Presented by
The Centre for
Aboriginal Economic
Policy Research
Program and Abstracts

ANU Commons, Australian National University, Canberra
4–5 September 2014
# Conference Program

## Thursday 4 September 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8am</td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9am</td>
<td>Welcome to Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aunty Agnes Shea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matthew Gray, CAEPR Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.20am</td>
<td>Session One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Hybrid Economy: Theory and Method</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Geoff Buchanan</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chris Gregory</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kaely Woods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kim de Rijke, Richard Martin &amp; David Trigger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.50am</td>
<td>Morning tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.15am</td>
<td>Session Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Hybrid Economy: Empirical and Comparative Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Douglas W. Bird, Rebecca Bliege Bird, Brian F. Coddin &amp; Brooke Scelza</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Michael Hibbard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annick Thomassin</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peter Cooke, Murray Garde, Terah Guymala &amp; Dean Yibarbuk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jann Karp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pm</td>
<td>Session Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Public Policy Implications of the Hybrid Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jack Green &amp; Seán Kerins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bill Fogarty &amp; Mick Dodson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Craig Linkhorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.15pm</td>
<td>Afternoon Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.40-5pm</td>
<td>Session Four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Policy Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nicolas Peterson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Katherine Curchin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emma Kowal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7pm</td>
<td>Conference Dinner, The Lobby Restaurant</td>
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<tr>
<td>10pm</td>
<td>Conference Dinner Close</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Friday 5 September 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8am</td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9am</td>
<td>Session Five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neoliberalism and the Guardian State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shelley Bielefeld</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Melissa Lovell</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Strakosch</td>
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<td>Kerry McCallum &amp; Lisa Waller</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stephen Muecke &amp; Ben Dibley</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Morning tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.50am</td>
<td>Session Six</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutions of Land Rights and Native Title</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pat Brahim &amp; David Pollack</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pamela McGrath</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ed Wensing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.55am</td>
<td>Short Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.05pm</td>
<td>Session Seven</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reforming Land Title</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Louise Crabtree</td>
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<td>Michael O’Donnell</td>
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<td>Leon Terrill</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.10pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.10pm</td>
<td>Session Eight</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indigenous Organisations and Entrepreneurs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jock Collins, Mark Morrison</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; Branka Krivokapic-Skoko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ken Markwell &amp; Hannah Chadwick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bruce Martin, Donna Green &amp; David Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marianne Riphagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.30pm</td>
<td>Afternoon Tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>4–5pm</td>
<td>Session Nine</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflections</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ben Scambary</td>
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<td>John Nieuwenhuysen</td>
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<td>Jon Altman</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.30–7pm</td>
<td>Conference Closing, University House</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SESSION ONE

The Hybrid Economy: Theory and Method

Thursday 4 September 2014  9.20am – 10.50am

A genealogy of the hybrid economy: A critical examination of hybridity in theorising contemporary economies in Indigenous Australia

Geoff Buchanan

With its origins in pig husbandry and biology, hybridity has a colonial legacy in theories of race and a currency in postcolonial studies as a third space. Jon Altman’s hybrid economy framework has empirical roots in his doctoral research on the economy of Momega (Mumeka) outstation in Arnhem Land. Altman’s research, then and now, has hybridity at its heart, seeking to transcend the disciplinary boundaries of economics and anthropology in order to better understand the interrelationship between remote Aboriginal communities and the Australian economy. Mayfair Yang’s writing on economic hybridity in rural China inspired Altman’s choice of terminology in describing contemporary remote Indigenous economies. Yang’s notion of economic hybridity derived from Mikhail Bakhtin’s writing on linguistic hybridity, which had also inspired Homi Bhabha’s postcolonial theory of cultural hybridity.

Drawing on the link between the work of Yang and Altman, this paper presents a brief genealogy of the hybrid economy with a focus on influences and insights from economics, anthropology and postcolonial studies. Reflecting on ten years of involvement in hybrid economy research, the paper critically examines hybridity as a metaphor for contemporary economies in Indigenous Australia.

Geoff Buchanan is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, ANU. His life as a researcher began under Jon Altman’s supervision in 2004 focusing on customary economic activity and caring for country in Indigenous Australia. He currently works at the Native Title Research Unit, AIATSIS.

The hybrid economy in comparative perspective

Chris Gregory

Altman’s notion of the hybrid economy began its life in the late 1970s as an unnamed logical tool used for the collection and analysis of economic data on the three main sources of economic livelihood of the Mumeka people in Arnhem Land: social security, arts and craft, and non-market activities such as foraging and hunting. Over the years the logical tool slowly morphed into a theory of ‘hybrid’ economic value used to inform normative interventions in policy debates and arguments in theoretical debates about the values that inform familial redistributions of money within Aboriginal communities. As the idea has been refined and developed claims for the generality of the hybrid economy have become ever bolder, now reaching beyond Australia to developing countries characterised by the presence of colonised indigenous peoples. It is this latter claim that I will investigate using data I have collected on the multiple sources of livelihood of indigenous peoples in Central India and Fiji.

My career mirrors that of Altman’s in that I began my career as an economist-turned-anthropologist who has made repeated visits to the same field site for over three decades. This has meant that our economic anthropology has, perforce, become economic history as we ourselves have advanced in age. It is from my historical and comparative empirical perspective on the livelihoods of indigenous people in India and Fiji, rather than the more abstract perspective of value theory, that I will examine the generality of my age-mate’s notion of the hybrid economy. I will argue that multiple sources of economic livelihood are a fact of contemporary indigenous economic life everywhere and whether we use the adjective ‘hybrid’ or some other term such as ‘human’, ‘informal’ or ‘moral’, is a relatively minor terminological problem.

The substantive issue is the fact that we now live in a changing and turbulent world where eking out a living is becoming increasingly difficult for the precariat. As such the question becomes one of how to pose relevant comparative and historically informed questions for empirical investigation. Altman’s classic 1987 work, Hunter-Gatherers Today: An Aboriginal Economy in North Australia, and his subsequent work on the economic history of the Mumeka, remains a model of the type of empirical investigation needed to study multiple sources of livelihood. The policy implications of empirical work of this kind, and the adequacy of the theory of value implicit in the latest version of his hybrid economy for this task, while always a matter of equal concern for Altman, raise important questions that are beyond the scope of this paper.

Chris Gregory is currently Professor of Political and Economic Anthropology at the University of Manchester and Visiting Fellow in the School of Archaeology and Anthropology at ANU. He is the author of Gifts and Commodities, Savage Money and Observing the Economy (with Jon Altman).

Indigenous cultural activity counts

Kaely Woods

My doctoral research explores the economic valuation of the non-market Indigenous cultural or customary economy in Jon Altman’s hybrid economy model, specifically cultural or
customary practice, using choice modelling of the preferences of Aboriginal people living in a remote area of northern Australia for paid employment relative to cultural practice. Past quantitative measurement of aspects of the customary economy have been based on models drawing on market comparators or overlaps such as nutritional values of hunting and fishing activities; time allocations to assess competing production possibilities; the market value of artistic and cultural tourism product; government payments for environmental services; or a combination of government and market value at the intersection of all three sectors. My methodology will use choice modelling to reveal the value of cultural activity relative to market production from the perspective of Aboriginal people over other forms of production in the market and market/customary.

Many academics, including Jon Altman, have pointed to the tensions inherent in the choices that Aboriginal people make in how they allocate their productive time. Market employment options in remote settings may be limited and Aboriginal people may need to leave country and reduce or change the way they conduct cultural practice for education, training and employment, and some Aboriginal people resist or avoid taking up these options in order to remain wholly within the customary and customary/government sector. How do Aboriginal people choose, and what do their choices reveal about the value of the customary economy and cultural production? By exploring these potentially rival uses of Aboriginal labour from an Aboriginal perspective we can better understand the motivating forces at play in Aboriginal participation in economic development in remote Australia, which could inform labour market and economic development policy.

Kaely Woods is a PhD candidate at ANU and CDU as a Northern Research Futures Collaborative Research Network Scholar, pursuing research into the role and value of Indigenous culture in economic development, particularly in remote Australia. Kaely’s professional experience includes over 25 years in Indigenous policy, with senior roles in government dealing with native title, land rights, heritage protection, health, housing, home ownership, governance and economic development. Until 2012 Kaely was the Deputy CEO of Indigenous Business Australia (IBA). Kaely is currently an independent expert Director on the Board of QAIHC, the peak body for the Indigenous controlled health sector in Queensland.

Cultural domains and the theory of ‘customary’ environmentalism in Aboriginal Australia

Kim de Rijke, Richard Martin and David Trigger

In a review of People on Country: Vital landscapes, Indigenous futures, a collection edited by Jon Altman and Seán Kerins (2012), Richard Martin (2013) noted that the arguments in that book for environmental work based on a ‘two-way’ combining of ‘Indigenous knowledge’ and ‘Western science’ will prompt cynicism among some readers. Not only does the book’s position sit uneasily alongside views arguing for the main focus to be on Aboriginal participation in the economic mainstream, but also, in the context of paid environmental work across most of the continent exactly how does ‘Indigenous knowledge’ drive strategies distinguishable from science-based programs, as Kim de Rijke (2013) asks in his review of the same book. While Jon Altman (2013) responded in a published letter that Martin’s review ‘deploys a false but pervasive binary as a provocation’, and called for a focus on ‘hybrid economic theory’ given that there are ‘productive interconnections between market, state, and customary activity’, de Rijke’s caution is that it is in fact this book’s approach that may promote a false dichotomous ‘valorisation of western and indigenous knowledge’.

Cultural, material and social distance between Aboriginal people and other Australians – analysed in many studies as ‘domains’ of life that are nevertheless constituted through ‘intercultural’ relations – has been widely documented across the nation. This paper addresses the extent to which this socially produced separatism, whether evident in everyday life or elaborated in a politics of indigenism, informs the theory that environmental rehabilitation work is or can be based on customary knowledge and traditions. If seasonal burning from helicopters, poisoning of invasive weeds or removing discarded marine nets aim to improve ecological health, in what sense is this best understood as part of a ‘customary economy’? We present case material from both the gulf country and southeast regions of Queensland to consider whether promotion of the idea of a recuperated domain of ‘traditional knowledge’ is a viable basis for income-producing environmental work. Are activities among Rangers and related employees more adequately understood as part of the combined state and market driven suite of employment opportunities that are no different from the more extensive involvement of Aboriginal people in the mainstream economy? Is such income-producing employment falsely positioned as ‘customary’ if it differs little from similar work done by Australians of a range of non-Aboriginal backgrounds?

Kim de Rijke is Lecturer in Anthropology at The University of Queensland. His recent research focuses on environmental disputes and the concept of emplacement, particularly in relation to the development of water and unconventional gas resources in southern Queensland, but previously also in relation to the concept of wilderness and Denali national park in Alaska. He has undertaken applied native title research with Indigenous groups in the Kimberley region of Western Australia and Central Queensland since 2003, involving Indigenous heritage protection associated with mining and exploration proposals. He is also developing comparative interdisciplinary research with regard to hydraulic fracturing technologies and extractive industries across various continents.

Richard Martin is a postdoctoral research fellow and consultant anthropologist at The University of Queensland. His academic research in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria examines issues of land, identity and representation. He also works across the same region on a variety of native title claims and cultural heritage matters.

David Trigger is Professor of Anthropology at The University of Queensland. His research has focused on contesting conceptions of land and nature, encompassing studies of the social and cultural significance of resource development, environmental issues and Indigenous rights. Projects have been set in Australia, examining overlapping and contesting cultural identities, with a strong interest in international comparisons. Recent work has built on his research in Australian Aboriginal studies to develop broader inquiries concerning diverse ideas about the emergence of ‘nativeness’ and senses of what ‘belongs’ in both society and nature. Professor Trigger’s applied anthropology work in land claims, agreement making and native title has spanned 35 years.
The Hybrid Economy: Empirical and Comparative Studies

Thursday 4 September 2014  11.15am – 1pm

The dynamics of Indigenous livelihoods and ecologies in the Western Desert: Economic, social, and environmental values of foraging in a remote Martu community

Douglas W. Bird, Rebecca Bliege Bird, Brian F. Codding and Brooke Scelza

In Australia, current federal economic policies designed to address problems of indigenous disadvantage encourage "mainstreaming" remote Aboriginal communities by redirecting public sector funds to improve opportunities for market based employment. Such policies cast remote communities, with few sustainable options for market generated income, as economically unviable and detrimental to Aboriginal futures. Here we present a set of analyses that illustrate the importance of unrecognised customary components of contemporary Martu Aboriginal economies – specifically foraging practices – in Parnngurr, a very remote outpost in Western Australia's Karlamilyi National Park. We quantify the contribution of foraged foods and situate patterns of Martu foraging time allocation in relation to more mainstream market and public sector opportunities and constraints. We then illustrate how customary livelihoods continue to facilitate fundamental ecological interactions in the region, especially how patch mosaic burning practices required for effective foraging sustain critical habitat for vulnerable species. We suggest that the environmental, economic and social benefits of Martu foraging practices offer significant and poorly recognised services to the public sector. Policies that discourage investment in remote Aboriginal communities in order to promote more engagement with the "real" economy may produce perverse and publicly costly outcomes that undermine the aspirations of these remote community members to live the Dreaming and maintain the link between customary livelihoods and ecosystem health.

Doug Bird is a Senior Research Scientist at Stanford University. He is an ecological anthropologist with interests in the processes that influence land and resource use in Western Desert indigenous communities. His research explores the social and economic dynamics of customary subsistence practices, their role in ecosystem function, and their archaeological signatures.

Brian F. Codding is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Utah. His research explores the ecology of foraging economies and the ways in which populations interact dynamically with their natural and social environments. Current work is focused on understanding these dynamics in Western North America and Australia.

Brooke Scelza is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at UCLA. She has conducted fieldwork with the Martu of Western Australia and the Himba of Namibia. Her research focuses on women's social networks and reproductive decisions, as well as maternal and child health.

Subsistence and first foods: Sovereignty, development planning, and natural resource management in Indian Country

Michael Hibbard

The relationship between Indigenous culture and economy has long been contested territory. The essential dispute is between those who think the only possible future for Indigenes is assimilation and those who see the possibility of sovereign, self-determining nations-within-nations. It is reflected in the ongoing debate in development planning. The conventional view is that the only practical choice for Indigenes is to focus on jobs and wealth creation, embracing the cash economy, and shaping their communities into favourable sites for investment, even if it contradicts deeply held cultural values and behaviours. Countering this view, alternative development (AD) holds that the purpose of development is improving the quality of life by expanding Indigenes’ control over the things that matter most to them, as defined by their own culture, in the economic, political, and social realms. This longstanding debate has reached new salience in recent years.

The aim of the present paper is to add to the discussion through an analysis of two paradigmatic development experiences in the U.S. West: on subsistence, a Tlingit community in Southeast Alaska; on first foods, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation in Northeast Oregon. They have moved, in very different ways, from a conventional approach to an AD approach, by adopting a “hybrid economy” view of socio-economic development and connecting it with multifunctional approaches to natural resource management. The paper has three parts. First I draw on the development literature to illuminate the culture-economy debate, particularly with respect to issues faced by American Indian communities in “doing” culturally appropriate AD. Next I use the case study communities to illustrate the culture-economy debate and the possibilities of AD. Finally, I draw on the cases to form conclusions about the strengths and limitations of the AD approach for Indigenous communities more broadly, with respect to both theory and practice.

Michael Hibbard is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Planning, Public Policy & Management at the University of Oregon and a participating faculty member in Environmental Studies, International Studies, and Historic Preservation. His work focuses on the social impacts of economic change on small towns, Indigenous communities, and rural regions.
Indigenous hybrid economies as performed narratives of grounded life projects? Lessons from the Torres Strait

Annick Thomassin

Over the last decade, Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and activists have progressively embraced the concept of "life projects" as a holistic and less directional alternative to the notion of "development". In the edited volume In the Way of Development, Mario Blaser summarises the concept as "being about the possibility of their [in this case Indigenous peoples] defining the direction they want to take in life, on the basis of their awareness and knowledge of their own place in the world" (2004: 30). In this paper I propose to approach contemporary Indigenous "hybrid economies" as spaces where individual and collective "life projects" are emerging, performed and actualised. As original and fluid articulations of the state, market and customary economic sectors of Altman's hybrid economy model as well as of local and external constraints and opportunities, these life projects are examples of possible alternate modernities driven notably by the dynamic local lifeways, knowledge systems and tenure regimes. In other words, they are enacted narratives of local ontologies, resistance, resilience and aspirations. Yet, like the communities from which they emerged, they are also heterogeneous and changing. I will draw examples from fifteen months of doctoral fieldwork in the Torres Strait to illustrate how such economic strategies are used to push forwards life projects that are in tune with contemporary local ethos, needs and wants. In particular, I will discuss how central Islanders have, since the early 1900s and beyond, continuously re-articulated these three overlapping economic fields to sustain and foster a synergy between the vagaries of their fishery system and seafaring lifestyle, their life on their Island and away, and their social rights, responsibilities and obligations.

Annick Thomassin is a PhD candidate at the Department of Anthropology of McGill University (Montréal). Her thesis examines the principles and power relationships underlying co-management of fisheries in the context of the Torres Strait. Ms Thomassin is also a Research Officer at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research. Her previous studies include a M.A and B.A. in Anthropology both completed at Laval University (Québec). She has also conducted and published research which critically examines ‘social exclusion’ with a particular focus on England.

Contemporary customary economy, attribution of value and the management of the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area

Peter Cooke, Murray Garde, Terah Guymala and Dean Yibarbuk

This paper presents a case study of the application of Indigenous ecological and cultural knowledge in the land management programs of Warddeken Land Management Ltd, an Indigenous organisation that manages the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area on the Arnhem Land plateau in Western Arnhem Land. As in much of the work on the customary economy by Jon Altman, Warddeken’s exploration of the relevance of Indigenous knowledge to the dynamics of contemporary cultural identity and economic opportunity has necessarily been cross-disciplinary and intercultural. Teams of Indigenous experts and younger Indigenous rangers working together with biologists and social scientists have, over the past fifteen years, effectively created employment opportunities that encompass new forms of cultural expression—the contemporary Indigenous land manager. The ‘hybrid economy’ as outlined by the work of Jon Altman is a combination of state, market and customary components that continue to be relevant to Indigenous land owners in remote parts of Australia. The sustainability of customary economic practices is underpinned by the reproduction of cultural knowledge and intellectual endeavour which in some cases is quantifiable in monetary terms (e.g. art and craft, carbon trading) whilst in other cases this becomes more difficult (e.g. maintenance of biodiversity, feral species control). More fraught is the attribution of economic value to notions of wellbeing and quality of life engendered by participation in intellectual pursuits that are concerned with the relationships between people and their land and the communication of symbolic meaning. We describe a ‘national public good’ that derives from the application of a contemporary indigenous land management regime to conserving and restoring the land of the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area as a ‘jewel in the crown’ of the National Reserves System (NRS). Our view is that this is an important bridge between an indigenous hybrid economy and a national mainstream economy in which the NRS lands are important biophysically and as a critical component of national identity which demonstrate an exemplary Australian stewardship of both the natural world and its associated Indigenous cultural heritage.

Peter Cooke has worked with people from Western and Central Arnhem Land since 1972 in roles of outstation support, art and craft marketing and conservation land management. He assisted landowners to establish Warddeken Land Management Limited and was foundation CEO until February 2014.

Murray Garde is a linguistic anthropologist who has been working in Western Arnhem Land since 1988. He has worked in a variety of projects that seek to bridge the interests of researchers in the natural and social sciences with Indigenous experts to record ecological knowledge in the languages of the region, for the benefit of those people seeking to establish land-based livelihoods.

Terah Guymala is a former Chairman and foundation director of Warddeken Land Management who was born in 1966 on the Mann River and swaddled in paperbark as a baby. He is a strong advocate for the role of indigenous land management in caring for country and providing healthy and productive employment for his people.

Dean Yibarbuk is a former chairman of Warddeken Land Management Limited. Dean has been a key figure in the establishment of Warddeken Land Management Limited, the declaration of the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area and the development of a ground-breaking use of traditional knowledge to deal with climate change.
Economics in rural communities: How to find work when opportunities are limited

Jann Karp

Interstate truck drivers and indigenous sex workers have both suffered vilification at the hands of the media and the police. This presentation will review narratives from the field which may lead to a greater understanding around sex work, economic conditions and rural communities. The workers define the definition of work and the conversations lead to the conclusion of interdependence and respect. These working connections/business relationships have mutual benefits. Wages in rural locations are low. Interstate drivers’ wages are often low. The economic situations of rural communities and people’s needs will result in the supply of cash providing for some of the needs of Indigenous sex workers in isolated areas. These ideas arose from field research, while working in the interstate trucking industry. I talked to Aboriginal women who reported generational sex work within communities. Drivers spoke of respecting sex work as a working class job. A driver recalls:

“The second time I had contact was, I pulled into Forbes at the Caltex one afternoon just to check my load and get an ice cream. I went to get round the truck, this Aboriginal girl asked me if I could give her a lift to Parkes and being a bit naïve, like I have been. I didn’t realise I said, ‘yeh fine I’m going there and jump in’ and away we went. I didn’t get any further up the road, and, about 5km and she offered sex but really she was after money” (in Karp 2012).

There are legal, policing, social policy and economic realities that need to be discussed. A review of the benefits and negatives involved in these human interactions, independent of race or gender but more dependent on need, will be offered.

Dr Jann Karp PhD (Uni of Syd, Soc.Pol) Jann’s research focus is on the link between practise and theory. The link between police work and police theory was explored by working and interviewing police officers from 1996 to 2004. She retired in 2006 after 23 years of police service. She has published Corruption and Crisis Control (2007) and Truckies: Life Behind the Wheel (2012). Her research subject area is giving voice to workers in different work sites, including Indigenous communities.
Territories of difference or indifference? Indigenous country in the southwest Gulf of Carpentaria

Jack Green and Seán Kerins

‘To remove the passive welfare trap, we need to break the nexus between indigenous development and geography. This means reorienting programs and incentives onto the development of individuals, rather than the development of geographical areas. It is a vital distinction’, said Alan Tudge, the now Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, in 2011.

This is a view that Garrwa, Gudanji, Marra, Waanyi and Yanyuwa peoples of the southwest Gulf of Carpentaria in the Northern Territory reject in their approach to development. Instead, they see their development as a nexus between themselves, as Indigenous peoples, and their country. For the past decade they have been building small-scale cultural and natural resource management initiatives, utilising their common property resources, to provide social, economic and environmental benefits to themselves and wider Australia. Since 2012, they have been experimenting with regional governance institutions with the aim of consolidating and growing these initiatives so that they can achieve their long-term development goal of sustainable land and sea-based livelihoods throughout the region.

In this paper we do three things. First, we explore how Indigenous peoples have sought to create territories of difference in the southwest Gulf by claiming ancestral land and affirming different values to nature and self. Second, we provide examples of government indifference encountered during these Indigenous development initiatives. And third, we propose policies and incentives that may assist Indigenous peoples achieve their long-term development goal of living and working on country in the southwest Gulf country.

Mr Jacky Green is a Senior Cultural Advisor to the Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa Rangers in the southwest Gulf of Carpentaria. He is an elected member of the Northern Land Council (Northern Territory) and a Director of the Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (Queensland).

Dr Seán Kerins is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research.

The reluctant educationalist: Altman, education and remote development

Bill Fogarty and Mick Dodson

Remote Indigenous education in Australia continues to be characterised by ideological tension, consistent policy failure and exceedingly poor outcomes at the ‘chalkface’. Paradoxically, education is simultaneously touted as the key to a long awaited renaissance in employment and development for discreet remote Indigenous communities. In this paper we explore the place of remote education in the national discourse of Indigenous development, finding that despite the rhetoric, there is a surprising lack of attention paid to pedagogic structures as crucial components of development approaches. Drawing on Jon Altman’s ‘alternative’ development discourse, we explore some possibilities Altman’s work provides for new pedagogic approaches in the bush that connect education with local development aspiration. We also make explicit Altman’s dalliances with education throughout his career and the influence this reluctant (sometimes recalcitrant) educationalist has had on a field well beyond his immediate research concerns.

Dr Bill Fogarty is a Research Fellow at the National Centre for Indigenous Studies. Bill has a PhD from the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research and has lived and worked in remote communities for over fifteen years. He has extensive experience in research on Indigenous education, development and policy.

Professor Mick Dodson AM is a member of the Yawuru peoples – the traditional owners of land and waters in the Broome area of the southern Kimberley region of Western Australia. He is Director of the National Centre for Indigenous Studies at the Australian National University and Professor of law at the ANU College of Law. Mick Dodson was Australia’s first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner with the Human Rights Commission. He is the current Chair of Council of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). Mick has been a prominent advocate on land rights and other issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as a vigorous advocate of the rights and interests of indigenous peoples around the world. In 2009, Mick Dodson was named Australian of the Year by the National Australia Day Council.
Fresh water: Contestation and reconciliation over values and property rights

Craig Linkhorn

The Whanganui River system – Te Awa Tupua – has been the subject of one of the longest running disputes over recognition of indigenous rights in Aotearoa New Zealand. The settlement of these issues in 2014 bears little resemblance to the form the litigation took from the late nineteenth century through to the 1960s. That period saw the issues made to fit Western property law’s focus on dividing a watercourse into bed, banks, water, airspace and minerals. A Treaty-based settlement negotiated between the State and Whanganui iwi (indigenous people) means the river system is now recognised as an integrated, living whole from the mountains to the sea. Legal personality, a status rarely recognised for natural features, will give the river an independent voice and standing to protect its status, health and wellbeing. Critical to this reorientation are the adoption of indigenous values and a significant strengthening of the place of those values in regulatory decision-making affecting the river system. My questions:

> A constraint, the cunning of recognition, or a genuinely new space to give natural features and Maori environmental management values and practices a voice?

> A property law outcome (land rights/use rights) in water governance, or a redefinition of rights-speak to reflect the indigenous legal system (the river owns us, we don’t own the river)?

> A constraint on current private uses of river resources and future economic development, or economic hybridity, fuelling growth of the river economy?

The paper explores how this approach – a fresh treaty with customary owners – critically engages with Australian settings and outcomes that Jon Altman has written about. Particular areas of this comparative focus are:

> Recognition of land rights and native title;

> Reorienting water governance and environmental management as inclusive of indigenous values and practices;

> Economic hybridity; and

> Whether extractive business activities (minerals, water) are compatible with the new settings.

Craig Linkhorn is Senior Crown Counsel, New Zealand Crown Law Office and co-editor, Maori Law Review. Craig advises and acts for the New Zealand Government in constitutional, human rights and public law issues. This includes legal work on the Crown-Maori relationship established by New Zealand’s Treaty of Waitangi, 1840.
From hybrid to moral economy: Policy and the social in Aboriginal Australia

Nicolas Peterson

The original impetus for the development of the idea of the hybrid economy by Jon Altman came from the neglect of the contribution of the customary sector to the life and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in Arnhem Land outstations. In the 1979-80 period he estimated that the imputed value of subsistence income, that is hunted and gathered foods at Mumeka outstation, was 175% of the people’s cash income. Clearly this was a major contribution to people’s livelihood and fundamental to understanding their circumstance at that time. Subsequently the model has been used by Altman and others to theorise the inter-linkages between the customary, market and state sectors of local and regional indigenous economies. The hybrid economy model has proved to be a helpful and popular framework for thinking about Aboriginal sources of income and how Aboriginal people in any particular situation obtain the wherewithal to survive. The question that I will address in this paper is the usefulness of this model in policy formation. I will argue that the model over-focuses on the sources of income to the neglect of other important social factors affecting economic wellbeing in the Aboriginal domain and related political matters in the policy domain.

Nicolas Peterson is Professor of Anthropology at the Australian National University. He has a long standing interest in Australian Aboriginal anthropology, land and sea tenure, economic anthropology, fourth world people and the state and the history of the discipline in Australia.

If the market is the problem, is the hybrid economy the solution?

Katherine Curchin

One of Jon Altman’s preoccupations in recent years has been the impact on Indigenous affairs policy of neo-liberal ideology. He has been a critic of the policy goal of incorporating more Indigenous Australians in remote regions into the mainstream economy, believing that Indigenous Australians joining the labour market are destined for the least desirable place within it. Altman has argued that an ideological commitment to the market has blinded many policy makers to the viable alternatives to market-based development in Australia’s north. His hybrid economy approach makes visible a range of livelihood opportunities Indigenous people might choose to pursue while resisting the commoditisation of their labour and their land.

This paper interrogates the concerns about the market system explicit and implicit in Altman’s work that have driven his search for alternative economic forms. It acknowledges that one impetus for Altman’s development of the hybrid economy approach to Indigenous development was his scepticism that the market economy will ever deliver adequate opportunities for Indigenous people in remote regions. But it argues that his concern about the social costs of moving from a kin-based to a market-based economy have also been vitally important to the development of this innovative approach. He fears that making the shift from a pre-modern economy to a market-based economy demands a profound transformation of people’s values, desires and relationships. Bringing Altman’s concerns about market-based development into critical focus helps us assess the merits of the alternative development model he proposes. The paper concludes by asking whether the hybrid economy offers a convincing way of resolving the tension Altman identifies between Indigenous cultural dispositions and the attitudes and priorities underpinning market society.

Katie Curchin is a postdoctoral fellow at CAEPR with research interests in Indigenous policy and political philosophy. She was awarded a PhD in Political Science by the ANU in 2010. Her current ARC Project is ‘Reconciling rival visions for Indigenous development in remote Australia’.

Trapped in the gap: Noble intentions in Indigenous Australia

Emma Kowal

The ‘gap’ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous health and social outcomes has been the major focus of Indigenous policy since the early 1970s, and the slogan of most government and NGO efforts to address disadvantage since the mid-2000s. Altman has long recognised that closing the gap is problematic because, simply put, different ways of life produce gaps (Altman, 1979). This paper draws on ethnographic research with non-Indigenous people who work in Indigenous health in the Northern Territory to explore the politics of the gap (Kowal, 2008) and the dilemmas it poses.

The biopolitical technologies of epidemiology and demography have produced countless measures of Indigenous disadvantage. A central visual motif is a graph with two lines depicting Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates of disease, employment, education, etc. Whichever graph you care to look at, those who are always represented on the ‘good’ line are White, middle-class, educated people. It is their mode of use of resources available to them that is responsible, everything from exposing young children to books, living in small family units, buying and cooking nutritious food, not smoking, saving money, and regularly accessing high-quality health care. To the extent that the statistics we measure construct what we mean by ‘healthy’,
‘healthy’ is racialised as White. As the ‘gap’ narrows, the more closely the ways of life of the lower line resemble that of the upper line.

The question that irks those working in Indigenous affairs is whether a culturally-distinct way of life gives you a different line on the graph. If so, when we eliminate the gap, do we eliminate this distinctiveness? This paper does not seek to answer this question but to illustrate how the anxiety the question provokes influences work in Indigenous affairs. Finally, I consider whether the politics of the gap signal the limited utility of the concept for evaluating outcomes in Indigenous policy.

Emma Kowal is Associate Professor of Anthropology in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and Principal Research Fellow in the Centre for Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University. She is the author of Trapped in the Gap: Doing Good in Indigenous Australia (Berghahn, 2015).

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Conference Dinner

at ‘The Lobby’ restaurant

Thursday 4 September 2014

7pm – 10pm

King George Terrace, Parkes

Opposite the rose gardens of Old Parliament House

Please arrive at 7pm for pre-dinner drinks and canapés
Neoliberalism and the Guardian State

Neoliberalism and the return of the guardian state: Micromanaging Indigenous peoples in a new chapter of colonial Governance

Shelley Bielefeld

Neoliberalism promotes policies that continue to reproduce structural inequality for Indigenous peoples. This is particularly apparent in the area of income management, which has been subject to Altman’s critique as part of the Northern Territory Emergency Response. Although neoliberalism endorses the ideal of a minimal state, it is also committed to the ideal of self-reliant individuals functioning as part of capitalist machinery. Indigenous welfare recipients who do not conform to this neoliberal ideal have been portrayed as deviants who fail to take responsibility for their behaviour. Thus the stigmatising and intrusive tools of new paternalism are now being employed to remake deviant subjects into good neoliberal citizens. New paternalism requires an amply resourced guardian state in order to bring this moralistic crusade into fruition. Yet the government’s dream remains of a more minimalist state in the future, one in which all the idealised neoliberal citizens go to work each day, eventually reducing welfare expenditure.

New paternalists claim to implement their coercive policies for the good of those subject to them, which is familiar rhetoric to Indigenous peoples. New paternalism therefore provides colonial governments with a convenient cover, a new label for their old racism. The heavy influence of new paternalism is seen in the income management discourse which has portrayed Indigenous welfare recipients as drug addled irresponsible parents, and Indigenous communities as places where abnormal behaviours flourish due to Indigenous cultural deficiencies.

However, as a technique of paternalistic governance, income management cannot eradicate the poverty experienced by Indigenous welfare recipients, because micromanaging the paltry sums they receive will never redress the structural disadvantage Indigenous people experience. Nor can income management effectively address generations of impoverishing government policies. Neoliberalism and new paternalism simply serve the objectives of the colonial state by reinforcing the same patterns of oppression and domination that have plagued Indigenous people since the commencement of colonisation.

Dr Shelley Bielefeld has a keen interest in social justice issues affecting Indigenous Australians. She has published several articles on this theme, including articles on the impact of income management, land rights, and constitutional issues affecting Australia’s First Peoples.

The politics of ‘real jobs’: Producing exclusionary and assimilatory discourses in Aboriginal affairs governance

Melissa Lovell

Australian politics has seen an increasing use of the concept of “real jobs” as well as the notion that such jobs are the appropriate goal of Aboriginal Affairs policy. The concept is often a poorly defined one. However, it is typically used to distinguish between private sector employment—at a market determined wage—and various other training and job schemes that target Aboriginal people. These might include the (now defunct) Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) as well as other community-based schemes based around either Aboriginal or “hybrid” conceptions of economic activity. There is clearly much that can, and should, be said about the inadequacy of the concept of “real jobs” as a primary goal for social and economic policy.

In this presentation, however, I focus on the symbolic work that this concept is performing in contemporary Aboriginal Affairs governance. Drawing on the notion of colonial ambivalence, I suggest that the imprecise definition of the phrase “real jobs” allows it to be productively mobilised as part of two distinctive, but mutually reinforcing, types of colonialist governance. I demonstrate the way that this term is related to both exclusionary and assimilationist approaches to governance. I posit that this ambivalence about whether to symbolically situate Aboriginal people as external or internal to the liberal democratic state is one of the chief characteristics of contemporary settler colonial politics.

Melissa Lovell is a political scientist, based at the National Centre for Indigenous Studies, ANU. She is interested in the way that social actors frame policy problems and political possibilities. Her current research investigates the role that ideas about risk, vulnerability and capability play in contemporary political debates about Indigenous peoples.
Neoliberalism as return of the guardian state: Consequences of the focus on Indigenous capacity

Elizabeth Strakosch

In this paper I explore the seemingly contradictory approaches of neoliberal voluntarism and coercive paternalism, and suggest that they constitute the two faces of the contemporary Australian Indigenous policy focus on individual capacity. Between 2004 and 2007, neoliberal policies such as Shared Responsibility Agreements recoded the Indigenous policy landscape in ways that made the 2007 Northern Territory Emergency Response possible. They did this by positioning Indigenous governmental capacity as a prerequisite of material equality, tying this capacity to the issue of political consent and linking state assessment of Indigenous capacity directly to the selection of appropriate policy approaches. When SRAs hit roadblocks including lack of agreement and implementation failure, the state unilaterally withdrew its provisional recognition of Indigenous capacity and ‘legitimately’ moved to secure Indigenous communities. Although the NTER is often seen as a sudden and unconditioned policy event, I argue that there is extensive practical and conceptual overlap between neoliberal voluntarism and coercive intervention.

Elizabeth Strakosch is a lecturer in public policy and governance at the University of Queensland, and her research explores the ways that new public policies and administration techniques transform our social relationships and political identities. She has just completed a book on the intersection of neoliberalism and settler colonialism, due out with Palgrave in 2015.

Media stars and neoliberal news agendas in Indigenous policymaking

Kerry McCallum and Lisa Waller

This paper traces the rise of a small number of Indigenous spokespersons in news reporting of Australian Indigenous issues and its impact on the policy agenda. The Media and Indigenous Policy project has examined the connections between media attention to Indigenous issues and the development of Indigenous affairs policy between 1988 and 2008, with a particular focus on the shift towards a neoliberal policy agenda in health and education during the last term of the Howard government. We conducted textual analyses of newspaper reporting of Indigenous spokespersons in three Australian newspapers and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and recorded the insights of Indigenous affairs bureaucrats, journalists and Indigenous policy advocates in the fields of health and bilingual education.

One notable finding from this research was the rise of a small number of Indigenous media stars, including Noel Pearson of Cape York, and their deployment by influential mainstream media outlets to promote ‘market-based technical solutions to complex, deeply-entrenched problems’ (Altman 2010, p. 262). Influential news outlets such as The Australian newspaper sponsored a small number of Aboriginal spokespeople and provided a platform for their views to promote a narrow range of policy possibilities to complex social and economic problems.

Our interviews with senior policy bureaucrats found that they paid very close attention to the content of mainstream news media reporting, attending to a limited range of news sources in order to understand public discussion of Indigenous affairs. The concept of ‘singular influence’, whereby those media stars are consecrated by influential news media outlets and this univocality is accepted by political and policy leaders, is one way of conceptualising the desire for simplicity in both journalism and politics which can lead to the rationalisation and adoption of a particular set of policy outcomes.

Dr Kerry McCallum is Associate Professor of Communication and Media Studies and Senior Research Fellow in the News & Media Research Centre at the University of Canberra. Her research focuses on the relationships between media practice, representation and the development of social policy in Australia.

Dr Lisa Waller is a senior lecturer in Journalism and a member of the Centre for Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University. Her research focuses on how news media shapes social space, from small regional communities, to the judicial system and Indigenous affairs policy.

An anthropology of the Broome economy

Stephen Muecke and Ben Dibley

‘The Economy’ has become such a powerful and unifying metalanguage that the investigation of the economy of Broome—the empirical terrain of this paper—would seem to have its terms set and goals defined from the start. The intervention of anthropology on the same terrain seems outmoded and weak; it can either look to pre-capitalist forms of exchange and value creation in the Indigenous communities, or accept modernist universalism and see Indigenous people attempting to ‘catch up’ within the modernist economy. While Altman’s economic hybridity model provides a useful approach, this paper also aims to critically and anthropologically analyse the global (neoliberal) discourses and practices that embody both the common sense and the most deep-seated values of the moderns (Latour, 2013, chs 14–16). We shall argue that the figures don’t support the speculative claims of the modern economy as the inevitable bottom line that benefits Broome locals.

Stephen Muecke is Professor of Ethnography at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. He works with Indigenous groups in Broome (a recent booklet is Butcher Joe, for Documenta 13, Hatje Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern, 2011) and on the Indian Ocean, Contingency in Madagascar, with photographer Max Pam, appeared in 2012 in Intellect Books’ Critical Photography Series.

Ben Dibley is a Research Associate at the Institute for Culture and Society, the University of Western Sydney. He has research interests in social and cultural theory, particularly around questions of colonialism and the environment. His has recent publications in Australian Humanities Review, History and Anthropology, New Formations and Transformations.
The political economy of royalty distribution in the Northern Territory: Aboriginals Benefit Account autonomy and development

Pat Brahim and David Pollack

The Aboriginals Benefit Account Advisory Committee (ABAAC) is established under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 for the purpose of advising the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on ‘grants’ to be made to Indigenous organisations in the NT. The Advisory Committee commenced its operation in 1978 and has a long history of contributing to Aboriginal survival and development in the NT. It is estimated that nearly $600 million in ‘grants’ have been paid to Indigenous organisations across the NT. In more recent times, and in the context of the mining boom, the Minister, based primarily on recommendations from the committee, has approved over $350 million between the 2007/08 and 2012/13 financial years.

The importance of the ABAAC to Indigenous Territorians cannot be underestimated as it has increasingly become a major player in Indigenous economic development and the NT economy more broadly. As a result the ABAAC proposes that it requires more independence and is advocating to become a separate Commonwealth statutory authority with its own staff based in the NT. The Committee believes that it is better placed for locally informed decision making than a remote Canberra-centric bureaucracy. It also believes that it is better placed in dealing with local institutions such as the Northern Territory Government, Shires and the Land Councils from which they draw their membership. There also exist structural and more recent emerging political tensions between the ABAAC and the Minister and senior bureaucrats over the application of ABA monies and the setting of Indigenous priorities.

A proposal for ABAAC autonomy is not new and was a cornerstone recommendation of a review of the then ABTA chaired by Jon Altman in 1984. Altman provided a rationale and pathway for an autonomous ABA charged with coordinating economic development using discretion in allocating royalties as leverage. This paper examines the current proposal of the ABAAC and analyses its prospects in achieving autonomy and anticipated improved development outcomes for Indigenous Territorians. It also compares it with the proposal by Altman and attempts to ascertain the utility of his recommendations almost 30 years on while also asking why many of his recommendations were never implemented.

The work of rights: The everyday sociality of native title corporate activity

Pamela McGrath

Inspired by the time-allocation methodology pioneered by Altman, this paper investigates the corporate ‘work’ of a native title group over a fifteen year period with a view to gaining insights into the amount of time and social capital Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples invest in the pursuit and management of their native title rights, the socio-economic impact of that investment, and whether those involved believe the effort has ultimately been worth it.

Using information held on historical legal files and focusing exclusively on external (or intercultural) activities and relationships, I have examined the character, intensity and impact of this group’s corporate activities, including governance meetings, legal testimony, future act negotiations and research trips. By mapping the interactions with others such as lawyers, bureaucrats and mining executives against these corporate activities, it has also been possible to build a sense of the social dynamics of this unique corporate space.

What emerges from this examination of native title ‘work’ is a sense of a complex, dynamic and demanding corporate domain that simultaneously blurs the boundaries between ‘personal’ and ‘professional’ relationships while reinforcing a distinction between traditional owner and settler positionedness. Moreover, although the multiple native title corporations of this particular group are recognised by all involved (including the law) as fundamentally grounded in local indigenous notions of place-based identity and associated rights in land, they are nevertheless recognised by native title holders who govern them as demanding a form of non-Indigenous labour that remains distinct from the exercise of.

Engaging Indigenous Economy Conference 13
native title rights themselves. For some, the ‘work’ of managing rights remains a categorically colonial activity.

Dr Pamela McGrath is a Research Fellow with AIATSIS’ Native Title Research Unit. Both an anthropologist and historian, she has worked in native title for 14 years and was instrumental to the establishment of ANU’s Centre for Native Title Anthropology in 2010. Pam’s academic interests extend to intercultural historical ethnography.

How to enable home ownership and economic development where land is not an alienable asset: A report on initiatives in the Kimberley region of Western Australia

Ed Wensing

Research on the land tenure aspirations of Aboriginal people in the Kimberley region in WA in 2011 and 2012 found that Aboriginal people as native title holders are reluctant to surrender their native title rights and interests in exchange for other forms of Crown title. Native title determinations in Australia align the incidents of title with attested ‘custom’ such as hunting, fishing and gathering. So far, they have excluded ‘alienability’ as a feature, other than by surrender to the Crown for their permanent extinguishment. While native title rights and interests are considered by the High Court to be a property right, native title holders are unable to use their native title rights and interests to engage in the modern economy in ways that require them to be alienable or as equity to secure finance. Similarly, the statutory Aboriginal land rights regimes that pre-date Mabo (No. 2) impose similar restrictions on alienability and use of the land as equity to secure finance.

The Commonwealth believes these arrangements are an obstacle to the expansion of government-backed home ownership programs and private economic development, and it is actively urging the States to undertake land tenure reforms aimed at individuating land titles and facilitating private home ownership. The land tenure debate centres on the merits of individual ownership versus communal or group ownership in order to generate private home ownership and economic development.
Exploring economic hybridity in housing: Lessons for appropriate tenure choices and policy

Louise Crabtree

Altman’s work provides the vital concept of economic hybridity for examining and facilitating appropriate Indigenous development models, focusing primarily on activities on ancestral lands. Work on Indigenous housing tenure has harked the idea of a ‘recognition space’ in which Indigenous and state discourses, knowledge and expectations of housing ostensibly inform one another; however, the actual mutuality of this exchange appears questionable. This paper presents research exploring appropriate housing tenure options in partnership with Indigenous organisations in NSW and the NT. Its core objective was to work with organisations expressing interest in the project, to examine the applicability to Indigenous housing, of core principles of community land trusts—(CLTs)—namely, community stewardship and perpetual affordability.

The project found central interest in the retention of land and housing in community hands, and much less interest in wealth creation through home ownership. Wealth creation is a central tenet of much recent public policy and tenure reform proposals regarding Indigenous lands; hence, the project team and partners were interested to explore communities’ aspirations in this regard, to speak to this policy premise. Central CLT principles were found to be of interest, primarily due to their ability to accommodate diverse and hybridised tenures under community control.

Building on this, the project developed workable tools and models to help communities and organisations think through the decisions they would need to make if considering provision of a range of appropriate tenure options for their households. The project outlined a tenure spectrum based on key operational features transcending language of ‘owning’ and ‘renting’, while encapsulating core issues of ongoing community tenure and community-based operational policies, plus implications for public policy. This reflects Altman’s core concerns with economic hybridity and presents a genuine ‘recognition space’ in which housing policy might actually be affected by Indigenous concern and knowledge.

Louise Crabtree is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Culture and Society, University of Western Sydney. Her research focuses on sustainability, resilience, property rights, institutional design, radical democracy and decoloniality. Louise has worked on models of appropriate landholding and housing with Aboriginal organisations in NSW and the NT.

Indigenous land title and economic development

Michael O’Donnell

A renewed focus on the fungibility of Indigenous land titles will no doubt constitute a significant part of the Prime Minister’s Indigenous Advisory Council’s tasks. It will be “reviewing land ownership and other drivers of economic development”. This review will presumably reignite long standing debates concerning communal Indigenous titles and individual property rights and the best way forward in encouraging economic growth in Indigenous communities in rural and remote Australia. Indigenous land title in Australia is complex and often not a form of land ownership. Land rights and native title meet a variety of Indigenous needs and aspirations, not solely economic. There appears to be a consensus internationally and domestically that leasing in the customary property law setting is the best way forward as it does not disturb any underlying ownership of the land by Indigenous peoples.

This paper will evaluate by reference to the international and domestic literature and statutory models whether that is in fact the case and examine the nature of the risks involved in some of the leasing models currently utilised in Australia. The critical issue is how to encourage economic development that maximises Indigenous involvement and benefit while minimising the risk of losing control of the land. The areas where clear steps forward in economic development are occurring in mining and the hybrid economy such as the acquisition of carbon credits through savannah burning in the top end of Australia are based primarily on the legal recognition of Indigenous rights. The utilisation of early season traditional burning practices brings traditional owners into the modern carbon economy while not putting traditional land at risk through leasing or other changes in proprietary interests. This paper will suggest further legal mechanisms by which this can occur, particularly in the water allocation and planning area pursuant to the National Water Initiative, and propose key changes to current leasing models to lessen the risk involved to traditional owners and native title holders.

Michael O’Donnell is a Barrister at John Toohey Chambers, Darwin. He specialises in native title law and Indigenous rights in Australia. He has recently provided advice to the National Native Title Council and NAILSMA Ltd. He is the author of articles in relation to native title law, carbon ‘farming’ and Indigenous rights to water in Australia.
Neo-liberal rhetoric and guardian state outcomes in Aboriginal land reform

Leon Terrill

Over the last decade the Australian Government has been searching for new ways of framing its approach to Indigenous policy. One element of this has been the widespread introduction of land tenure reform in Indigenous communities. The reforms arose out of a public debate about communal and individual ownership of Indigenous land, a debate containing strong elements of neo-liberal rhetoric. It was with the stated aim of enabling individual ownership or private property that the Australian Government began introducing reforms in 2006. A striking feature of the reforms themselves is that they have not led to widespread individual ownership in any meaningful sense. Nor have they led to the creation of land markets. Instead, one of the more pronounced outcomes has been the way the reforms institutionalise a greater role for governments in community life. This increase in the guardianship role of governments did not form part of the public debate about land reform, and is not reflected in contemporary government statements about the reforms.

With a focus on Aboriginal land reform in the Northern Territory, this paper will consider two related issues. The first is the significance of the fact that this increased guardianship role of governments has not featured strongly in public discussion about the reforms. The second issue is to do with ongoing arrangements. If it is accepted that there is a need for some level of regulation over land use in remote communities, such as maintaining control over the allocation of key infrastructure, it becomes necessary to consider who is best suited to play this guardianship role. Should it be a government body, a land council or some other organisation?

Dr Leon Terrill is a lecturer in the University of New South Wales law school and a Centre Fellow of the Indigenous Law Centre. He previously worked as a senior lawyer for the Central Land Council.
Indigenous small businesses in the Australian Indigenous economy

Jock Collins, Mark Morrison and Branka Krivokapic-Skoko

One of the most significant developments in the Australian Indigenous Economy over the last decade has been an increasing growth in the importance of Indigenous enterprises and Indigenous entrepreneurs. There are many pathways to Indigenous entrepreneurship in Australia: partnerships between corporate Australia and Indigenous corporations/communities; Indigenous community-owned enterprises; Indigenous social enterprises and co-operatives and Indigenous private enterprises.

This paper reviews recent research on Indigenous private enterprises in the small business sector of the Australian economy to think about a number of conceptual issues related to Indigenous economic development. Specifically it draws on qualitative and quantitative research with 366 male and female Indigenous entrepreneurs in small businesses in all states and territories of Australia apart from Tasmania conducted between 2012 and 2014. The fieldwork was designed, in part, to assess (1) whether Indigenous culture and Indigenous social relations within the family and community constrains or enhances the economic activity of Indigenous enterprises in the small business sector, and (2) how Indigenous enterprises seek to contribute to their communities through a range of non-monetised activities and how this differs across urban, regional and remote locations and across business type.

Our findings suggest that what emerges is a version of Altman’s notion of a ‘hybrid economy’ whereby the market intersects with customary obligations and Indigenous social relations in shaping the dynamics of this form of Indigenous entrepreneurship, with Altman’s third sector, the state, playing a relatively minor role for Indigenous small business entrepreneurs compared to other Indigenous enterprises. We find significant differences in a range of community contributions across location and business type, indicating that the extent of the hybrid economy is greater in remote areas and where businesses are predominantly community owned.

Jock Collins is a Professor of Social Economics in the Management Discipline Group at the UTS Business School, in Sydney, and Co-Director of the Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research Centre at UTS. His research interests centre on an interdisciplinary study of immigration and cultural diversity in the economy and society.

Professor Mark Morrison is Sub-Dean Research in the Faculty of Business, Charles Sturt University. In recent years his research has been funded by the Australian Research Council (Discovery and Linkage Grants), US Environmental Protection Agency and National Science Foundation, NSW Environmental Trust, Land and Water Australia, Country Energy, and US Forest Service.

Associate Professor Branka Krivokapic-Skoko has published extensively on immigrant entrepreneurship in New Zealand and Australia. She has received funding from the Australian Research Council and Rural Industry & Research Development Corporation to do research on ethnic communities and the built environment in Australian cities, and on new immigrants in regional and rural Australia.

IBA Health Check Tool: Working with organisations to maximise returns for future generations

Ken Markwell and Hannah Chadwick

Recent research conducted by Social Ventures Australia Consulting estimated that there are around 6,000 Indigenous Organisations in Australia with assets of between $10-40b. The research also indicated the Indigenous investment market is large, growing and professionalising. However, some organisations are not receiving good advice and more demand for high-quality advice is expected in the future. These Organisations and the assets they hold represent a once in a lifetime opportunity for beneficiary communities.

To maximise the returns for communities and to ensure sustainable economic development, these organisations require strong governance structures, effective leadership and strategic focus. Many corporations could be stronger in these respects, however, and struggle to access technical support and professional independent advice that would enable them to do this. This is reportedly also the case with some Native American Nations. According to the University of Arizona’s Native Nations Institute, over the last 20 years Native American nations have increasingly come to realise the value of taking a Nation Building approach to economic development as opposed to a more standardised approach. The key points of difference are that the former has at its core practical sovereignty, effective governance, cultural legitimacy, strategic orientation and strong leadership.

In 2013, Indigenous Business Australia’s (IBA) Traditional Owner and Native Title Unit identified that they have a unique and important role to play through the provision of strategic and operational support to Indigenous Organisations. IBA engaged SVA Consulting to co-develop an organisational health check
tool to be used with Indigenous Organisations to identify and prioritise their strengths, weaknesses and required support across four key commercial capability domains: Governance, Management, Strategy and Financials (including Investments). The tool is designed so that information is gathered in consultation with Indigenous Organisations and key stakeholders, supporting the development of relationships and knowledge sharing. This presentation will be offered by representatives from IBA and SVA to demonstrate the functionality of the tool and highlight how it can be used to help Indigenous Organisations identify their strengths and weaknesses, monitor and evaluate progress over time, effectively allocate resources and strategise to ensure a sustainable and strong future.

Ken Markwell is a Mununjhali man. His mob are from the Beaudesert region in South East Queensland. He also has cultural responsibilities for neighbouring Wangeneribura country. Ken has spent his life pursuing better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the country. Over the last two decades Ken has worked in senior roles in Government, Business and Community sectors. He is currently the Senior Manager, Traditional Owner and Sustainability Unit within Indigenous Business Australia (IBA). Before joining IBA Ken was Director of Markwell Consulting: a successful independent consulting business providing leadership, facilitation and planning support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. Ken has worked in the areas of Native Title, Land and Sea Management, Education and Training, Cultural Heritage and the Arts. He has formal qualifications in business, archaeology, applied science, and training.

Hannah Chadwick has worked with non-profit, private sector and government clients to understand and increase their social impact through conducting research and analysis and developing effective solutions to their problems. Before joining Social Ventures Australia Hannah consulted to the World Bank, the OECD and the NSW Ministry of Health on social development issues. She also worked with the UN Economic Commission in Mexico City for two years. Hannah holds a Bachelor of Arts majoring in languages from UNSW and a Masters in Anthropology and Development from ANU.

Productive livelihoods for Wik people of Aurukun, Cape York, Queensland

Bruce Martin, Donna Green and David Martin

Aak Puul Ngantam (APN Cape York) is a community-based organisation established only a few years ago in Aurukun. Independently of Jon Altman’s ‘hybrid economy’ model, but broadly consistent with it, APN has developed, and is now implementing, an innovative integrated model of sustainable social and economic development. APN’s focus is on developing productive livelihoods on Wik country, as well as strategic ventures in the local and regional economies, with financial inputs derived from income generated from services and sales, government funding, and co-funding from the environmental and philanthropic sectors.

This paper outlines the development process that created a robust governance model which allows individuals and family groups to have input into, and develop a commitment to, APN’s strategic future. It also outlines the range of activities APN undertakes, and the mechanisms adopted to strategically position APN as a partner of choice for external investors. Simultaneously with APN’s organisational development phase, there were forces within, and in the intersections between, the three sectors of what Altman describes as the hybrid economy, which led to organisations and agencies specifically looking to invest in programs with outcomes commensurate with Wik people’s own aspirations. The paper outlines the range of activities conducted through APN across these sectors, which have resulted from this organic development process. These include Ranger groups undertaking feral animal and weed control; redevelopment of a cattle enterprise; quantifying carbon offsets from early dry season mosaic burning; outstation support; partnering with a major construction firm building housing across several Cape York communities to deliver community engagement and training; auspicing the establishment of local businesses; and instituting or supporting a range of social ventures. The paper concludes by reflecting on the implications of APN’s practice and philosophy for Altman’s hybrid economy model.

Bruce Martin’s traditional country lies within the Aboriginal lands south of Aurukun. He was instrumental in establishing Aak Puul Ngantam (APN Cape York), a community-based organisation focussed on developing productive livelihoods on and off Wik lands. Bruce is also engaged in establishing an institutional architecture for leveraging government, private and NGO investment in Wik country and beyond it.

Dr Donna Green is an interdisciplinary environmental scientist. Her research focuses on human-environment interactions, specifically on
social and economic vulnerability to climate change. Dr Green led the first scoping study on the risks from climate change to Indigenous communities in Northern Australia. Her work in this field also involves translating scientific findings into policy recommendations relevant for government policy-makers.

David Martin is an anthropologist who worked as a half time Research Fellow at CAEPR for a decade until 2006, when he returned to full time consulting. He lived in Aurukun and worked there as Outstation coordinator for 8 years from 1976, returning for his Doctoral research in 1985 and 1986. His research and applied work in Aboriginal Australia has focussed on such areas as policy, development, governance, and social continuities and transformation.

Community-owned Indigenous art centres, tourism and economic benefits: The case of Maruku Arts

Marianne Riphagen

In 2012, Maruku Arts, an Anangu-owned art centre situated in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, decided to diversify and expand its original focus on purchasing and selling woodcraft to include arts-based tourism activities. A downturn in both the market for Aboriginal art and tourist visitation to Uluru necessitated the centre’s move down the path of cultural tourism. Besides realising national accreditation as a tourism enterprise, Maruku has joined the prestigious Indigenous Tourism Champions Program; an initiative of Tourism Australia and Indigenous Business Australia. In doing so, Maruku has placed itself in a position not usually occupied by community-owned Indigenous art centres.

In this paper, I examine key outcomes of Maruku’s new activities in light of Jon Altman’s extensive research on the Indigenous visual arts industry and his studies of Aboriginal cultural tourism, including research conducted in the Mutitjulu Community in 1985 and 1986. In particular, I will revisit three findings previously published by Altman, namely: that Anangu derived few economic benefits from tourism at Uluru (1987, 1991); that interconnections between the production of Aboriginal art and the tourism industry hold economic potential to Indigenous communities, tourists and the state, at least in the Northern Territory (1993, 2003); and that in many instances, Indigenous Australians opt for indirect, rather than direct, participation in tourism (1992). As I will demonstrate, Maruku Arts’ recent incursion into cultural tourism has generated unforeseen changes to the centre’s local and regional alliances as well as to the nature of cultural and economic support provided to Anangu. The Maruku experience suggests community-owned art centres should adopt a cautionary approach to participation in tourism.

Marianne Riphagen is a research fellow at the Centre for Heritage and Museum Studies, School of Archaeology and Anthropology, Australian National University. Her research focuses on the economic value of Indigenous cultural heritage in remote Australia and the use of such heritage within the domains of the arts and tourism.
SESSION NINE

Reflections

Friday 5 September 2014  4pm – 5pm

Ben Scambary and John Nieuwenhuysen, with Jon Altman in response

Ben Scambary is an Anthropologist with twenty years’ experience working with Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. He completed his PhD at CAEPR under the supervision of Jon Altman in 2007. He is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.

Professor John Nieuwenhuysen AM is Emeritus Professor at Monash University, and Honorary Professorial Fellow at the Asia Institute, University of Melbourne. He is also a member of the Board of the Australian Multicultural Foundation and Chair of the Board of the Bill Kent Foundation. Previously, John was Director of the Monash Centre, Prato, Italy; Foundation Director of the Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements; Chief Executive of the Committee for Economic Development of Australia-CEDA; and Foundation Director, Commonwealth Bureau of Immigration, Population and Multicultural Research. John has also been a member of the Council of RMIT University and, for three years, Deputy Chancellor. In 2003 John received an award (AM) in the Order of Australia for contributions to private and public research. John holds the degrees of MA (Natal) and PhD (London School of Economics) and is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences of Australia.

Conference Closing

5.30-7pm
at University House
All Welcome