indigenous policies is made by Altman et al. (2008b p. 10) who state that real change is unlikely without the support and input of the Indigenous communities.

So far, the discussion has centred around how government should change its policies, and practices to include Indigenous input and advance their ability to effectively build Indigenous leadership, develop Indigenous ability to negotiate in western contexts and to self-determine

and self-manage their communities. But there is also an onus on Indigenous leadership to actively seek to affect change and to respond positively to any possibilities of these things occurring. Pearson has views as to why Indigenous communities seem to be lacking in such initiatives.

9.4.2 Pearson and passive welfare

Pearson argues that many of the problems and socio-economic disadvantages faced by Indigenous people stem from their almost total reliance on welfare handouts such as government unemployment benefits, CDEP, grants, royalties, etc. Indigenous communities have named this form of passive welfare 'sit-down' money (Pearson 2000a). He maintains that government welfare in Indigenous communities has become a permanent way of life rather than a temporary solution. He allows that this was perhaps not the intention of government. In his view, any workable reform of welfare must be based on the principle that dependency and passivity are scourges that must be eliminated. Pearson argues that dependency and passivity kill people and pave the way to social decline (Pearson 2000b pp. 1-3).

Chapman et al. (2014) observe behaviour in Lajamanu that appears to support Pearson's views. They found that:

...anecdotal evidence from residents to a project team during their visit to Lajamanu in April 2012, reported previously unobserved levels of hopelessness amongst elders in terms of their perceived low ability to have any direct control over their lives and community (CLC Report to Community, 2012,)...most Warlpiri feel that Lajamanu is really owned by *kardiya*¹³ (i.e., non-Aboriginal people) who have unilaterally made major changes to the way the community is run, with the result that Warlpiri power to make decisions about Lajamanu is heavily constrained (Chapman et al. 2014 p.49).

Developed passivity and perceived lack of control is seen by Pearson and Chapman et al as a major hazard which needs to be eliminated if Indigenous communities are to gain rights, equality and are to lessen the socio-economic gap. However, if Indigenous communities can overcome this learned passivity there remains the query as to whether individual communities have enough governance capacity and of capability, or potential to gain these attributes that are so essential to negotiate effectively with government.

9.4.3 Indigenous Governance and Management

There has been considerable research analysis of the state of Indigenous governance and of the ways in which it may be developed. Government and scholarly writers are generally of the view that in most circumstances, Indigenous communities lack western governance, communication and negotiation skills (Hunt & Smith 2006a). Saethre⁵⁸ (2013) explains that the requirements for leadership and management in Warlpiri communities are vastly different from those of mainstream:

Warlpiri social hierarchies are situated around age and gender. "Looking after" land and jukurrpa⁵⁹ stories is a primary way through which authority is exercised...there is no structure through which one individual could exert power or make decisions for the whole community...Authority is exercised through personal ties and allegiances rather than a formal structure composed of distinct and hierarchical positions. Personal autonomy is so highly valued that, even in a crisis situation it is seldom violated (2013 pp. 146-47).

This is not to say that Indigenous governing authority is not effective. On the contrary, Indigenous authorities have successfully governed their communities, managed cultural practice, maintained control and overcame disagreements for centuries (Morton⁶⁰ 2011). But Indigenous governance is designed for and successfully applicable to specific Indigenous circumstances rather than for that of western style negotiation and management. The two are quite different. According to Morton, an understanding of these parameters is necessary to appreciate the complexities and difficulties that the Lajamanu Warlpiri (and all Indigenous communities) face when addressing the need to manage and govern in these vastly different contemporary situations. He argues that because they are in the minority, Indigenous communities will need to develop the skills to liaise with agencies and manage projects adopting western paradigms if they wish to effectively negotiate and assert their rights and needs.

Pearson and others have already noted the problems associated in initiating Indigenous change. Chapman, Holmes, Kelly, Smith, Weepers & Wright⁶¹ 2014, p. 9) state that:

⁵⁸ Ass. Professor, Department of Anthropology (ANTH), University of Hawaii.

⁵⁹ See Glossary for a definition of jukurrpa.

⁶⁰ an anthropologist, with degrees from Sussex (BA), Oxford (Dip. Soc. Anth, MLitt) and the Australian National University (PhD).

⁶¹ Graduate Associates with Central Land Council.

the practice of how to go about the initial work and then build governance in a developmental way is in its infancy in Australia, and requires more targeted research planning, testing and implementation.

Hunt (2007) argues that western governance skills can be learned but that both Indigenous and government attitudes and understanding need to be approached in a reciprocal process. Hunt has extensively researched Indigenous community governance and affirms that traditional Indigenous leadership differs from western leadership, often lacking the skills that are required to negotiate effectively with mainstream government and mainstream systems. She maintains that government must be prepared to listen to Indigenous communities and to work with them jointly constructing and managing policies aimed at the elimination of Indigenous disadvantage. She indicates that both government and Indigenous leaders need be willing to be more flexible, to look at alternative ideas and to consider lateral ideas and alternatives.

First, governments must develop skills and frameworks to enable more effective whole-of-government and intergovernmental functioning and must also develop their capacity to build and sustain relationships with Indigenous communities, and to support these governance developments over longer time frames—coercive approaches are not conducive to the sorts of relationships required. Secondly, Indigenous people need to review and strengthen their own governance capacity so that they can take a leadership role in their relations with governments to drive agendas and programs that will improve their lives. A strong role for Indigenous people in designing and implementing solutions is essential to success (Hunt 2007 p. 164).

A substantial volume of research, trial, work and on-site experience supports Hunt's argument (Altman 2009a; COAG 2006; Cunningham & Baeza 2005; Hunt et al. 2008). The Indigenous Community Government Research project, a joint project between the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) and Reconciliation Australia, involving twelve Indigenous Australian communities, additionally reveals some valuable information relating to effective Indigenous governance. The ten key lessons, referred to as messages, are listed below:

Message 1: Relationships and representations are [the] key...Message 2: No 'one size fits all', but not all sizes are equal...Message 3: Cultural match is about legitimacy...Message 4: The cultural geography of regions forms a basis for governance...Message 5: Institutions of governance matter...Message 6: Leadership, leadership, leadership and succession...Message 7: Governance matters for sustained socioeconomic development...Message 8: The governance environment can enable or disable...Message 9: Enhancing governance capacity requires a systems developmental approach...Message 10: Governments and

Indigenous people have different criteria for evaluating governance effectiveness (Hunt & Smith, 2006b pp. 1-6).

Hunt and Smith find these key findings to be particularly relevant because:

Governance capacity development within organisations appears to work best when it is: place-based; work and goal orientated; based on self-assessed governance priorities; in a relevant form and delivered in ways that are meaningful in terms of local community realities; and sustained and reinforced over the longer-term (2005a p. 11).

The Lajamanu Community Governance Project has been particularly productive in this area. This project was conceived as an attempt to develop a model to assess and to strengthen remote community governance. It particularly focuses on the Lajamanu community's ability to effectively deal with government. It has found that:

Building governance capacity is the process of people identifying their own problems, thinking through solutions, making informed choices, carrying out effective and culturally-based actions, and taking collective responsibility for the outcomes. The lessons learnt from the project point to the conclusion that a developmental approach not only appears to work, especially at the initial stages of 'getting started', but that it appears to be eminently suited to Aboriginal preferred ways of life (Chapman et al. 2014 p. 84).

Changes to government policy origination and compilation and the building of Indigenous governance and management are seen to be important factors in lessening Indigenous disadvantage. But there is still the massive problem of whether remote Indigenous communities, like Lajamanu, can become economically as well as socially sustainable? It would seem to be unlikely that the Lajamanu community, and other similar remote communities, can have a successful autonomous future without developing some type of continuing economic base.

9.5 Alternatives for economic and social change and opportunities for sustainability

Folds has done much work with the desert Pintupi people (who live adjacent to the Warlpiri lands). He succinctly describes the magnitude of the problem of economic stability and sustainability. Folds explains that Indigenous people have a different perspective on stability. Folds is of a firm view that bureaucrats have never investigated or understood 'how Central Australian Aboriginal people are currently spending their time, or whether they are willing to forfeit their Aboriginal lifestyles to spend seven hours a day, five days a week in employment'

(Folds 1994). He has studied and witnessed the Pintupi community societal structure and realises that cultural commitments constitute an integral part of their everyday life. Their everyday actions and enterprises are not similar nor are to be compared with the unemployed lifestyles of the socially deprived non-Indigenous communities (Folds⁶² 1994). The Central Australian Aboriginal people developed a vastly different way of maintaining and sustaining their communities, a vastly different system to that of a western economic model. These systems are now in conflict.

Guenther and McRae-Williams⁶³ have similar views on the reasons that Australian Indigenous communities have markedly different priorities to those of the mainstream economy:

Unlike those viewed as 'successful' in a mainstream sense it is not the market economy or paid employment that is the principal lens through which [Indigenous] people know themselves and others to construct identity...paid employment is a tool for establishing, expressing and maintaining relatedness with others, family, community and also importantly country or place. As Povinelli (1993, p. 5) has stated, Aboriginal economic action is...neither an enclave of subsistence production nor a capitalist penetration. It is part of an ongoing production of a group—its economic, cultural, and political well-being (Guenther & McRae-Williams 2014 p. 3).

Remoteness and lack of economic opportunities are already massive problems without substantially adding the problem of cultural difference. Indigenous communities (such as Lajamanu) need to somehow develop an economic system that will be enough to provide community permanence and stability. Folds believes that for equitable change to happen, the 'majority society' and governments must reassess their thinking to appreciate the substantially differing Indigenous cultures and societal structures. He argues that 'wall-papering over them [the problems] will not make them go away' (1994 p. 10). In the conventional definition, economic viability appears to be impossible, or at best extremely improbable in places such as Lajamanu, given its remote location and lack of perceptible economic prospects. And it is worth recalling that Austin-Broos (2011 p. 11-14) notes that unless the thinking changes government policies will inevitably drive Indigenous peoples into the market economy, and force changes to Indigenous cultural/kinship perspectives.

⁶² Yirara College Alice Springs

⁶³ Graduate researchers in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts within Australia

However, some believe that there are alternative economic possibilities (Altman 2005 p. 6).

9.5.1 The Hybrid Economy Model (Altman 2005 p. 2)

Arguably, the most valuable approach to lessening Indigenous disadvantage and to moving towards *Closing the Gap* has been offered by Altman (2005) with his concept of a hybrid economy model. He maintains that a hybrid economy concept could be gainfully applied in communities where socio-economic systems are kin-based. He considers a hybrid model is preferable to that of attempting to impose a conventional western market-based economic model. While there are similarities, the hybrid economy model differs from a mainstream economy model in that it has three overlapping sectors—the market, the state, and the customary economy. Altman states that the hybrid economy focus concentrates on the overlap of these three sectors (see figure of Hybrid Economy Model below). Altman explains the third sector, the customary economy, as follows:

The customary economy is made up of a range of productive activities that occur outside the market and that are based on cultural continuities: hunting, gathering and fishing occur within the customary economy, but so too do a range of other activities like land and habitat management, species management and the maintenance of biodiversity. A distinctive feature of the customary economy is that it is not monetised; consequently, its value has remained either unquantified or unrecognised in mainstream terms (2001b p. 6).

The western economy model only offers the standard two sectors, state and market.

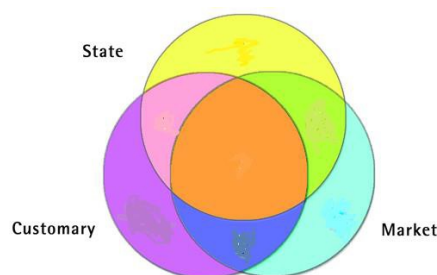


Figure 9-1: The Hybrid Economy Model (Altman 2005 p. 2)

It is Altman's view that the hybrid economy model;

Offers diversity...So there is a need for local solutions to be in touch with local circumstances. Development approaches need to be community-based and bottom

up...it is important to grow all sectors of the hybrid economy...The state sector should expand so that Indigenous townships and outstations are supported on an equitable needs basis...And the expansion of the market sector should be encouraged, be it in the sale of art or the sale of labour to miners or in the provision of services to major development projects in remote Australia (Altman 2005 p.6).

Importantly, he believes that the customary economy can supply additional employment opportunities in Indigenous communities. Altman gives some examples of community based activities that might be considered to be economic opportunities:

- funding for a suite of community services for young and old people that are normally provided by a combination of levels of government and the private sector in non-remote areas—after school care, care for kids at risk, care for the aged
- continued support for the visual arts sector (which generates national and international benefits for Australia) both at the organisational and individual artist income support levels
- support for Caring for Country/Working on Country activities that are enhancing Australia's National Reserve system and will underpin the ambitious targets set out in the government's recently released National Biodiversity Strategy to enhance Indigenous engagement
- funding for enterprises that are not commercially viable without ongoing support, ranging from community stores to mud brick factories and to community mechanical and contracting services
- funding for new enterprises, involvement in the carbon economy, such as aquaculture, cultural tourism and wildlife harvesting, which all require up-front 'infant industry' support (2011a p. 37).

Altman's argument has strength in that it provides remote Indigenous communities with an opportunity to pursue livelihoods that allow them to engage with market, state and additionally with customary economies if government is prepared to support and finance the development of a local hybrid economy over the long term (2001b p. 10). This suggests that a government subsidised economy, hybrid in design, could gradually develop and become increasingly sustainable over a long term. However, Altman pragmatically notes that 'The issue of Aboriginal economic development is hideously complex; 'it will require careful policy thinking and the delicate right mix of market and state interventions and community initiative' (2011b p. 6). Employment positions and services will need to be funded by the public sector and considered to be permanent employment rather than some sort of job training or welfare to ensure sustainability.

Hunter (2009 p. 55) has somewhat similar views to Altman but believes that the hybrid economy concept is an optimistic construction, and he doubts its practicability. Communities,

he says, must produce something that someone wants otherwise they are not producing anything of value to the nation and therefore are unlikely to survive. In his view, the hybrid economy model has potential but does appear to be able to produce enough value that can contribute measurably to the community or the nation. His point is well taken. Altman's hybrid economy model seems to have limitations in the number of employment opportunities on offer, and in attracting the trust and incentive of the Warlpiri community to embrace such a plan, to say nothing of convincing government to fund it.

However, recently Guenther and McRae-Williams have introduced a different perspective. It is common belief that the biggest hurdle to gaining employment in remote area communities is the lack of jobs available and those that are available require educational and technical qualifications, and/or experience. These requirements generally exclude most residents of remote Indigenous communities from employment consideration. However, Guenther and McRae-Williams have gathered statistics that suggest that this may not be the case because:

about 46% of the whole [Northern Territory] workforce and 36% of the non-Indigenous workforce had not completed a certificate or higher qualification, with many having left formal schooling at year 10 levels. In 2011 there were 46,505 jobs in very remote Australia that required no certificate qualification (Guenther & McRae-Williams 2016 p. 5).

Further to this, Guenther and McRae-Williams argue that statistics suggest that the lack of education or qualifications cannot be assumed to be a limiter of Indigenous employment:

The 2011 Census data for Very Remote Australia shows that there are almost 28,000 jobs held by non-Indigenous people who have not gone beyond Year 10 and more than 30,000 jobs held by non-Indigenous people with no certificate qualifications. There are of course complexities associated with a simple transfer of employment, which we would not want to deny. However, to argue that there is no 'real economy' that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can engage in is to start from a false premise (Guenther & McRae-Williams 2014 p. 8).

The works of the writers discussed in this chapter begin to give hope that it may be possible for remote Indigenous communities to develop some form of economic stability, albeit that it may require government assistance and financial support. There are several experiments that show how some areas plan to do this; the Cape York Agenda and the CLC (Lajamanu) Governance Project are two such plans.

9.5.2 The Cape York Agenda

The Cape York Agenda advocated by Noel Pearson⁶⁴ seeks to develop a holistic framework for social and economic reform in which the 'Cape York people have the capabilities to choose a life they have reason to value' (Pearson, 2005). The main element of the agenda is to move from a welfare economy and its association with learned helplessness. The Project started in earnest in June 2006 when the Australian Government committed \$3 million to the project. Pearson's Cape York Agenda (2005) is an attempt to incorporate the capabilities approach of the economists Sen⁶⁵ (2001) and Nussbaum (2000).

If our attention is shifted from an exclusive concentration on income poverty to the more inclusive idea of capability deprivation, we can better understand the poverty of human lives and freedom in terms of a different information base (involving statistics of a kind that the income perspective tends to crowd out as a reference point for political analysis). The role of income and wealth - important as it is along with other influences - must be integrated into the broader and fuller picture of success and deprivation (Sen 2001 pp. 19-20).

Essentially, Sen (2001) advocates that: peoples' freedom of choice is dependent on their ability to be able to use and apply their capabilities. The capability ability and the availability of opportunity limits the way in which people can choose to live. He advocates the building of people's capability with a view to expanding their opportunity to determine their economic and social development. Pearson (2005 p. 4), using Sen's capability theory, set about establishing what he describes as a 'staircase' for the Cape York people to overcome socio-economic disadvantage. He envisions a staircase composed of:

a strong foundation of social values and norms...a generous investment in capabilities supports, and...reformed set of incentives steps...the idea [being] that everyone should have the capabilities to choose a life that they have reason to value is part of the basic political fabric of mainstream Australia (Pearson 2005 pp. 4-7).

Pearson's argument appears to have merit and to take a sensible approach, especially when noting that he suggests that development should take place on a bottom-up approach, starting with the people and funnelling ideas up to leaders and management. It is worth noting that Pearson states in his 'Cape York Agenda' address to the National Press Club that

⁶⁴ Indigenous influential writer and academic.

⁶⁵ an Indian economist and philosopher

'maximum participation in economic life is *key* to overcoming disadvantage' (2005). Sanders points out that it is important to note that:

Pearson has argued not for the withdrawal of income support payments from Indigenous people in remote areas, but rather for their reform towards a less passive mode of delivery which would involve Indigenous individuals and their families in acts of responsibility and reciprocity (Sanders 2008a p. 3).

The shift from a welfare mode to supported employment maybe considered only a subtle change but does offer a positive mind-set opportunity for a community to build stability and to possibly develop a more real economy.

The Cape York experiment has met with limited success, but it has showed potential, admittedly at a very large cost. (Tlozek 2013). Greater financing and a long-time frame may be necessary for better outcomes considering that any experimental refocus of this magnitude requires much change and adjustment and the cooperation and willingness of both the Indigenous community and government. This complex experiment can be expected to be one that will take time to establish and to produce positive gains. Martin explains some of the complexity:

it does raise issues about whether Aboriginal 'families' and 'communities' have the capacity to both demand and implement mutual obligation ('reciprocity') in the manner which Pearson proposes...the key to Pearson's reform agenda lies in the new institutional and governance arrangements which must be devised (2004 p. iii).

The CLC (Lajamanu) Governance Project is another experiment that seeks to build Indigenous leadership and governance skills. The Jawun partnership for the Katherine Gorge management and development is also another positive program. The Cape York experiment is a much larger project in population and financing than that of both the Jawun partnership and the Lajamanu Governance project, which is discussed below. Both the Lajamanu Governance Project and the Jawun Partnership are smaller less ambitious programs.

9.5.3 The CLC (Lajamanu) Governance Project

Chapman et al (2014 p. 8) explain the thinking behind the CLC (Lajamanu) Governance Project:

Over the last several decades, there has been mounting evidence for a strong causal link between governance and positive development outcomes. Research from the United Nations Development Program, the World bank, the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic development and the Australian Indigenous Community Governance Project all concludes that having effective governance pays a 'development dividend': that is, it is a powerful protector of success in economic and community development (Cornell & Kat 1997; Dodson & Smith 2003; Jones 2002; D.E. Smith 2005; United Nations Development Program (UNDP); World Bank 1994).

The Central Land Council (CLC) embarked (2011) on an innovative three-year community (ICG) project in partnership with residents of Lajamanu, and subsequent departmental backing of the Australian and Northern Territory Governments. The Lajamanu Governance Project (CLC 2014) makes assumptions that the CLC (Lajamanu) community want to take ownership and control of community governance, and that the community has the necessary capability and capacity for governance given acceptable training and direction. It seeks to build 'individual and collective capacity as well as broadening the benefits by engaging less powerful community members in planning and decision-making' (CLC. 2014 p.19). The project is applying the concept that:

In a climate of disempowerment, where Aboriginal people feel they have limited control of or influence over decisions affecting their lives, the formation of legitimate governance mechanisms can provide a means for the community to regain a voice and provide lessons for elsewhere (CLC 2014 p. 20).

The Warlpiri Lajamanu community (Chapter 5), non-Indigenous Lajamanu residents (Chapter 6), and government bureaucrats (Chapter 7) have all acknowledged that the Lajamanu community leaders need management and communication assistance and training to negotiate effectively with government. Although Warlpiri generally believe that their traditional cultural systems work effectively in traditional Warlpiri ways, they realise that they are unsuitable when relating and negotiating with non-Warlpiri people and western systems. Chapman et al note that:

They saw it as essential to collaborate with non-Warlpiri people who were educated in the Warlpiri worldview in order to find solutions to these complex problems of cultural creditability and workability (Chapman et al. 2014 p.56).

They are also united in believing that:

Building governance capacity is the process of people identifying their own problems, thinking through solutions, making informed choices, carrying out effective and

culturally-based actions, and taking collective responsibility for the outcomes (Chapman et al. 2014 p.84).

After consultations the Lajamanu community decided that the project would focus on Kurdiji, a traditional appointed Warlpiri law and justice group. Kurdiji was already well received by the Lajamanu community and this new role has seen Kurdiji gain in community respect and authority. The re-emergence and strengthening of this traditional leadership authority are seen by many community members to be a positive development. This is probably because the Bough (the elite leadership body) and its subsidiary Kurdiji are established and proven traditional authorities in Warlpiri cultural practices, understood and acknowledged by Warlpiri residents. The Kurdiji Committee was formed around 1998 as a law and justice project funded by the federal government and has had a rather chequered history. It has been energised by the 2011 Lajamanu Governance Project (CLC 2014) to 'address the aspirations of the Commonwealth Government for strong community governance in remote service delivery sites' (CLC 2014 p. 86).

The Lajamanu Governance project has been fostered and expertly tutored by Robert Chapman under the guidance of the CLC. Lessons learnt from the Lajamanu Governance Project suggest that:

A fundamental principle of developmental work is that change must come from the people themselves—outsiders can provide skills, resources and a different perspective, but meaningful, long-term change will only come from within. (Chapman et al. 2014 p. 33).

The Central Land Council has reported initial encouraging project results:

Overall the work at Lajamanu has been extremely productive in the last 6 months, with increasing feeling amongst Kurdiji and community members that there are growing opportunities to influence decisions made in Lajamanu and a growing role for Kurdiji in governing internal community issues (CLC 2013 P.1).

However, it has also been recognised that that the building of trust, confidence and management processes do not occur overnight. Development is anticipated to be a '10-year journey' (Chapman et al. 2014 p.78). The Lajamanu community's lack of trust of government was noticeable when Lajamanu Warlpiri residents were interviewed (Chapter Six).

But these two projects are only a part of a great deal of research and viewpoints in relation to this subject. Another interesting project is that of the Jawun people of the Katherine area who have built on Pearson's principles and formed a partnership organisation with private enterprise to manage the Katherine Gorge area very successfully.

9.5.4 Other Thoughts on socio-economic Development in Indigenous Communities

Crough⁶⁶ (2002 pp. 4-9) and Hunter (2014) have considered and rejected the idea that it might be more efficient to give current government funding directly to Indigenous communities, with 'no strings attached'. Admittedly, this would largely eliminate much paperwork, lessen the number of departments that need to be involved and save on bureaucratic expenditure. This idea may provide more flexible and more usable funds to the community but is unlikely to build any lasting economic stability. Hunter concludes that this concept is impractical and notes that while it would provide Indigenous people with more money, it will not necessarily provide more employment. It could encourage waste and it could prolong the passive welfare (Pearson 2000a) situation. Instead, Hunter suggests that the encouragement of some form of economic development is a better option for providing the necessary basis to stabilise Indigenous communities. Hunter argues that until remote Indigenous communities have activities that are of demonstrable value to the rest of society there will always be questions as to the worth and continuity of these communities. However, in stating this he does not insist that economic independence is essential (2011). These arguments about demonstrable value resonate with some of the reasoning behind the government *Closing the Gap* strategy. The bringing of Indigenous communities into a situation of equity with Australian mainstream communities will necessarily require some economic development within the community. Both Hunter and Altman recognise that the establishment of realisable alternative economies are necessary for this to occur.

Rowse (2002) also appreciates the need for some type of community economic development and argues that government should establish policies that are cognisant of Indigenous difference and needs. In a similar vein to Austin-Broos (2011) he argues that:

⁶⁶ Head of ANU Research Unit, Darwin.

... the categories of a politics of 'equity' are not suited to *all* policy relevant mobilisations of cultural difference. Sometimes the politics of recognition is at odds with a politics of 'equity' because to be 'different' is more a chosen destiny than a misfortune...a social analysis attentive to the kinds of cultural 'difference' that people choose to defend must be more fine-grained; it must highlight distinctions of locality, class and gender. It must attend to differences *within* the Indigenous population, and/or it must ask about how Indigenous and non-Indigenous people differ in particular circumstances of their co-existence (Rowse 2002 p. 236).

There is one essential factor that seems to filter through the many views and that is the necessity for education. Education would seem to be a key to development of the skills that have been shown to be essential for the building community self-determination and socio-economic stability.

9.6 Education

The Northern Territory government has been given the opportunity to benefit from the innovative and practical report *A share in the future: Review of Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory* (Wilson 2013). This independent report was initiated by the Northern Territory Government. The Wilson report as it became known is a comprehensive and well-researched review of Indigenous education in the Northern Territory with a widespread range of recommendations that could be of great value to Indigenous communities. One particularly relevant recommendation for literacy programs for the primary years' advocates:

- a. Sustained teaching of first language, including literacy, to Indigenous children of whom English is not their first language, where feasible and where a trained teacher is available;
- b. training of Indigenous first language speakers to teach the language both as fully trained teachers and on limited Authority to Teach basis;
- c. provision of English language learning from the start of school; delivery of curriculum in English; and
- d. the active presence of trained first language-speaking adults in the classroom where the curriculum is delivered in English to Indigenous students whose first language is not English (Wilson 2013 p. 20).

Briefly, this means that Wilson recommends bi-lingual education in earlier years, using Indigenous teachers and teacher aides wherever possible, but with the focus being on developing English language skills which will enable students to continue with higher levels of education in the later years of primary schooling and at secondary and tertiary levels.

The Wilson Report has an extensive number of other recommendations, including the need to address issues of attendance, the need for cross-cultural training, and particularly in the advocacy of 'long-term funding in accordance with the strategic plan' (Wilson 2013 pp. 24-30). One example is in the training of Indigenous Teachers and teachers' aides. The 2017 Indigenous Education Strategy notes that Item 5 of the Implementation Plan 2015-2017 states that the intent is to 'Develop and implement policy to guide the delivery of Aboriginal Languages and Cultures programs in NT schools following national and Territory policy direction' (NT Govt. 2017) and yet in the updated Implementation plan for 2018-2019 it indicates that much of this work is still to occur:

Literacy and Numeracy

Expand the delivery of a consistent approach to literacy and numeracy programs in remote and very remote schools and improve data collection methods to track achievement and growth.

Indigenous Languages and Cultures

Implement the Indigenous Languages and Cultures curriculum framework in remote and very remote schools through community led processes (2017).

While government and the Lajamanu community have both agreed that changes to the education system is needed there seems to be difficulties and delays with implementation. At the time of writing this thesis, efforts to implement the Wilson Report recommendations have been limited and slow to occur in Lajamanu according to the recent field research (Chapters Six and Seven). One wonders why since the Lajamanu School has had successful outcomes with bilingual education in the past, with many of the Elders having gone on to gain a secondary education (Nicholls⁶⁷ & Herbert⁶⁸ 1995). However, since that time, the highly successful bilingual teaching initiatives of Nicholls (1995) and Cataldi⁶⁹ (1996) seems to have been overlooked or ignored. The current academic performance of the Lajamanu School, as has been discussed in an earlier chapter, is poor.

There is also one non-government educational initiative that demonstrates the intricacies and sophistication of Warlpiri culture and the wish to educate others into how cultures can co-exist and gain from each other. The Ngurra-kurlu plan (Patrick et al. 20140), as described in

⁶⁷ Dr Christine Nicholls is a writer, curator, Warlpiri linguist and Senior Lecturer in Australian Studies at Flinders University,

⁶⁸ A senior Warlpiri Elder.

⁶⁹ a contemporary Australian poet and linguist who has spent a number of years in Lajamanu.

Chapter Four, is a local initiative that practically applies this approach. Sullivan has similar thoughts: one that also suggests that both Warlpiri and government can learn from each other and in doing so enrich their future.

While there are limited statistics available there appear to be few Warlpiri people that have permanently left Lajamanu for western employment and/or for academic qualifications. Louth (2013) mentions the developing Indigenous middle class, but this is not apparent with Lajamanu diaspora. The resilience of Warlpiri culture and kinship ties may have limited such opportunities:

Familial networks also frequently operate as job networks, playing a critical part in accessing the most desirable forms of employment, those jobs that offer greater potential for shared social and cultural values, such as jobs in an Indigenous organisation, and/or with an Aboriginal boss or manager (Lahn 2012 p. 9).

However, there are some examples of the desire to gain more education e.g. Steve Jampinjinpa Patrick (2008), several have pursued sporting careers, etc. But it is also noted that many choose to return to Lajamanu.

9.6.1 Belonging Together (Sullivan, 2011)

Sullivan attempts to capture the spirit of Indigenous thinking. He believes there is a way of 'belonging together' (2011 p. 122). He is not in favour of past or present government policies and practices. Sullivan seeks change but takes a subtly different approach from Altman, Hunter, and others. He rejects the settler-colonial thinking which has decided that Indigenous Australians ways of life, traditions, and practices are 'a remote problem to be solved' (2011 p. 122). Sullivan argues that Indigenous communities should not be viewed as an 'extension of settler conditions of life' (2011 p. 122). He points out the futility of continuing government policies that focus on the notion that 'they' (Indigenous communities) should be more like 'us' (mainstream Australians), arguing that such policies are misguided and will continue to fail. He states that:

I do not suggest that it is necessary to erase differences, even radical differences of behaviour and understanding. Aboriginal people can consolidate their relations with each other without erasing their differences. Descendants of settlers and immigrants can consolidate with Aboriginal people without absorbing them or appropriating their identities. Consolidation requires recognising what is shared as well as what is distinctive (Sullivan 2011 p. 17).

Consolidation 'begins by acknowledging that Australian national identity will remain hollow at the core until we develop a sense of belonging together' (Sullivan 2011 p. 122). He acknowledges that government is well-intentioned in creating policies that are aimed at eliminating Indigenous poverty and in improving services. He argues that these policies are decidedly unpalatable to Indigenous Australians because they require the abandonment all but the most superficial aspects of their cultural uniqueness. Using this reasoning, he criticises the policy thinking of all levels of government. In his view, Indigenous Australians will continue to fail to support the current policies (2013 p. 357).

Using his concept of 'belonging together', Sullivan suggests an alternative 'public value' policy. Moore⁷⁰ has explained the public value concept as 'the aim of managerial work in the public sector is to create *public* value just as the aim of managerial work in the private sector is to create *private* value', which he explains as being that 'public institutions must be judged against citizens' expectations for justice and fairness as well as efficiency and effectiveness' (Moore 1995, p. 22 & 53). Sullivan's call for recognition of an alternate public value aligns somewhat with that of Altman's hybridity ideas and with Hunter's thinking (2009 p. 55) that the community needs to produce something of value.

Sullivan insists that public value is pertinent when developing policies for remote Indigenous Australian communities because 'Aboriginal people make up about 63 percent of the population in outer regional, remote and very remote regions' (Sullivan 2011 p. 15). He maintains that defence strategy, land and sea ecological pursuits, and feral animal elimination are some examples of how Indigenous communities can demonstrate public value. These values are in addition to the continuation of what he considers to be the important intangible values of kinship and heritage of the First Australians (2013, p. 366), values that he maintains have yet to be fully recognised by mainstream Australia. In his view mainstream government policies of normalisation offer public value for mainstream citizens but ignore others (Indigenous communities).

Sullivan's 'Belonging Together' policy approach utilises a 'public value' construction in which Indigenous Australians are regarded as an inseparable part of the Australian nation. This

⁷⁰ A seminal figure in the field of **public management**, Harvard University.

seems reasonable because it advocates a position that 'seeks to neither erase nor enshrine cultural difference' where non-Aboriginal Australians 'see themselves as intrinsically implicated in an Aboriginal social and physical environment' (2011, pp. 16-17). He argues that:

Consolidation requires a discussion in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have their generosity stretched to the limit to include non-Aboriginal Australians and non-Aboriginal people require the courage to confront their deepest anxieties about the relative shallowness of their national history and the identity that depends upon it (Sullivan 2011, p. vii).

Clearly, in Sullivan's view, Indigenous communities and government must both be prepared to work together, and both must accept responsibility if this is to occur. 'Belonging together' offers the possibility of a much more diverse and pluralist Australian conception of 'citizenship within relatively egalitarian polities' (2013, p. 357). Indigenous rejection of assimilation and hesitance to integrate into a mainstream societal outlook presents problems for government. There is much value in *Closing the Gap* and in developing an economic base in Lajamanu (Altman 2005). While assimilation has been rejected and integration is considered by Warlpiri to be unpalatable it seems that a compromise as suggested by Austin-Broos (2011) seems to offer the most potential. *Belonging Together* (Sullivan 2013) may offer some possibilities.

9.7 Summary

The information, explanations, views and arguments of the many authors of this literature review provide an 'in-depth' insight into the complexity of the disadvantages and differences between Indigenous communities and mainstream Australian society. Importantly they also demonstrate a continuing determination to gainfully work towards ways in which the Indigenous disadvantages may be lessened and of how Indigenous rights and entitlements can occur. Austin-Broos (2011) has addressed this in arguing that equity and cultural retention should be suitably balanced. Or to put it another way, rights and retention of Indigenous identity should be equated to the *Closing of the Gap* concepts of government. Thompson (2000) makes a persuasive argument that colonisation has been a major factor in the resultant Indigenous disadvantage and that government should accept much of the responsibility. Government have accepted this responsibility albeit using criteria for Indigenous disadvantage in which Indigenous communities have had little opportunity to

agree upon and or to prioritise. Hunt, & Smith (2005); Sanders (2008a); Sullivan (2008) and others note that past and present government policies have failed to achieve any substantive minimilisation of Indigenous disadvantage and question the government's under-utilisation of available knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures, their history, and the importance of the different Indigenous social relationships.

Johns (2011), Windschuttle (2009), and Etherington (2007) consider that assimilation policies offer the best opportunity for success even though they were ineffective in the past. However, research conducted throughout this thesis rejects these views. Government has formally discarded assimilation and has latterly accepted a neo-liberal agenda; an agenda that concentrates on obtaining Indigenous social equality while largely ignoring cultural difference (Povinelli, 2002 & Lattas and Morris, 2010). In accord with this agenda, the 2008 *Closing the Gap* policies are structured to achieve the equalization of socio-economic outcomes in specific target areas. *Closing the Gap* has continued to be the targeted objective for lessening Indigenous disadvantage. Unfortunately, the results of these policies have been disappointing. It may be that the inherent bias of *Closing the Gap* policies toward integration has been a deterrent.

Sullivan (2011), Altman (2003 p. 16), Hunt (2013), Dillon & Westbury (2007) and Hunter (2007) argue that most government policies have been established with little if any Indigenous consultation or input. They argue that they may be more effective if they were to include both practices. Sullivan (2011), Shergold (2013) and others propose changes to streamline and improve policy-making and bureaucratic effectiveness.

Government and many writers are generally agreed that remote Indigenous communities lack western governance, communication and negotiation skills, and that these skills are needed for the future social and economic development of Indigenous communities (Hunt & Smith 2006a; Hunt 2007; Saethre 2013; and Chapman, Holmes, Kelly, Smith, Weepers & Wright, 2014).

Altman [the hybrid economic model], 2013 and Pearson [Cape York Agenda], 2005, provide valuable positive alternatives for economic and social sustainability and these have been further expanded on and articulated by the suggested innovations of Sullivan 2013; Patrick,

2014 and Chapman, Holmes, Kelly, Smith, Weepers & Wright [CLC Lajamanu Governance Project 2014).

Finally, the Wilson Report highlights the importance of making changes to education procedures in such a way as to encourage rather than discourage Indigenous attendance and achievement rates (Wilson 2013).

All in all, this compilation of material provides an appreciation of writers' views and critiques of the governance, rights and socio-economic disadvantages associated with Lajamanu. The contributions in this the Literature Review, as will be seen, are extensive, well-argued and persuasive. They particularly articulate the complexity of the problems and the difficulties involved in overcoming these problems. Assimilation policies have been largely discounted; the *Closing the Gaps* policies have been well examined, critiqued and while their intent has been commended have been seen to be lacking Indigenous input and direction. Alternative views and arguments and suggestions have been presented. There are a number of key points to be taken from this collage of literature, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Importantly, the new field research of Chapters Six, Seven and Eight adds to, supports and reinforces many of the views and arguments of the literature with the combination of the two identifying key factors that may provide a new approach to the governance of Lajamanu; one that will safeguard rights and progressively overcome its socio-economic disadvantages.

Chapter Ten seeks to gather the information from all the chapters and consolidate this invaluable information, identify these key factors and show how they may offer possible opportunities for policies and practices that may lead to a more stable and equitable future for Lajamanu (and perhaps other remote Indigenous communities).

CHAPTER 10

PULLING THE THREADS TOGETHER

This case study has purposefully examined the history, philosophy and the literature that relates to Indigenous communities and to Lajamanu in particular. It has sought to research those that are directly or closely associated with Lajamanu, the Warlpiri community and those actively implementing policies and practices that affect Lajamanu. Field research is the crux of the study because this new research information provides additional knowledge, corroboration and critique to those views and arguments of the voluminous amount of existing literature. Background information is supplied by the history and philosophy chapters. This is a study of the Lajamanu community seeking to offer a more complete understanding of the problems that face that community; its lack of rights and its continuing socio-economic disadvantage. The study has concentrated on seeking information and ideas that may show more effective ways of providing an acceptable stable future for Lajamanu; information that may also be applicable to other remote Indigenous communities.

I have acknowledged that as a white older non- Indigenous male I must have some bias in evaluating the material that has been forthcoming in this research, regardless of my attempts to avoid it. The question then became, how having compiled all this information could this information be analysed and collated while attempting to avoid bias wherever possible? It was my view that the best way for this to happen was to look to the views, arguments and ideas that have been forthcoming from the field research and particularly from the Warlpiri community of Lajamanu (Chapter Six). Their contributions backed up by those of the non-Warlpiri residents of Lajamanu (Chapter Seven) and of those others that have relationships to Lajamanu (Chapter Eight) specifically relate to the needs and wants of Lajamanu and of what the community wants for the future of Lajamanu. Note that the methods of obtaining these contributions were designed to minimise researcher bias. This new research was seen to be the base information to which the other known research was added.

The Literature review (Chapter Nine) provided invaluable depth and status. Both opinion and evidence has been provided by Indigenous (Chapter Five and Nine) and non- Indigenous, national and international authors that builds on the new Lajamanu information, giving explanation, argument and theory.

However, none of this work is of value unless its validity is credible. Chilisa is of the view that:

Credibility is the equivalent of internal validity in qualitative research. Qualitative research is characterized by multiple realities and therefore multiple truths. Research evidence is therefore credible if it represents as adequately as possible the multiple realities revealed by the participants (Chilisa, 2012 p.165).

He highlights the importance of integrating Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge to improve research outcomes (Chilisa 2012) and suggests that the triangulation approach appears to blend qualitative and quantitative methods with indigenous data collection and relationship building methods to form a reasoned view of the possibilities for the future of Indigenous communities (Chilisa 2014 p. 231). His method has been applied in this study for the Lajamanu community.

In totality these views reveal a small number of recurring observations and thoughts which appear to be key points. These points recur throughout in the various chapters. However, the proposal to conclude that all or as many as possible of these factors should be activated is my value appraised argument.

Each point is discussed in detail with some explanation as to why they are considered to be key factors. The key recurring points are:

- Sovereignty, rights and retention of identity
- Leadership and management capacity training and assistance and the fostering of traditional leadership and development in useful ways.
- Supporting traditional leadership and management constructs and re-constructs.
- Initiating a hybrid or some alternative structured and sustainable socio-economic development
- Education Development
- Freeing up government resources, funding and strategies.
- Long term policies, long term sustainable funding and long-term expectations
- Overcoming the sit-down mentality ...learned helplessness
- Thinking small and concentrating on each community as separate entities.

I re-iterate that these are factors are those that have been identified in the thesis as concerns of the interviewed community residents, service providers and policy practitioners. These views confirm many of the views and arguments expressed in the Literature Review; not all but sufficient to suggest that the nine factors specified should be considered to be of prime importance in future policy and practices. The recurrence of these factors was apparent. Each factor is further explained and justified below.

10.1 Sovereignty, rights and retention of identity

Chapter Five demonstrates that Indigenous peoples throughout the world wish to achieve the return of their sovereign rights. Colonisation served to eliminated Indigenous sovereignty and subsequent western development has confounded Indigenous peoples thinking as to how, if and in what form Indigenous sovereignty can be regained. The form and substance of a contemporary Indigenous sovereignty has proved difficult to define.

The gaining of self-determination powers, rights and retention of identity and culture by communities does not fully embrace the concept of sovereignty, but it is a concept that appeals to the Lajamanu Warlpiri people and to some other Indigenous communities (Chapter Six; Altman 2005; Sanders 2004; Hunt, Smith, Garling, & Sanders 2008). Self-determination, rights and cultural acceptance may represent an acceptable compromise. It is noted that the Lajamanu Warlpiri residents are especially concerned that they should be able to assert their human rights, retain their identity and their cultural heritage (Chapter Six). Most have accepted that they cannot turn back time and have accepted that they must be prepared to be a part of the nation that has resulted from European colonisation (Chapter Six). However, the Lajamanu community insists that an integral part of any compromise would necessitate it being listened to, heard and respected by government, and being given local decision-making powers.

It is therefore understood that under given conditions the Lajamanu community has indicated that some form of traditionally orientated self- management and self-determination (e.g. Kurdiji) could be acceptable (Chapter Six; CLC 2014). The Ngurra kurlu (Patrick, Holmes & Box, 2008) proposal and Milpirri (Patrick, 2015) celebrations confirm that the Lajamanu community are keen to develop government-mainstream relationships.

However, although much of the literature and much of the new research recommends compromise of this nature government seems reluctant to amend its neo-liberal agenda and continues with its largely unproductive *Closing the Gap* policies (Altman 2005; Sanders 2004; Hunt, Smith, Garling, & Sanders 2008). Notwithstanding that much has been said about government failing to listen, or to negotiate with the Lajamanu community (Chapters Six & Seven) Peterson argues that:

administrative choice is to treat Aboriginal people as simply recalcitrant and push ahead in the assumption that they will eventually fall into line, but with no clear idea of when or how this will happen, or to take a more proactive approach and work with the people in the community. That is, policy should recognise that the highest priority is community development and use every possible point of engagement to achieve this, including, and especially, community governance. Community governance cannot be meaningful, however, unless it involves funding and real responsibility and authority (Peterson 2013 p. 347).

Chapter Five has shown that government thought and actions stem from its European and colonial cultural heritage whereas the thoughts and actions of Indigenous societies have developed from different philosophical backgrounds. Colonial-settler and Indigenous cultural heritages are not easily related, compared and/or compatible. The Australian colonially–originated mainstream government bases its governance on the Westminster system and the one rule of law principle. English is the firmly established *lingua franca*. Because of its immigrant history Australia also considers itself to be a multicultural nation. Australian folk lore celebrates a fair go for all and yet government largely ignores Indigenous cultural difference, some Indigenous human rights, and has not seriously embraced Indigenous self-determination for the Lajamanu Indigenous community (and other remote communities), though, in recent times, government actions have sought to lessen and to eventually eliminate Indigenous socio- economic disadvantage.

It is noted that the *Closing the Gap* priorities of government are important to the Lajamanu Warlpiri community, but they are not considered as important as the retention of Warlpiri culture, identity and rights (Hunt 2018; Chapman et al., 2014; Sullivan 2011 and Chapter Six). Yet, government continues to ignore or fail to take notice of the priority needs of Indigenous communities (Russell & Wenham 2010 p. 3), including Lajamanu.

Government did toy with self-determination when it introduced the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSICS) and in the COAG Trials. However, even though promise was shown ATSIC was abandoned and only vestiges of the government COAG Trial report recommendations were followed (OIPC, 2006). Since then government has continued with a neo-liberal agenda in Lajamanu, admittedly while offering some limited support for projects that offer hope for self-determination; the Local Implementation Program and the CLC Lajamanu Governance Project (CLC 2014). This is some consolation because as has been demonstrated (Chapter Nine) both the CLC Lajamanu Governance Project and the Cape York Agenda are exiting projects that indicate that communities such as Cape York and Lajamanu can make positive steps to assert their rights, retain their cultural heritage and to self-determine the management of their communities given opportunity and assistance (Pearson 2005; CLC 2016). Government is urged to continue support and place a greater focus on the Lajamanu Governance Program.

While opportunity and willingness are positive steps forward, the research suggests that it is unlikely that the Lajamanu community will have sufficiently leadership and management abilities be able to effectively in a western manner unless they receive training in leadership and management.

10.2 Leadership and management capacity training and assistance: fostering traditional leadership and development in useful ways.

Many writers agree that most Indigenous communities lack western governance, communication, and negotiation skills and that these skills are needed for the future social and economic development of Indigenous communities (Hunt & Smith, 2006a; Hunt 2007; Saethre 2013; Chapman, Holmes, Kelly, Smith, Weepers & Wright 2014). Warlpiri and non-Warlpiri residents (chapters Six and Seven) of Lajamanu concur with the literature that Warlpiri traditional systems and leadership (the Bough) were effective in pre-colonial requisites but are not compatible of competitive for present-day negotiations with government and modern western world economies. Australian National University academic Melinda Hinkson is non-Indigenous, but has spent much time with the Warlpiri people and supports the Warlpiri views regarding government misconceptions surrounding the community's capacity to manage themselves:

European residents who regularly voiced frustrations at the challenges of working alongside Warlpiri in the day-to-day business of community organisations looked in amazement as the Warlpiri social body seamlessly orchestrated this massive event [annual sports weekend, with round-the-clock football, softball, basketball, 'battle of the bands' competitions] (2014 p. 141).

Having attended several annual sports weekends that have been organised and managed by the Lajamanu community I concur with Hinkson's observation.

The research shows that Warlpiri appreciate the need for community leadership training and education in self-determining and managing roles to build capacity and capability and to negotiate rights. Warlpiri residents realise that the development of these skills is especially needed when one culture is faced with surviving within or alongside a greater alien cultural circle.

Louth (2013 p.5) notes that Indigenous academic Marcia Langton stated that 'there is a growing Aboriginal middle class (Langton 2012)'. But Warlpiri Elder Johnson commented that there were only a few examples of this development in Lajamanu. He attributed this deficit to a lack of education, the remote location and to Warlpiri's strong kinship ties to country.

Kerry Marsham⁷¹, Jim Butler⁷² (Chapter Seven) and many in the Warlpiri community (Chapter Six) believe that there have been insufficient initiatives and efforts by government to develop leadership skills in the Lajamanu community. While this appears to be so there are signs that some efforts have been made in recent times, initially with the Lajamanu Implementation Plan (NT Gov. 2010), the COAG trials initiative, and latterly the CLC Lajamanu Governance Project. The CLC Lajamanu Governance Project (CLC 2014) is focused on developing these skills. It is not a government project as such but has received government financing.

Chapman, the project manager, has done a remarkable job of instilling the confidence and motivation that is needed. The CLC (2014) report states that;

The project worker has built trust and engagement by creating a clear relationship between his undertakings and his actions. This started in the form of small things such as undertakings to follow up on requests for information, acting as agreed on meeting decisions and, as relationships grew, became more substantial as people observed his behaviour. Equally the project worker found it important to not promise things that

⁷¹ Kerry Marsham is a previous housing manager in Lajamanu

⁷² Jim Butler was the previous manager of the Lajamanu Store.

could not be delivered and to be clear about what could and could not be done. (Chapman et al. 2014 p.40).

Chapman advises that this project is only in early development, a work in progress that should be considered to be a long-term project and judged accordingly (CLC, 2014). He warns that hiccups are to be expected and in a more recent conversation (Chapman 2018) confirms that Kurdiji activity has slowed somewhat. This view is supported by Erglis (Chapter Seven). There may be many reasons for this slowing including the deaths of an adept leader (Kumanji Jigili) and perhaps Warlpiri people's longstanding mistrust of government sincerity and intent. However, it is a warning that the project should be maintained and judged over a long period. The Lajamanu community is aware that the CLC (Lajamanu) Governance Project is funded by the federal government and is linked to the government-supported Lajamanu Implementation Plan (NT Government, 2010) which in turn has been evaluated by La Trobe University under the auspices of the CLC. It is also possible that the Lajamanu community has reservations that the project may be too directed and influenced by government processes and direction, although this was not apparent in discussion. However, the field research (Chapter Six and Seven) overwhelmingly indicates that the community continue to support Kurdiji and believe that it has the potential to play a major role in the way that Lajamanu will develop. Regardless of this hitch, the Lajamanu Governance project, directed by someone of the quality and attitude of Chapman, seems to be offering Warlpiri people the opportunity to develop the leadership capacities and capabilities so necessary for negotiating ways in which they need.

The Cape York Agenda in Northern Queensland is another strong role model for this type of incentive, as is the Jawun Partnership agreement in Katherine.

10.3 Supporting traditional leadership and management constructs and re-constructs.

As mentioned, the Lajamanu Warlpiri community have indicated that they are prepared to work with government and apparently to accept some reasonable compromise on an elusive Indigenous sovereignty (Chapter Six). Members of the Lajamanu community argue for the retention of identity, kinship systems and cultural heritage (Chapter Six). The Yamparru (commonly referred to as the Bough) the traditional elite body of leaders is the accepted Warlpiri authority, although it probably has lost some of the power and respect it had prior to

colonial impact. The Yamparru (Bough) body is composed of two separate groups, one of men and one of women Elders who have been selected because they 'combine vigorous ritual education and personal charisma with the support networks of close residential kin' (Dussart 2000, p. 86). Chapter Four describes the complexity and depth of Warlpiri culture and of how much of it remains as part of the Lajamanu community's way of life. All important matters are discussed daily by Yamparru.

The Kurdiji Committee is a traditional law and justice offshoot of the Yamparru originally formed to monitor law and justice. Having been neglected somewhat Kurdiji was reactivated, partially by government assistance in 1998 and has since continued to gain status especially under the tutorage of CLC Lajamanu Governance project. Because Kurdiji is a traditional Warlpiri body it appears to have the support of the community and therefore would seem to be the ideal choice for leadership and management training (CLC 2014; Hunt 2013a).

However, the development of local leadership and management can only be a part of the process of building some stability and economy to ensure a future for Lajamanu.

10.4 Hybrid or some alternative structured and sustainable socio-economic development

Peterson (2013) perceptively observes that;

While some remote community members are able to negotiate the ongoing tension between relatedness [of kin networks] and market individualism, most are not. The idea that the communities will become jumping-off points for people seeking jobs in the wider community anytime soon is quite fanciful (2013 P. 350).

It therefore becomes necessary for remote communities to find some form of permanence and stability by developing an alternative economic base. It has been established that Lajamanu is a small, very remote Indigenous community, one that has considerable disadvantages when comparing it with mainstream. Efforts to implement *Closing the Gap* policies have been less than satisfactory (Prime Minister 2017). Small communities like Lajamanu face a major problem in establishing a stable, enduring economy (Hunter 2009 p.

55). Unless it can establish some form of economic base the task of establishing socio-economic equity for Lajamanu appears to be near impossible.

Hunter (2009 p.25) has stated that a community needs to produce something of value to the nation, or to put it another way it requires to produce something of socio-economic worth. Altman (2005) agrees but argues that a hybrid economic model could offers possibilities. He explains that a hybrid economy involves three overlapping sectors, market, state and customary whereas mainstream economy only constitutes a market and state sector. The customary economy is based on cultural activities such as 'hunting, gathering and fishing ... land and habitat management, species management and the maintenance of biodiversity' (2001b, p. 6). Altman states that with imagination the customary sector could offer additional employment and business opportunities.

Sullivan has similar thoughts to Altman. He suggests that that 'public value' should be considered as being of intrinsic value to the Australian nation and this would satisfy Lajamanu (or other remote communities) to meet the need to produce something of socio-economic worth, as Hunter has mentioned. Public value has been explained (Chapter Nine) as being work in the public sector being of equal value to work in the private sector and further explained as that 'justice and fairness' is as important as 'efficiency and effectiveness' (Moore 1995 p. 22 & 53). To fortify his argument Sullivan (2013 p. 366) notes that over fifty per cent of the population of remote and very remote regions of Australia is Indigenous and suggests that in their communities public value should be measured by such factors as unique cultural heritage and kinship along with ecological protection functions, feral animal elimination and defence strategy, as Altman suggests.

While Altman (2011b p. 6), Hunter (2009, p. 55) and others see much value in hybridity they have expressed doubts over its practical application. Employment opportunities of the kind typical in non-Indigenous communities are seen to be limited in Lajamanu (and other remote communities) even if some ecological and cultural positions were to be funded by government. However, the more recent research of Guenther and McRae-Williams suggests that there may be more employment opportunities than first thought. Their statistics show that over one third of the workforce in remote Australia 'had not completed a certificate or higher qualification, with many having left formal schooling at year 10 levels and that there

was a total of '46,505 jobs in very remote Australia that required no certificate qualification' (Guenther & McRae-Williams 2016 p. 5). This information seems to improve the potential for the building of a hybrid economy in small communities like Lajamanu. Consideration could perhaps be given to the foregoing of some administrative efficiency if it will mean more local employment and enhance community development (Peterson 2013).

While the findings of Guenther & McRae-Williams (2016 p. 5) are interesting and suggest that there are more employment opportunities for community residents it does not lessen the need for a dramatic improvement in education of the Lajamanu Warlpiri people, especially the younger generations. Substantial gaps in education standards continue to exist between remote Indigenous communities and mainstream. This inevitably means that because of their lesser education Indigenous community residents (including those in Lajamanu) will continue to be severely disadvantaged when seeking employment.

10.5 Education Development

Research indicates that most of the Lajamanu community (Chapter Six) believe that they need better education, both for their children and for themselves. Lajamanu Elder Geoffrey Barnes states that 'our kids need a good education, so they can 'fight fire with fire' (Chapter Six). Government maintains that it is focused on fostering better education in remote Indigenous communities and has listed it as one of the *Closing the Gap* priorities (Prime Minister 2015 p.5), However, remote Indigenous education continues to be sub-standard. Attendance is poor.

Even though some statistics suggests that there is a gradual improvement (Prime Minister 2014, 2015 & 2017) the Lajamanu residents (Chapters Six & Seven) dispute these results. My observations over several years lead me to agree with them. Regardless of these views the state of education in Lajamanu continues to be extremely poor when compared to that of urban mainstream school results, as is indicated in the Prime Ministers' Reports. This is a sad situation because in the 1980s Lajamanu introduced bi-lateral education with considerable success under the direction of Nicholls (Nicholls & Herbert 1995) and Cataldi (Roche, Watt, & Cataldi 1986). Disbray also notes with some dismay that:

The Northern Territory (NT) bilingual program set out a range of goals to provide remote Indigenous communities a bilingual, bi-literate and bicultural education and achieved a range of outstanding successes. Yet, when the NT government closed the program in 2008, these achievements were not recognised (Disbray 2014 Extract).

Encouragingly, a report entitled *A share in the future: Review of Indigenous Education in the Northern Territory* (Wilson 2013) re-assesses educational procedures and policies in the Northern territory. This comprehensive review of provides a widespread range of recommendations. In part it recommends:

Sustained teaching of first language, including literacy, to Indigenous children of whom English is their first language, where feasible and where a trained teacher is available; training of Indigenous first language speakers to teach the language both as fully trained teachers and on limited Authority to Teach basis; provision of English language learning from the start of school; delivery of curriculum in English; and the active presence of trained first language-speaking adults in the classroom where the curriculum is delivered in English to Indigenous students whose first language is not English (Wilson 2013 p. 20).

The Wilson Report has many other well researched recommendations, including the need to address issues of attendance, the need for cross-cultural training, and particularly advocating 'long-term funding in accordance with the strategic plan' (Wilson 2013 pp. 24-30). Lajamanu residents (Warlpiri and non-Warlpiri) are supportive of Wilson's recommendations as are many educationalists (Nicholls & Herbert 1995) and Cataldi (Roche, Watt, & Cataldi 1986). Unfortunately, efforts to implement these recommendations seem to be limited and slow to occur in Lajamanu according to the recent field research (Chapters Six and Seven). Government is urged to re-visit and hasten the implementation of the report's recommendations as a priority.

However, there are other things that government is urged to consider.

10.6 Freeing up government resources, funding and strategies

Much of the literature (Chapter Nine) and the field research (Chapters Six, Seven & Eight) criticises government deployment of resources, funding and strategies. Hunt and Smith (2005a p. 11) cite government's poorly directed resourcing, lack of effective conflict-management mechanisms, and lack of workable systems to deliver readily accessible funding, and Hunt (2013) adds that:

Recent government efforts to improve coordination and whole-of-government working for engagement indicate that a need remains for:

- greater flexibility in funding arrangements
- approaches towards accountability systems and capacity development that reflect a whole-of-government approach
- greater coordination of and authority for senior local staff
- shifts in bureaucratic cultures to support collaboration (Hunt 2013a p.2).

Westbury and Sanders (2000 p. 22) reflect upon the size and complexity of government bureaucratic arrangements, Hughes and Hughes (2011 p. 16) are highly critical of government bureaucratic performance, and Sullivan (2011 p.12) questions if the states and territories are appropriate vehicles for Indigenous development. Sullivan is particularly critical of government funding arrangements arguing that these failings have inhibited and will continue to inhibit effectiveness and productivity. He comments on funding complexity:

There are four basic sources of funding for Aboriginal and Torres Islander development. There is Commonwealth own-revenue expenditure (usually in Indigenous specific programs) and state/territory own-revenue expenditure (usually buried in mainstream programs). Third, there are specific purpose grants to the states and territories from the Commonwealth. These may be targeted specifically at Indigenous people or may have Indigenous development objectives embedded in wider objectives and they may be bundled into one of the five specific purpose payments allocated under the Federal Financial Relations Act 2009 (Cth.) or into National Partnership payments. Fourth, there are funds collected by the Commonwealth, such as the Goods and services Tax (GST), and distributed to the states through the Commonwealth Grants Commission using a formula that ensures all states can provide the same level of service to citizens regardless of local circumstances (horizontal fiscal equalisation (Sullivan 2011 p.113).

Pat Turner⁷³ argues against whole-of-government programs seeing a need to categorise the core services of each community at the local level seeking community input with accounting maintained by a regional accounting service. Turner sees a need for a cooperative and collaborative approach from government departments. In this vein, Shergold (2013) proposes the establishment of a 'culture of collegiality' throughout the whole-of-government policy-producing network (2013 p. x). However, Sullivan (2011) disagrees with Shergold's proposal and advocates a 'tighter integration of the various arms of the bureaucracy through whole-of-government coordination of service delivery' (2011 p.112).

⁷³ Patricia Turner is a former Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and senior public servant in Canberra.

The third tier of government, the Shires/Regional councils, are also considered to have problems. McAdam and Birrell (Chapter Eight) believe that the development of Shires (Regional Councils) has the potential to provide effective service delivery but that their developmental phase has disappointed because of a poor, top-down approach and less than adequate local input.

These suggestions as to how best to free up government resources, funding and application have been explained in more detail in previous chapters. All deserve consideration. All have expressed possible ways in which government could free up its resources and operate more effectively.

Government has also faced criticism over policy times and short-term expectations.

10.7 Long term policies, long term sustainable funding and long-term expectations

There is a substantially supported view (Hunt & Smith 2006b; Altman 2001b; Pearson 2005) that the complex problem of establishing continuity of Indigenous identity and cultural requisites, rights and development of local self-management is only likely to occur if well planned, long-term policies and long-term sustainable funding are put in place by government. A possible example of the failure to implement and to fund long-term well-planned policies occurred with the COAG trials. The COAG trials were deemed to be unsuccessful, but with the important qualification that the lack of success was largely due to their being too complex, over-ambitious, and being too short-lived (COAG 2006 p. 29). Projects and policies should be well-planned before commencement and then allowed adequate and specified time-frames before they be judged to be successful or not.

According to the literature (Chapter Nine) there is another major problem that has developed within Indigenous communities, one of a learned helplessness which according to Pearson (2000) has derived from forced welfare dependency. Pearson describes this syndrome as a sit-down mentality.

10.8 Overcoming the sit-down mentality...learned helplessness

Pearson (2000) strongly believes that colonialism and government actions have been major causes of the learned dependence and learned helplessness that is prevalent in many Indigenous communities. Pearson (2000b) persuasively argues that government-engineered passive welfare dependency has encouraged passivity in Indigenous communities and has fostered 'negative capability' (2005 p.6). In his view these policies have led to a 'vicious cycle of government-community-individual dependence that [has] led to the complete disintegration of indigenous society and culture—the very thing these policies had first sought to protect' (2005 p.2). Behrendt agrees and explains that:

Indigenous people share a cultural heritage, but they also share the experience of colonisation. These shared experiences (socialisation, heritage, history) validate and provide an enclave of inclusion and solidarity, detached from the wider community. These experiences – both negative as a result to discrimination and poor self-image and positive due to the re-affirmation of the Indigenous community and the pride in their history and cultural heritage become defining aspects of Indigenous self-identity (Behrendt 2003 p. 79).

Pearson contends that not only has this resultant dysfunction 'ceased being just a symptom or consequence of poverty: it has also become a causal factor' (2005 p.5), one that he believes has discouraged Indigenous communities from attempting to development of any real economy; an economic base that is necessary for community survival. He argues that:

With economic development and participation comes empowerment. Economic development is therefore closely linked to self-determination (Pearson 2005 p.9).

He initiated the Cape York Agenda seeking to find a way to overcome this developed negativity and encourage the Cape York communities to build an economic base. The Cape York Agenda has a three steps approach; a strong foundation of social values and norms; a generous investment in capabilities supports; and a reformed set of incentives steps (Pearson, 2005 p.4). The Cape York Agenda is an ongoing bold experiment that is showing some signs of success. However, as has been stressed, results should be expected to be gradual and the project will need to be judged over the longer timeframe (details of the Cape York Agenda were discussed in Chapter nine).

The CLC Lajamanu Governance Project (also discussed in Chapter nine) is a project seeking similar goals; build self-esteem, eliminate the welfare mentality and foster socio-economic

development, and it too has had a promising beginning. Its potential has been discussed in some detail in this and in previous chapters.

It is perhaps worth noting that both Pearson and the Central Land Council have chosen to focus their studies and efforts on specific communities, seeking a micro rather than a macro approach.

10.9 Think small and concentrate on each community as a separate entity

An examination of the number of different Indigenous Australian language groups, their diverse locations, different environments and especially their differing and unique cultures, suggests that government policies and practices need to be attuned to the differences. The concept of one policy or practice that suits all would seem to be unsuitable. The background information, in Chapters Three, Four and Five, demonstrate the complexity of the Warlpiri culture and suggest that its location, environment and remoteness has played a large part in how that community has evolved. Other language groups with different circumstances appear to have evolved to suit their circumstances. Each community can be expected to have differing needs and requirements because of these differing environmental, cultural and locational circumstances. This is why in planning this research it was believed vital that the Lajamanu community should be fully researched and assessed to determine its particular idiosyncrasies, differing problems and differing needs. This presumption resulted in a decision to undertake a SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the Lajamanu community to confirm these views. (Appendix F). The Lajamanu Warlpiri (Chapter Six), non-Warlpiri residents (Chapter Seven) and much of the literature (Chapter Nine) support the view that an intense study and examination of each Indigenous community is essential.

While the research shows the need to think small and concentrate on each community as a separate entity this does not necessarily signify that government policies must be designed and differing for each community. However, it does suggest that policies and bureaucratic practice should be flexible enough to cater for the differences.

10.10 Summary

The Warlpiri community (Chapter Six) are staunchly of the view that government does not listen to them, that it ignores their culture, kinship systems and their heritage. Non-Warlpiri Lajamanu residents (Chapter Seven) support these observations, as does much of the literature (McClay 1988; Nicholls & Herbert 1995; & Tatz 1964).

Lajamanu, and other Indigenous communities, face an uphill struggle in their endeavour to secure rights and identity and to close the socio-economic gap. They and government have long realised that this is an intensely difficult, complex problem. At first glance it seems incongruous that a small community like Lajamanu should find it so difficult or so complex a task but when examined in depth, as this thesis has done, it is understandable. There would seem to be no easy, simple or fast formulae to overcome all, or perhaps even some of the disadvantages. Unfortunately, whether the government actions and omissions have been intentional or unintentional it is seen that government has developed policies to close the gap without having seriously consulted with community to ascertain what it considers to be the 'gaps' that should be given priority and how the 'gaps' should be addressed.

The case study of Lajamanu presented in this thesis leads to the view that there are nine key factors that are important, and perhaps essential when attempts are to be made to positively address the building of a more equitable future for Lajamanu. However, while nine key factors have been highlighted by the many contributors to this thesis it should be noted that other relevant issues have been raised that should also be visited. However, the nine factors are seen to be the collective key to positive progress.

Finally, one particular key factor should be highlighted. Because each community is complex and differing, each community needs to be researched separately if their differences and idiosyncrasies are to be recognised. It should then be possible for government policies and practices to be adapted and applied to meet the specific requirements of each community.

CHAPTER 11 CONCLUSION

The previous chapter pulled all the threads together, that is to say it collated and analysed all that has been researched concerning the Lajamanu community. This chapter assesses the worth of these findings and arrives at some conclusions as to how or if there is a future for Lajamanu. It concludes that it may be possible for Lajamanu to have a future that that will safeguard rights and progressively overcome its socio-economic disadvantages. However, the complexity of this project is appreciated, and it is understandable that past efforts have been disappointing. The findings in this case study indicate nine key factors that have the potential to make positive steps to achieve this goal. The analysis presented in this thesis leads to a conclusion that this potential will be maximised if all nine factors are packaged as a whole. However, progress in this direction is heavily dependent on both government and the Lajamanu community being prepared to accept and practically implement the key factors.

11.1 Explaining how the Project comes to these conclusions

This project has researched the possibility of improving the prospects and capabilities of the Lajamanu Warlpiri community. It explores how and if that community can gain the human rights to which every person is entitled; how it can retain its unique and dynamic Warlpiri identity; how it can eliminate the present socio-economic disadvantage and how it can become a unique partner in the makeup of the multicultural Australian nation. Background information to this research case study is supplied in Chapters Three, Four and Five. But the next three chapters, Six, Seven and Eight supply the essential fieldwork which reveals the views of the Lajamanu community and those that have relationships with that community, past and present, direct and indirect. These views have then been assessed and discussed in the context of the triangulation approach analysis of those with informed knowledge of Indigenous Australian and other communities and of mainstream government, discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter Nine).

The nine key factors have been deemed to be of importance by either the literature (Chapter Nine) or the findings of the field research (Chapters Six, Seven & Eight). Chapter Nine has

shown that government has taken note of some of these factors as is instanced by the COAG Trials, ATSIC and the Cape York Agenda. Unfortunately, it would seem that government has not placed as much importance on these factors as has been recommended by past observers and is now advocated as a result of this thesis research. Instead government has moved away from such initiatives and continues to pursue policies that have shown little progress and seemingly less potential.

Scholarly arguments and Lajamanu residents' views suggest that present government policies and practices will continue to be unproductive and that the Lajamanu socio-economic disadvantage will persist unless a dramatic change in policy approach is achieved. Admittedly past government policies have improved community infrastructure, but they have made very little progress in improving socio-economic well-being. Yet, government continues to persevere with policies that have failed to achieve the desired results. Change is needed, and the research suggests that these nine factors can be positive catalysts.

But why do those researched consider each of these factors to be so important in effecting socio-economic change?

11.2 Nine Key Factors

The first factor involves Indigenous sovereignty, or more to the point, whether the Lajamanu community will accept a compromise proposal in which they are prepared to consider a guarantee of equitable human rights, recognition of Warlpiri identity, support for cultural retention and negotiated local self-determining rights as an acceptable alternative. This case study research indicates that the Lajamanu community would react positively to such a proposal (Chapter Six, Altman 2005; Sanders 2004; Hunt, Smith, Garling, & Sanders 2008). On the other hand, government has seemingly proffered few opportunities for these things to be negotiated. However, on a more positive note government has shown guarded support for the Lajamanu Governance Project and in Kurdiji, for Shire/Regional government, and it claims that it wishes to discuss and to negotiate future policies before it implements them. So, there may be potential to expand government thinking to consider a compromise along the lines that has been suggested. Government may take notice that while the community supports Lajamanu Governance Project and Kurdiji, its attitude to local government has been controlling. Possibly this is because the former is seen to be community controlled and the

latter to be government controlled. Lajamanu residents are not impressed with the current Regional council arrangements (Chapter Six). It is the view of the Lajamanu residents that they lost considerable self-management capacity when the local council was amalgamated into the Central Desert Shire.

Obviously, there are many difficulties that need to be overcome, but it does seem that there may be possibilities for the Bough via Kurdiji and government to negotiate an acceptable process for Lajamanu sovereignty to be acknowledged. But the research clearly shows that government has qualms about change. It doubts the Lajamanu Warlpiri leadership capacity and capability to self-determine and self-manage (Cunningham & Baeza 2005 p. 47). It has some worries that the retention of culture may impinge on the Australian rule of law (Howard cited in Robbins 2006 p. 75) and that its cultural activities may not be democratic. While the Lajamanu community is sometimes mystified by some of the law that applies throughout Australia it reluctantly acknowledges that there can only be one rule of law (Chapter Six). However, the community also believes that there should be some scope for interpretation which could allow aspects of traditional law to operate. The Warlpiri concept of shaming is an example (Chapter Six).

Traditional leadership and kinship arrangements may not strictly accord with western democratic ideas but seem to give every community member a say in Warlpiri affairs. There were no indications that the community wanted to change this traditional arrangement.

Traditionally mainstream government bureaucratic agendas focus on workforce efficiency, educational qualifications and financial accountability (Moore, 1995 p. 22 & 53). Research suggests that perhaps government (federal, territory and shire) could re-evaluate its priorities regarding efficiency, education and financial accountability and place effectiveness and project results higher. In doing so it may be that the effectiveness and development in remote Indigenous communities could show improvement without dramatic increases in funding (Altman 2005; CLC 2014). All of these changes will require substantial changes in government mindset.

Another obstacle is the Lajamanu Warlpiri community's distrust and disillusionment with government. Steve Jampijinpa Patrick's comment is worth repeating:

They [Warlpiri people] have become defensive because Kardiya [non-Indigenous people] do not listen and are constantly changing law and policies. Kardiya does not give Yapa respect (Chapter Six).

It may be that the problems of distrust and disillusionment could be addressed by the other key factors.

The second determined key factor is the proposal that government give support to a traditional Lajamanu leadership and management body. Chapter Four establishes that the Yamparru (commonly referred to as the Bough) is recognised by Warlpiri as the traditional elite body of leadership and that the Bough fully supports and encourages Kurdiji to develop the leadership and management skills that are necessary to embrace and negotiate with government and mainstream agencies. However, as mentioned, the community continues to have doubts as to whether government is sincere in its efforts to accept traditional leadership. The Lajamanu community and the authors of much of the relevant scholarly literature (Sullivan 2011; Hunt 2008; Altman, Biddle, & Hunter, 2008; etc.) are convinced that government is continuing not to listen, respect, or to be ready to re-think and change policies. Chapman, Holmes, Kelly, Smith, Weepers & Wright) argue that:

most Warlpiri feel that Lajamanu is really owned by kardiya¹³ (i.e. non-Aboriginal people) who have unilaterally made major changes to the way the community is run, with the result that Warlpiri power to make decisions about Lajamanu is heavily constrained (Chapman et al. 2014 p.49).

But to give government its due, it has established policies designed to bring social equity and inclusion to Indigenous communities, even though the policies appear to be designed to integrate Indigenous communities into mainstream western functioning. *Closing the Gap* policies have shown that government does seek to overcome Indigenous disadvantage in Indigenous communities. Unfortunately, government has failed to realise that perhaps Indigenous Australians have different perceptions as to what they consider to be the main disadvantages that impact on their lives and how each disadvantage should be prioritised. Government has also failed to consult, communicate, and negotiate policies with the

Lajamanu community. These government actions and omissions appear to have played a part in the lack of progress in achieving *Closing the Gap* targets.

However, this case study research suggests that Kurdiji may well be the instrument for the much needed change in government-Lajamanu relations. The listening ability of government could be demonstrated if and when it constructively shows that it is prepared to support and accept a traditional leadership body, such as Kurdiji, and is willing to act on reasonable innovations that emanate from that traditionally accepted body. However, Kurdiji will need to be supported, encouraged, trained and given the opportunity to mature. It is suggested that government could demonstrate its sincerity by providing long-term funding of Kurdiji and ongoing funding for tutors of Chapman's (2014) standard.

Factor Three highlights the need for leadership and management training of the traditional leadership. In the case of Lajamanu, Kurdiji is the obvious choice. Chapman stresses that he thinks that training should be an enquiring rather than a directing process:

Building governance capacity is the process of people identifying their own problems, thinking through solutions, making informed choices, carrying out effective and culturally-based actions, and taking collective responsibility for the outcomes (Chapman et al. 2014 p.84).

The CLC Lajamanu Governance Project appears to have been a step in the right direction, a real attempt to assist Warlpiri to build the leadership and management skills so necessary for negotiating effectively with government. Kurdiji and the Lajamanu community have indicated that they want government to demonstrate genuine interest in the project by supporting the Kurdiji project financially, and more importantly by regularly meeting with it, listening and being prepared to act on reasonable requests. Genuine support by government could be the catalyst. While government may find it difficult to do this, an attitudinal change is perhaps not an impossible task. Undoubtedly, there is a need to build trust between the Lajamanu community and government.

Much of the researched literature (Altman 2005; Hunter 2009; Sullivan 2011) argues that remote Indigenous communities (and that includes Lajamanu) need some alternative economic base or structure to ensure a future. This is the fourth factor. Yet the problem of economic development for remote Indigenous communities has long appeared to be all but

insoluble. Altman's Hybrid Economy Model (2005) appears to be the most promising alternative opportunity to develop some semblance of an economy for Lajamanu. The Hybrid Economic Model with its three overlapping sectors—the market, the state, and the customary economy adds additional opportunities for employment and business with its cultural pursuits, land and habitat management, and biodiversity management, as has been explained in Chapter Ten. But doubts have continued as to whether these additional opportunities could provide enough impetus to develop the necessary economic stability.

However, recently, Guenther and McRae-Williams (2014 & 2016) have suggested that there are far more employment opportunities than had previously been considered. They have found that there are many jobs in remote areas that do not require certification or qualification (Guenther & McRae-Williams 2016 p. 5). This suggests that jobs could be made more available to local Indigenous residents. The 2011 Australian census (ABS 2011) shows that 'almost 28,000 jobs held by non-Indigenous people who have not gone beyond Year 10 and more than 30,000 jobs held by non-Indigenous people with no certificate qualifications.' These figures suggest that there may positively change the potential for the development of a hybrid economy similar to that which is recommended by Altman. However, again this is largely dependent on the government which would be required to revise its employment practices to preference the employment of local Indigenous workers, Warlpiri residents in the case of Lajamanu. It may also require the government to reconsider its focus on efficiency and financial accountability if it is to foster some form of government assisted economic development. Nevertheless, some research (e.g. Sullivan 2011) suggest that these considerations would show that government has changed and is opting for stability and effectiveness rather than continuing along its present non-productive path.

The areas of housing, mining and health offer more examples of possible employment opportunity. Housing maintenance and some construction jobs would be enhanced if Warlpiri residents were given preference and if certification and qualifications could be made applicable to the situation (Chapter Seven, Marsham). Community housing maintenance, development and design offers opportunities for local tradespeople. Currently preference is given to non-Lajamanu residents, sub-contractors, etc. Design and development emanate from elsewhere. Newmont Mining Company has showed willingness to employ Lajamanu resident and it may be that employment conditions could be negotiated that would fit with

Warlpiri kinship and customary requirements. This may be less efficient but could prove to be more productive for both the mining company and the community. Katherine West Health Service is acknowledged as being well-received by the Lajamanu community and might consider taking the opportunity to further benefit the community by training and employing a number of Lajamanu residents to educate the Lajamanu community on primary health needs. These are just a few suggestions that have come from the contributors to this thesis (Chapters Six & Seven).

Perhaps the biggest impediment to the building of a stable equitable future for Lajamanu (and other like communities) is the need to educate the community. This is factor five. The need to educate is a recurring theme that runs throughout this thesis. The Lajamanu Warlpiri community (Chapter Six), non-Warlpiri residents (Chapter Seven), government (Prime Minister 2014-2015 & 2017; Wilson, 2013; COAG 2008b; & Hunt & Smith 2006b) emphasize that education is a vital factor in overcoming Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage. Childhood education results in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory, including Lajamanu, are unarguably sub-standard in comparison with mainstream schools (Guenther & McRae-Williams 2014).

Bi-lingual education in Lajamanu is virtually non-existent, as are Warlpiri teachers and teachers aides. It is difficult to understand how and why bi-lingual education, particularly in early education, has been ignored or abandoned as it is seen to have previously produced encouraging results (Nicholls & Herbert 1995; Roche, Watt and Cataldi 1986). The recommendations of the Wilson report (2013) recommends a bi-lingual approach but little evidence of its possible implementation was observed in Lajamanu during the research period. Surely this situation should be rectified. While both government and the Lajamanu community pay 'lip-service' to expressing the urgent need for education, little seems to change. It may be that education is deteriorating rather than improving. Much of the research information maintains that if this is to change, government and the Lajamanu community must take more responsibility to ensure the children of that community get the education that all Australians are entitled to. This will be a lengthy process but an essential one.

It would also seem reasonable to require those non-Warlpiri people employed in Lajamanu to

undergo some form of compulsory orientation training in Warlpiri heritage, kinship arrangements and heritage. Education is a two-way street.

In 'normal' situations it would be reasonable to suggest that each community should be responsible for the way it wishes to live and for its planning for the future. The research testimony states that Lajamanu is not a normal situation. Biermann (2011 p.389) notes that Wolfe (1999) argues that the Australian 'settler-colonial state is [...] society's primary structural characteristic rather than merely a statement about its origins...invasion is a structure not an event' (Wolfe, P. 1999 p.163). Colonial impact, government policy directions and imposed welfare dependence have effectively convinced the Lajamanu community that they do not have enough power or authority to effect the changes that they so clearly want. There is an onus on government to recognise that they have a responsibility to effect change and the insight emphasised by the findings of this research is that this needs, above all, to be managed in an inclusive and culturally appropriate way. This leads to factor six, the call for government to free up Indigenous resources, funding and to revise strategies.

The previous chapter criticised government resourcing, funding and strategies (Hunt & Smith 2005; Westbury & Sanders 2000; Hughes & Hughes 2011; and Sullivan 2011). While the criticism and proposed corrective measures vary all critics advocate changes to the way government attempts to lessen Indigenous disadvantage. There is considerable support for factor six which urges the freeing up of government resources, funding and strategies. Some suggestions that have been voiced are; to re-consider the mainstream focus on efficiency and financial accountability and consider that a less efficient Indigenous work-force may be more effective, improve community employment and support for developing a hybrid economy. Despite many in the Lajamanu community, both Warlpiri and non-Warlpiri (Chapters Six and Seven) complaining that government employment and contract policies are ineffective, that housing maintenance is poor, that the Shire prioritises contractors and a non-Warlpiri workforce for infrastructure development and repair, government policies continue to originate from Canberra, Darwin or Alice Springs with little or no input or consultation with the community that it is supposed to benefit. Funding is tightly accounted for, often audited but rarely checked to see if allocated projects have been completed. The inevitable conclusion from the views expressed by all sectors of the research detailed in this thesis is that

government policies and practices (federal, territory and shire) are failing or ineffective. While it is obvious to many observers that the problem of overcoming Indigenous disadvantage is extremely complex, it is also obvious that changes to government thinking, policy direction and application are necessary.

Factor seven notes that there is substantial support (COAG, 2006; Hunt & Smith 2006b; Altman 2001b; Pearson, 2005) for the view that policies need to be given sufficient time to judge their effectiveness. There is need for government to ensure that policies and funding are established over long-terms and that funding is guaranteed for the life of the policy. Bi-partisan support of the political parties would assist this process.

Factor eight is about the Indigenous people's belief that they have little opportunity to effect change. Pearson (2000) considers that one major problem is that of a developed Indigenous learned helplessness which derives from a forced welfare dependency imposed upon them by government. Pearson and others argue that the sit-down mentality derives from the effects of colonisation and resultant government policies (Behrendt,2003). Pearson initiated the Cape York Agenda (2005) to overcome this inertia and to re-invigorate Indigenous self-reliance, self-determination and integrity. The Central Land Council Lajamanu Governance Project (2011) is attempting to achieve similar objectives. However, Warlpiri (and Indigenous peoples) have long endured welfare dependence and the accompanying learned helplessness, and this will not be quickly eliminated. The research suggests that it is government that bears most of, but not all, responsibility to overcome this learned helplessness. Both the government and the Lajamanu community will need to accept responsibility to overcome this disastrous syndrome if real and lasting change is to be possible.

The last noted and perhaps in some way the most important factor, factor nine, is particularly significant. This thesis research emphasises the importance of government and researchers recognising that each Indigenous community is different in practices, culture, heritage, location, ecology, etc. The information provided in Chapters Three, Four, and Five show the complexity of Warlpiri culture and of the idiosyncrasies of Lajamanu. However, as Hudson noted in Chapter 4 p. 59 'every culture has to adapt when it encounters another. To not adapt is to stagnate and die. Culture is dynamic, not static' (Hudson, 2013 p. 175), and clearly Warlpiri culture has had to confront the impact of settler colonisation on Lajamanu.

Unfortunately, it seems that government has not faced the same compulsion to confront the situation.

Chapters Six and Seven have divulged community views and ideas, some specific to Lajamanu and some more general for Indigenous communities. Chapter Eight added views of government officials that relate to Lajamanu. The Literature Review chapter (Chapter Nine) discusses Indigenous communities more generally but several contributors noted the peculiarities and differences in Lajamanu. This has led to the conclusion that it is not possible that 'one-fits-all policies' will be effective for the 240 plus Indigenous language groups spread throughout the length and breadth of Australia in their diverse, remote and non-remote locations. However, it seems reasonable to suggest that perhaps these policies could be effective if they have enough flexibility or adaption to fit the circumstances of the differing Indigenous communities.

11.3 Failure and the challenge of change

It is painfully obvious that it will be an extremely complex the task to change governance style, regain rights and eliminate or even lessen Indigenous disadvantage. Government endeavours have produced only minimal or no improvements. Periodic reports (Prime Minister 2014; 2015 & 2017) appear to signpost that it is unlikely that there will be any significant closure of the socio-economic disadvantage gap in Lajamanu (and remote Indigenous communities) in the short term.

Surely this shows that the current policies are not working and that changes are needed. The nine key factors identified here are advocated and, in most cases, strongly supported by the many varied contributors to this thesis. These keys offer an opportunity for better results, and a more fair and equitable future for Lajamanu. Why government (federal, territory and shire) often fail to listen to or continue to ignore much of the well documented views and arguments of academics, their own reports, government employees and the Warlpiri (and Indigenous peoples) is difficult to understand. The overwhelming amount of the views and arguments expressed by the many contributors to this research, particularly those of the Lajamanu residents, surely bear consideration. Although government sometimes takes partial note of scholarly argument its failure to recognize the need for change is disappointing. If

government and the Lajamanu community (and by inference other communities) are sincere in seeking to eliminate Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage, support Indigenous rights and retention of Indigenous identity, then changes need to take place. The government and the Lajamanu community are urged to consider these nine factors as being an opportunity for change.

11.4 Trust

History suggests that change will not be easily achieved, and yet the research suggests that change will require the building of mutual trust. Government is the dominant, most powerful partner and therefore should take the initiative in developing trust and indeed change.

The thesis argument is that if government is prepared to embrace these nine key factors, partially or preferably as a whole, in Lajamanu it will seriously and positively demonstrate goodwill to the Lajamanu community. This seems to be a logical beginning for negotiated change. However, when, and if this occurs, it will then fall upon Warlpiri leaders to positively respond. The development of trust will not be easily developed. It will require time.

11.5 The Future for Lajamanu

The information, evidence, ideas, arguments and theories that have been presented in this thesis, have led me to believe there are nine key factors that appear to be instrumental in the building of any acceptable future for Lajamanu (and perhaps many other Aboriginal communities). However, while government continues to rely on policies that foster sameness; policies that ignore cultural difference and policies that ignore the real wants and needs of the Lajamanu Warlpiri community, the future for Lajamanu looks bleak. As a multicultural country there is an inference that Australia accepts and acknowledges cultural differences, particularly considering that it recognises the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This is not apparent with the current Indigenous policies. The testimony of contributors to this thesis suggest that government should carefully examine the nine key factors, contemplate their worth and readdress Indigenous policies.

The Lajamanu community, and other Indigenous Australian communities, are of unique and of

immense value to Australia and to the world. They are assets that must not to be lost. If Australia really believes in a 'fair go for all' then the rights, and identity of the Warlpiri people of Lajamanu must be guaranteed and changes must be made to ensure that the community gradually closes the socio-disadvantage gap. The Lajamanu community deserves this future.

Indigenous communities deserve this future.

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APPENDIX A: LAJAMANU WARLPIRI/INDIGENOUS RESIDENTS

- Anderson Sharon Currently works as assistant to the Manager of the Art Centre. For approximately ten years prior to this, Sharon was employed as a teacher aide, always as a casual employee.
- Barnes, Geoffrey An Elder, a member of the Kurdiji, the Central Land Council, and the Katherine Health Board. Geoffrey was a senior member of the Lajamanu Council and other committees.
- Cook, Neil Currently works at the Warnayaka Art Centre. However, he is a capable, trained plumber, although his qualifications are not recognised. He is a younger developing Elder. His father, Henry Cooke, is the oldest Elder in Lajamanu and considered to be perhaps the most influential culturally senior Elder.
- Dixon, Richard An Indigenous man visiting from Robinson community, near Borrooloola. His wife is Warlpiri from Lajamanu.
- Doolan, Mike A younger Lajamanu resident.
- Donnelly, Agnes An Elder in her own right who was also married to a very powerful Elder who recently died.
- George, Robert ('T. O.') A Gurindji man married to Doris, a senior woman Elder. He resides in Lajamanu.
- Hargreaves, Lily Nungaryai Nearing eighty years old, Lily is quite frail but exerts much influence. She is a strong, intelligent lady. She is the premier artist at the Warnayaka Art Centre
- Herbert, Kirk A quiet but informative and articulate Elder.
- Jangala, Jerry A senior and much revered Elder. He is now nearing eighty years of age. He is a Baptist preacher, has translated the Bible into Warlpiri, and has received an Order of Australia. He is extremely well versed in his heritage and culture and wise in his interpretation of the various situations faced by Warlpiri people. Jerry is a major voice in the community.

- Jigili, Peter A younger Elder who is being groomed for more power and senior roles. He has been the President of the Lajamanu Councilor, a leading member of Kurdiji, a member of several prestigious art committees, and importantly the designated organiser and master of ceremonies for most public community meetings held between Warlpiri, government, and agencies.
- James, Kumanjayi Was the Chairman of the Lajamanu Store Board of Management. He has recently died, hence the title Kumanjayi meaning that his Christian name is not now to be used.
- Johnson, Andrew A younger brother of Willy. He is a strongly developing mid-powered Elder. He is very vocal and becoming a strong leader within the community. He works for Mission Australia.
- Johnson, Willy ('W.') Vice-chairman of the Central Desert Shire, ex-President of the Lajamanu Council, and a representative on a number of committees and boards. He is an Elder who is considered to be able to liaise effectively with government and agencies
- Kurdiji A group (male and female) predominately aligned with community governance and maintenance issues. They are considered to answerable to the Bough. In the Warlpiri language, Kurdiji means to shield or to ward off. It is evolving law and justice committee that was formed in 1998 by the Office of Aboriginal Development (OAD). While it was primarily an OAD concept, it was predominantly composed of traditional tribal council members.
- Kurdiji members Leslie Robertson, Peter Jigili, Jungerayi James, Henry Cook, Judy M, Andrew Johnson, Jerry Jangala, Joe Marshall, Tracie Patrick, Judy Bidy, Elizabeth Ross (some were missing).
- Mathews, Geoffrey An Elder who appears to have quite strong anti-Kardiya (non-Indigenous persons) sentiments.
- Patrick, Steve Jampijinpa Also known as Wanta teacher. He is the author of Ngurra-kurlu, a plan for the future of Lajamanu, working with non-Indigenous people. He has lectured at the Australian National University, at Deakin University, and other universities. Currently, he is employed in the Learning Centre in Lajamanu.
- Patrick, Norbert Chairperson of the Central Desert Shire (now Regional Council) and was previously the Deputy Chairman of the Lajamanu Local Council.

Ross, Elizabeth A senior woman Elder and a painter/artist at the Warnayaka Art Centre.

Tasman, Lamon (Cyril) The Assistant Government Agency Coordinator. Lamon is a respected young community member of a family that has a history of respect. He was previously an Assistant Police Officer at Lajamanu.

Unnamed woman A younger woman who has worked for the Lajamanu Council as a cleaner and in the office. Currently, she works on a casual basis for the Warnayaka Art Centre and is highly regarded by the manager. She has had a difficult life but is respected in the community. The community believes that she has had little support from government agencies in dealing with her problems and that she has been poorly treated.

Warnayaka Art Centre A community-owned Indigenous Art Centre catering for the development and sale of the unique art of Warlpiri heritage and 'dreaming' stories, art that reveals the culture, origins and creation according to Warlpiri people. Artists are predominantly women, but some men Elders and younger Warlpiri who are learning the stories and the painting techniques attend. There is a non-Indigenous manager, and three Warlpiri employees who are financed by GMAAC monies. The main artists are also partly financed by government grants and other royalty monies. The Centre is selling substantial numbers of artworks, with sales increasing yearly. The monies received from the sales go predominantly to the artists.

Warnayaka Art Centre Women's Group Composed of Agnes Donnelly, Lily Hargreaves, Elizabeth Ross, Ursula Marks, Rosie Tasman, Bidy Timms, Bidy Jarah, Molly Tasman, Judy Martin, Sharon Anderson, Judy Walker, Margaret Martin, Miranda Cooke, and Elizabeth Herbert.

APPENDIX B: LAJAMANU NON-WARLPIRI RESIDENTS AND EX-RESIDENTS

Butler, Jim	The Lajamanu Store manager. He has been managing the store for over fifteen years, and it is regarded as one of the most well run, efficient community stores in the remote areas of the Northern Territory.
Carroll, Aaron	The Remote Jobs on Communities Program (RJCP) manager in 2014. He was employed by the Victoria-Daly Shire Council, which had the RJCP contract at that time. It is now contracted out to a private body and Aaron no longer resides in Lajamanu.
Chapman, Rob	The Project Coordinator for Kurdiji. He was contracted through the Central Land Council (CLC), which is largely funded by government for the Lajamanu Governance Project.
Erglis, Louisa	The Warnayaka Art Centre Manager. She has been in Lajamanu for approximately eight years. Her husband Michael works as a regional works foreman for the Central Desert Regional Council.
Fleming, Michael	Government Engagement Coordinator (previously called the Government Business Manager).
Gudsek, Samuel	Resident doctor at Lajamanu Health Centre in 2014, employed by the Katherine Health Board. He was a young doctor undergoing residential experience. He has since been transferred to other duties.
Keefe, Juliette	The Deputy Principal of the Lajamanu School.
Name Withheld	A Warlpiri who works in the Warnayaka Art Centre. She has had great difficulties in her life
Marsham, Monicka (Nic)	A former Warnayaka Art Centre Manager, having re-started it after many years of it having been defunct. She is a highly qualified teacher and trainer. She is married to Kerry.
Marsham, Kerry	Previously the Housing Manager for the Lajamanu Council. He is a highly qualified manager and a qualified carpenter. He had a reputation for getting things done when employed in this position. He also has a

reputation for stating what he thinks.

- Parslow, Tim. The current Central Desert Regional Council's Service Manager. Tim has lived in the Northern Territory and worked in similar positions in other communities throughout the life of the Central Desert Regional Council.
- Rai, Ang Pasang A former colleague of mine at Yuendumu, a southern Warlpiri community, where he worked as an accounting officer for Central Desert Shire. He is a qualified accountant and currently works in a Queensland local government council.
- Teague, Roger A former Government Business Manager (GBM) in Lajamanu, a senior federal public servant, and a past CEO of the Palmerston North Local Government Council.

APPENDIX C: NON-WARLPIRI / GOVERNMENT INTERVIEWEES

- Birrell, Veronika A Councilor for the Vic-Daly Shire and ex-Mayor of Narrungalung-Madruk-Nudbury Regional Council. Interviewed in Katherine, 2014.
- Heffernan, Sean The Chief Executive Officer of the Katherine West Health Board. Interviewed in Katherine, 10 April 2014.
- Kelly, Doug Officer, Department of Health and Families Alcohol and Other Drugs Program, Katherine. Interviewed in Katherine, 10 April 2014.
- Mack, Deanella A consultant for mental health services based in Alice Springs. Interviewed in Alice Springs, 4 June 2014.
- McAdam, Elliot A former Minister of Local Government who introduced and supported the amalgamation of the local councils into the shire concept. He is an Indigenous man and there was no doubting his belief that the shires offered more opportunity for cost efficiencies and better outcomes. Interviewed at Tennant Creek, 5 June 2014.
- McCreesh, Moira Officer, Department of Health and Families Alcohol and Other Drugs Program, Katherine. Interviewed in Katherine, 10 April 2014.
- McGill, Allan A past Chief Executive of the Northern Territory Department of Local Government and Region, now retired. Interviewed in Darwin, 2 June 2014.
- McLinden, Peter Manager of Transport and Infrastructure for the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory. Interviewed in Darwin, 2 June 2014.
- Moxom, Greg Administrator of the Roads to Recovery Program (operating since 2001), a federal government funding program. Interviewed Canberra, 24 March 2014.
- Tapsell, Tony The Chief Executive Officer of the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory. Interviewed in Darwin, 2 June 2014.
- Teague, Roger A former Government Business Manager from Lajamanu, a senior federal public servant, and a past CEO of the Palmerston North Local Government Council. Interviewed in Adelaide 2104.?
- Turner, Patricia A past Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Commission and a senior public servant in Canberra. Interviewed in Alice Springs, 6 June 2014.

APPENDIX D: INDIGENOUS INTERVIEW DISCUSSION MATERIAL

All discussions and interviews were agreed to by the contributors. They were totally voluntary, and contributors were advised that they may choose to refrain from answers if they wished. All answers were kept strictly confidential, with the exceptions of any that interviewees have given written permission to release.

Informed views were obtained using research techniques, predominantly of a qualitative nature, using a combination of phenomenon and ethnographic methodology (Creswell 1998, pp. 38-40). Ethnographic research examines the group's observable and learned patterns of behavior, customs and ways of life (Harris 1968 cited in Cresswell 1998). Phenomenon research focuses not on the life of an individual but rather on the concept or phenomenon. Dadirri research methodology, which is described more fully in Chapter 5, was particularly applied when interviewing the Lajamanu Warlpiri people. Conversations were recorded with the permission of the interviewees or noted post-discussion. Official interpreters were employed.

Some individual interviews occurred but in the main research information was obtained by general group discussions and by informal individual and group conversations at the Bough, at the Warnayaka Art Centre, in the town square meeting place and throughout the community. Note: Generally, questions were not formally framed and issued but were introduced as subjects for discussion if the people were interested. This situation was made simpler because of my previous experience with this community. Care was taken with recordings, notes and permission authorisations and these have been lodged securely at Flinders University in Adelaide.

The following information was obtained wherever it was deemed to be acceptable by the people being interviewed.

Personal information

Name, skin group, age, immediate family structure, formal education, literacy, employment, level of income, housing, transport.

Socialisation and identity

People were asked to talk about their place of birth and early experiences growing up in the bush, outstations, Lajamanu or elsewhere.

Some of the subjects that were suggested for informal discussion were:

The future of Lajamanu

How is Lajamanu going?

Do you have plans for the future?

Do you have fears for the future?

What would you like to see for the future of Lajamanu?

Disadvantages living in Lajamanu

Do the people of Lajamanu believe that they are disadvantaged in comparison to the rest of Australian towns and societies?

What do you believe are your most urgent problems? Which are the biggest disadvantages?

Are these problems getting better/worse/just the same?

Do you consider you have any disadvantages with employment, law and justice, housing, health, education, drug and alcohol abuse, etc. Discussions of each subject are to occur separately where possible.

Do you want employment and are there opportunities?

What can the community or you do to improve the situation?

Local leadership, capacity and capability

Does the Lajamanu community have leaders and a leadership structure? Please give details?

Does the local leadership structure have the capability and capacity to manage the Lajamanu community? What are its limitations if any?

Does the local leadership structure have the capacity and capability to negotiate effectively and persuasively with government and mainstream agencies? What are its limitations if any?

Government and bureaucracy

Do you believe that the Federal, NT and Shire governments ask the Lajamanu people what they want, and explain what they are doing?

Do you believe that if they talked and listened more to the Lajamanu people it would change anything? What would it do?

I realise that Indigenous Government people, university people, consultants and business/mining people have come and gone with surveys, questions, and ideas. Has anything helped and do you think things are going to get better/worse, or just not change much at all?

Changes/Reviews/ Ideas

Would you like Federal, Northern Territory and the Central Desert Regional governments to work differently with and for Lajamanu? If so, then how?

How can the Lajamanu community work better with government? Does it want to?

How do you think problems can be lessened in Lajamanu?

Do you think the Lajamanu community believes it can get rid of these problems without government help?

Do the Lajamanu people think government should do it, that they should do it or that it should be a shared effort?

Do the Lajamanu people want to work with government to get a better Lajamanu

Any other comments you may wish to make

What message do you want to give to government?

What message do you want to give to the rest of Australia?

See 'Notice of wish to visit' shown below.

Remember Marc Dilena?



Marc will be coming to Lajamanu next April and May. He wants to sit down and talk with everyone. He wants to listen to Yapa and hear what they think about Lajamanu; the good things and the bad things?

What should stay the same and what would Yapa like to change?

Will Kardiya listen to what Yapa wants?

Important

Anyone who talks to Marc about these things;

- Only does so if they want to.
- The talks will only be recorded if you say YES.
- Anything you say is private.
- We can talk anywhere.
- You will be asked to agree to talk.
- You can stop whenever you like.
- A report on the talks with Yapa and Kardiya will be sent to Lajamanu.
- A translator will be used if Yapa needs one.

Why is Marc doing this?

Marc plans to listen, hear and then write a book that will help Kardiya to better understand the Lajamanu Yapa way, and for Lajamanu Yapa to better understand Kardiya way.

Marc Dilena has lived in Lajamanu. He worked with the Lajamanu Council, but he no longer works with any government, Federal, territory or Shire. If you have any questions or worries with him coming and talking at Lajamanu please contact his Flinders University supervisor;

Associate Professor Jane Robbins

School of Social & Policy Studies

Faculty of Social & Behavioural Sciences

GPO Box 2100

Adelaide SA 5001

Telephone on 08 82012393 or e-mail jane.robbs@flinders.edu.au.

APPENDIX E: NON-INDIGENOUS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

All discussions and interviews were agreed to by the contributors. They were totally voluntary, and contributors were advised that they may choose to refrain from answers if they wished. All answers were kept strictly confidential, with the exceptions of those where interviewees have given written permission of release. All answers were clearly delineated into those that were stated to be personal views and those that were stated to be government policy. Interviews were of a formal nature, pre-arranged where possible and usually took no longer than one hour. Research views were obtained by the use of research techniques, predominantly of a qualitative nature, using a combination of phenomenon and ethnographic methodology (Creswell 1998, p. 38-40).

The purpose of interviewing non-Indigenous persons associated with Lajamanu and/or Indigenous affairs was to obtain as much information and viewpoints as possible to form a balanced over-all picture of the Lajamanu community, its disadvantages and its potential. The basis of the interviews followed the structure that is detailed below.

Background information

Name, age, sex

Position, department/company, location

Time in this position

Length of time in association with Indigenous communities/relations

Disadvantages in Lajamanu

Do you think Lajamanu Warlpiri people are disadvantaged when compared to the rest of Australians? In what way are they disadvantaged?

It is generally accepted that many remote communities have the following ongoing disadvantages, health, education, housing, law and justice, housing, drug and alcohol and lack of employment opportunities?

Do any of these apply to Lajamanu and can you think of others?

Have you observed any significant improvements/deteriorations in any of the areas of disadvantage?

Government and Bureaucracy

Do you believe that Federal, NT and Shire governments are sufficiently involving the Lajamanu

people in the current project priorities, design, funding, and application of law for their area?
Do you believe that better consultation and better listening to community voice would improve government decision making and lessen funding wastage and misappropriation in Lajamanu?

Given that there is a mountain of relevant literature and experience in relation to Indigenous disadvantage; is the problem insoluble? Is it just too hard for Canberra, Darwin and perhaps the new Shires?

What can or should be done to improve the situation?

Community governance

How do you rate community leadership?

Do Warlpiri have enough competence, capacity or capability to become self-governing, self-sufficient or self-managed?

Local government or local governance in Lajamanu

Currently, the Central Desert Regional Council is the relevant local government body for Lajamanu. Previously, there was the Lajamanu Local Government Community Council, both formed under the auspices of the NT Government legislation.

Could you discuss and perhaps give opinions on each:

- a) Central Desert Shire
- b) Previous Lajamanu Local Government Council

Can you suggest improvements to the present system?

In your opinion if the Lajamanu community were given the opportunity to form a local governance body of their choice, probably in a consensual customary format, would it offer any better potential for them to express their opinions, needs and future plans for Lajamanu?

What future role do you see for the Central Desert Regional Council?

Assuming that a new local body could be established in Lajamanu, what changes would you see for the Central Desert Regional Council, if any?

Could you see a possibility of it being modified to be similar to an English County Council, acting as the regional accounting, grant research/acquiring, general acquisition/ordering agent, central equipment/machinery body that responds to the decisions, requests and desires of the local Lajamanu organisation (in conjunction with other local bodies)?

Changes/Reviews/ Ideas

How can Federal and NT and Shire governments better communicate with Lajamanu?

How can Lajamanu better communicate with Federal, NT and Shire governments?

How do you think disadvantages can be best lessened in Lajamanu?

Do you think the Lajamanu community is applying enough initiative and desire to alleviate these disadvantages? If not, why not?

Other comments you may wish to make

Some examples of questions put to interviewees were:

Should Warlpiri (Indigenous) people have a say in deciding how the Lajamanu community should develop?

Does the Lajamanu community have the capacity to manage the day to day activities of Lajamanu?

Can and should and will Warlpiri retain their culture and traditions?

Given that past government policies have produced few improvements to the longstanding disadvantages prevalent in Lajamanu, are you optimistic or pessimistic in changing this situation? Please explain your reasons.

Can Lajamanu become economically viable in achieving a semblance of stability?

Is self-determination or self-management on a small scale such as in Lajamanu feasible and/or economically possible? Is there sufficient Warlpiri leadership and competency?

Do Warlpiri want to work? Are they capable and/or prepared to work on a permanent and reliable basis?

Can Lajamanu Warlpiri residents develop viable business enterprises?

Will 'core town' strategies work?

Would a Lajamanu community plan be acceptable to the government bureaucracy or the Central Desert Regional Council?

Could such a Lajamanu plan, backed by Warlpiri support, be useful in approaching problems such as housing, health, schools, jobs, law and order, grog and illicit drug use?

Do you think that current government policies and actions will succeed in the long term? Can they be adapted to be flexible enough to enable specificity to individual remote communities?

Since each remote community has differing needs, is it possible for Federal, Territory and Shire to construct specific policies and programs for specific communities?

Are the three tiers of government coordinating effectively in implementing policies to eliminate disadvantage in Lajamanu? Could you suggest more effective and cost-efficient possibilities?

In your opinion, do Lajamanu residents consider themselves as part of the Australian nation or as being apart from it as Warlpiri people?

Other matters relevant to the interviewees' specific area of expertise were discussed on an ad lib basis.

APPENDIX F: SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE LAJAMANU METHODOLOGY

(SWOT = Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)

Strengths

It will enable cultural leadership and governance recognition.

It will empower Lajamanu community governance and decision making. It will create community belief and enthusiasm.

It is in government's interest to listen, absorb, and initiate community ideas.

It can lead to better community government communication and cooperation.

It can provide the opportunity for more employment, more money, and fewer non-Warlpiri workers.

It offers a real potential to develop a unique, stable and productive community economy.

It places more responsibility on the Lajamanu leadership for housing, education, drug and alcohol control, etc.

It could lead to more acceptances of Australian government efforts in Indigenous communities by world bodies such as the UN Human Rights Commission, etc.

Weaknesses

The Lajamanu community and/or government may fail to respond to the program.

There may be unwillingness by government and the bureaucrats to change present practices and policies.

If the 'trigger' fails, there may be a continuation of the passive welfare mentality. A mind-set of 'let the government do it' in the Lajamanu community.

Warlpiri cultural and kinship obligations and requirements compete with the individual's employment and enterprise individual's availability, punctuality and reliability.

Traditional kinship rivalry could impede renewed efforts to restore community leadership.

Lajamanu community leadership indecisiveness.

Failure to improve community governance.

Opportunities

The Lajamanu methodology could strengthen Warlpiri efforts to maintain their culture, heritage, and kinship structures.

It should strengthen cultural leadership and community control.

It provides an opportunity to plan for a future Lajamanu community that is decided by them.

It provides an opportunity to employ many more Warlpiri people, develop a more permanent workforce, and promote an emergent economic stability.

It provides an opportunity to gain a more educated, qualified community.

It provides an opportunity for more community decision-making for the employment of senior managers in specific areas.

It provides an opportunity for more say in the management of community services.

It provides an opportunity for better, more suitable and well-maintained housing.

It provides an opportunity for better health.

It provides an opportunity for less drug and alcohol problems.

Threats

The continuation of short-term policies by government.

There could be increased government resistance to community self-management efforts.

Negative changes to government funding and employment policies.

Possible corruption by Elders, leaders, employees, etc.

The possible community failure to accept change.

**APPENDIX G - SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
(SBREC)**

FINAL APPROVAL NOTICE

The Chair of the [Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee \(SBREC\)](#) at Flinders University considered your response to conditional approval out of session and your project has now been granted final ethics approval. Your ethics final approval notice can be found below.

FINAL APPROVAL NOTICE

Project No.:

6212

Project Title:

A Future for Lajamanu? Researching government policies, bureaucratic practice, Indigenous identity aspirations, and the seemingly incommensurable cultural / philosophical and social differences in Lajamanu, a remote Indigenous N.T community

Principal Researcher:

Mr. Marcus James Dilena

Email:

dile0001@flinders.edu.au

Approval Date:

18 December
2013

Ethics Approval Expiry Date:

The above proposed project has been **approved** on the basis of the information contained in the application, its attachments and the information subsequently provided with the addition of the following comment:

Additional information required following commencement of research:

1. Please ensure that a brief statement is added within the section “Who is Marc Dilena” to ensure that participants are made aware that Mr. Dilena is a researcher from Flinders University.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESEARCHERS AND SUPERVISORS

1. Participant Documentation

Please note that it is the responsibility of researchers and supervisors, in the case of student projects, to ensure that:

- all participant documents are checked for spelling, grammatical, numbering and formatting errors. The Committee does not accept any responsibility for the above mentioned errors.
- the Flinders University logo is included on all participant documentation (e.g., letters of Introduction, information Sheets, consent forms, debriefing information and questionnaires – with the exception of purchased research tools) and the current Flinders University letterhead is included in the header of all letters of introduction. The Flinders University international logo/letterhead should be used, and documentation should contain international dialling codes for all telephone and fax numbers listed for all research to be conducted overseas.
- the SBREC contact details, listed below, are included in the footer of all letters of introduction and information sheets.

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 'INSERT PROJECT No. here following approval'). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au.

2. Annual Progress / Final Reports

In order to comply with the monitoring requirements of the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research \(March 2007\)](#) an annual progress report must be submitted each year on the **18 December** (approval anniversary date) for the duration of the ethics approval using the annual / final report pro forma available from [Annual / Final Reports](#) SBREC web page. *Please retain this notice for reference when completing annual progress or final reports.*

If the project is completed *before* ethics approval has expired, please ensure a final report is submitted immediately. If ethics approval for your project expires please submit either (1) a final report; or (2) an extension of time request and an annual report.

Student Projects

The SBREC recommends that current ethics approval is maintained until a student's thesis has been submitted, reviewed and approved. This is to protect the student in the event that reviewers recommend some changes that may include the collection of additional participant data.

Your first report is due on **18 December 2014** or on completion of the project, whichever is the earliest.

3. Modifications to Project

Modifications to the project must not proceed until approval has been obtained from the Ethics Committee. Such matters include:

- proposed changes to the research protocol;
- proposed changes to participant recruitment methods;
- amendments to participant documentation and/or research tools;
- change of project title;
- extension of ethics approval expiry date; and
- changes to the research team (addition, removals, supervisor changes).

To notify the Committee of any proposed modifications to the project please submit a [Modification Request Form](#) to the [Executive Officer](#). Download the form from the website every time a new modification request is submitted to ensure that the most recent form is

used. Please note that extension of time requests should be submitted prior to the Ethics Approval Expiry Date listed on this notice.

Change of Contact Details

Please ensure that you notify the Committee if either your mailing or email address changes to ensure that correspondence relating to this project can be sent to you. A modification request is not required to change your contact details.

4. Adverse Events and/or Complaints

Researchers should advise the Executive Officer of the Ethics Committee on 08 8201-3116 or human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au immediately if:

- any complaints regarding the research are received;
- a serious or unexpected adverse event occurs that effects participants;
- an unforeseen event occurs that may affect the ethical acceptability of the project.

Best wishes for the Christmas season

Mikaila Crotty

Mrs Andrea Fiegert and Ms Mikaila Crotty

Ethics Officers and Joint Executive Officers, Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee

Telephone: +61 8 8201-3116 | Andrea Fiegert (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday – all day)

Telephone: +61 8 8201-7938 | Mikaila Crotty (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday - mornings only)

Email: human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

Web: [Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee \(SBREC\)](#)

Manager, Research Ethics and Integrity – Dr Peter Wigley

Telephone: +61 8 8201-5466 | email: peter.wigley@flinders.edu.au

[Research Services Office](#) | Union Building Basement

Flinders University

Sturt Road, Bedford Park | South Australia | 5042

GPO Box 2100 | Adelaide SA 5001

CRICOS Registered Provider: The Flinders University of South Australia | CRICOS Provider Number 00114A

This email and attachments may be confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, please inform the sender by reply email and delete all copies of this message.

APPENDIX H - PERMIT TO ENTER AND REMAIN ON ABORIGINAL LAND



Central Land Council

Permits Section: Telephone (inter.) 61 08 8951 6211
Facsimile 61 08 8953 4345 CLC web site: <http://www.clc.org.au>

PERMIT TO ENTER AND REMAIN ON ABORIGINAL LAND

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*
NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA *Aboriginal Land Act (1980)*

The person(s) whose name(s) are set out below are authorised to enter onto Aboriginal Land according to the details set out below and subject to the general and special conditions set out below or attached to this Permit.

Name of Aboriginal Land Trust(s):	Central Desert Aboriginal Land Trust
Specific area(s) of entry:	Lajamanu,
Dates of entry (inclusive) From: To:	01/04/2014 31/05/2014
Purpose of entry:	General Research : As a retiree I have now undertaken a PhD candidature and my proposed thesis is entitled: A Future for Lajamanu? How does this remote Indigenous community position itself in relation to mainstream Australia? Does this remote community have a plan for a future; and importantly can governments and the bureaucracy accommodate it? I plan to interview Lajamanu residents to obtain their views. I have obtained Ethics approval for this study from the University. Further details are available if you so wish.
Vehicle description: Registration State/Territory	Ford Fairmont VWX608 South Australia,

Address of Permit Holder:	5/174 Vesta Drive Hindmarsh Island South Australia 5214 Australia
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Issued without alteration or erasure by the Central Land Council at Alice Springs on 19

December 2013 Authorised by the Central Land Council Permits Department.

PERMIT NUMBER: 20236

The person(s) whose name(s) are set out below are authorised to enter onto Aboriginal Land according to the details on the first page and subject to the general and special conditions set out below or attached to this Permit.

I have read the general conditions and the special conditions (if any) and I agree to abide by such conditions.

Name(s) of Permit Holder	Signature(s) of Permit Holder
Marcus (Marc) DILENA	
Brayden REEKIE	

Issued without alteration or erasure by the Central Land Council at Alice Springs on 19 December 2013

PERMIT NUMBER: 20236

GENERAL CONDITIONS

1. This Permit is issued on the basis that all persons to whom it is issued enter Aboriginal land at their own risk and agree that neither the Central Land Council nor the landowners or occupiers shall be liable either jointly or severally

for any loss, damage or liability of any kind arising out of or in relation to the entry of the permit holders onto Aboriginal land no matter how such loss, damage or liability arises whether by fault or default or negligence.

2. This Permit is issued subject to the general conditions contained in this Application and any special conditions specified in this Permit. This Permit is automatically revoked if any general or special condition is breached by the permit holder.
3. This Permit is issued on the condition that the permit holder obeys all directions of traditional Aboriginal owners whilst on Aboriginal land.
4. This Permit does not authorise the entry of a person to a dwelling or a living area of a camp occupied by or belonging to an Aboriginal without the consent of the owner or occupier.
5. This Permit may be revoked at any time by traditional Aboriginal owners or the Central Land Council in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Aboriginal Land Act.
6. This Permit does not authorise the permit holders to discharge a firearm or take photographs while on Aboriginal land.
7. This Permit is valid only to enable the permit holders to perform the duties or activities associated with the stated purpose of the visit.
8. This Permit must be carried at all times while the permit holders are on Aboriginal land and must be produced for inspection on demand.
9. Before taking liquor onto any Aboriginal land the permit holders should ascertain what rules govern the possession, sale, consumption or disposal of liquor on that land. The permit holders must comply with all rules and restrictions made under the Liquor Act in relation to liquor on Aboriginal land.
10. With the exception of Opal, petrol must not be brought into communities, whether in vehicle tanks, jerry cans, fuel drums or otherwise. **Opal petrol is a BP product designed to reduce harm caused by petrol sniffing*

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. Applicant is to arrange to meet with the Kurdiji group when he arrives. Kurdiji can be contacted via Rob Chapman on 8975 0458