Fieldwork in 1986: further archaeological survey and consultation

At the beginning of 1986, in spite of the insights obtained in the previous field season, the orientation of research was still strongly archaeological. The aim this trip was to establish a regional profile and a chronology of socio-economic activities on the East Coast strip. This could be achieved by undertaking excavations at the 'W' site and on the large middens at Newcastle Bay. Further survey was aimed at locating stratified site(s), particularly if the evidence at the 'W' site proved to be either superficial or sparse. To this end, some survey work was envisaged for Albany and Muri (Mount Adolphus) Islands.

Albany Island was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, it is within the small sandstone belt which also includes Somerset. It was anticipated that there would be rockshelters on the island and that these would have been used. Given the extreme environmental processes operating in most tropical climates, I felt that such rockshelters would provide the best chance for obtaining undisturbed evidence. Secondly, the inclusion of Albany Island in the 'Wamera Story' (see Chapter 6) indicated the possibility of documenting the antiquity of an oral account of sea-level rise. It seemed that the location of sites within this general timeframe might prove both independently interesting and useful to the original topic. Part of my rationale was also that this was one way in which a connection could possibly be made between community knowledge and archaeological research, thereby justifying the latter. However, if this was the case, I was not fully aware of it. Moreover, like Allen (1978), although I could happily indicate the contribution the oral account made to archaeological research, it was not easy to articulate the contribution of a temporal framework to community knowledge.
In surveying Muri, I had different expectations. By this stage, I had determined that before European colonisation, trade routes extended from Papua through the Torres Strait and down the eastern coast of the Australian mainland. Muri appears to have been serviced by at least two of these routes, both of which passed through the Central Islands of the Torres Strait (see also Fuary 1991: 58). Within this system offshore islands were often used as trade centres. This was possibly because to the traders they approximated 'neutral territory' while locals were not obliged to accommodate visitors on their doorstep. Hale and Tindale (1933) report that Flinders Island off the central eastern coast of Cape York Peninsula was used for this purpose. These expectations of sites associated with trade (and the possibility of documenting its antiquity) would provide a necessary complement to the type of information available from the other sites. In addition, it was expected that such sites would address one of the critical elements in determining patterns of intensification (see Chapter 5).

Two periods of fieldwork were undertaken in this year. The first of these was extremely short, from the 24th July till 7th August. This was principally aimed at providing me with an opportunity for further consultation and PhD supervision in the field. Associate Professor John Campbell accompanied me on this trip, visiting both the 'W' site in Fishbone Swamp and the East Coast. We also went to the Evans Bay site test-excavated by Moore (1979) and had anticipated visiting Muri. The latter, however, was not possible due to bad weather and associated problems with rough seas. In fact, I was to discover that this was often a problem with visiting Muri, and it is a point I will discuss further in Chapter 10. The second field season was much longer, extending from 30th August till 20th October.
7.1 Consultation with councils

Before entering the field, I again contacted the Chairman of the Combined NPA Council, Mr C. Lifu. I explained that we wished to excavate in the two identified areas and that I would like to contact the appropriate people concerning this. In addition, I had funding to employ someone to work with me for a period during this season and needed advice with regard to this. I received no direct advice from the Council, although a man from New Mapoon was identified to the Aboriginal Relics Ranger as being appropriate. Once in the field, I briefly met with Mr Lifu to let him know that we were again in the area.

The problem of locating traditional owners/custodians for this area remained. This was particularly important as we had learned in the previous year that the East Coast had special significance to local people. We knew that the area around the 'W' site, Inangapudan or Fishbone Swamp, was considered to be a 'dangerous place'. In addition, the location of the Wamera Story in this area suggested that a much broader area might have special significance. In view of this, I was concerned about a number of issues that were to be addressed during consultation. Firstly, I wondered if the act of working in this area was problematic in terms of community beliefs. If this did not prove to be the case, then we needed to discuss the excavations we had planned and a range of issues associated with this.

In order to undertake consultation on these issues, it was essential to locate someone who had custodial rights for this area. This was not immediately obvious. My own contacts (Messrs Woosup, Williams and Massey) established the year before were traditionally associated with either Seven Rivers or McDonnell River country which I knew to be located further south. The people who had lived along the East Coast area had, by all accounts, suffered greatly in
the period following European entry into the area and the subsequent establishment of Somerset (Moore 1979). Although I knew that the original settlement at Injinoo had included these 'Sandbeach' people, they had not emerged (or so I thought) as a result of my previous consultation.

Given such problems, this year the consultation process entered a new phase which included the involvement of an anthropologist, Maureen Fuary, in the project. This stage of consultation was undertaken over several weeks. In the meantime, preliminary and non-invasive archaeological work (for example, survey and mapping) was undertaken on the east coast sites.

7.2 Locating a 'speaker' for the East Coast

Specific consultation began with the Deputy Chairman of the Cowal Creek Community Council, Mr T. Salee (now deceased). At this stage, Ms Fuary took a forward role in negotiations. Her fluency in Torres Strait Creole facilitated better communication of ideas, especially as Mr Salee himself was a Torres Strait Island man. This proved to be a turning point in the development of the consultation process. As a result of these discussions, Mr Meun Lifu was identified as a language-speaker who could assist us in our work on the East Coast sites.

I visited Mr Lifu with Ms Fuary and discussed the work we wanted to carry out. Again, these discussions were undertaken in Torres Strait and Cape York Creole. Communication in local languages is a key which can take consultation beyond a superficial level. Firstly, there is the issue of greater accuracy in the transmission of ideas and intentions. Secondly, there are a number of connotations surrounding the use of local language. In this case, Ms Fuary's fluency in Torres Strait Creole provided a demonstration that we were not the usual White people who come in to work on the reserve. In the vast majority of
cases, Whites in northern Cape York do not speak Creole. There is a perception that it is not 'proper English' and that it does not have the status of a separate and legitimate language. Where exceptions occur, Creole tends to be spoken in private exchanges. At this time, it was not used in formal or official instances. This is exemplified by the lack of a fully instituted bilingual programme in the schools. This is also the case in the area of health where non-local employees do not tend to speak Creole. Thus in the areas of health and education, local people are obliged to communicate in what is often their second or third language.

The importance of distinguishing oneself from other Whites on the reserves has been noted by Trigger (1992: 86). He states:

Unlike the missionary family, I have not been regarded as a transplanted piece of the local Whitefella domain. Also, unlike the two White men referred to above, I was not thought to be in need of 'looking after' in the face of White society. I have been regarded as another kind of exceptional Whitefella; one whose work involves learning about 'Blackfella ways', and who can to some extent operate socially like a Blackfella and (for a time at least) appear not to be too uncomfortable living in similar material conditions to Blackfellas.

The use of the dominant local language in the initial discussions at Injinoo indicated previous experience in the region. Indeed, the Yam Island 'tune' in Ms Fuary's speech was readily recognised and prompted a discussion of her previous work, of common friends, acquaintances, kinship associations etc. People became aware that she was able to 'operate socially' in a Yam Island context (and therefore the region generally) which afforded less uneasiness at being placed in the context of consultation. This, combined with the interactions that I had had, and the connections made in the previous year, afforded those involved in consultation with a certain amount of comfort with the process. This issue is further discussed in Chapters 9 and 11.
In this initial consultation, we outlined the work we wished to undertake, that is small excavations at the East Coast sites, and expressed our concerns surrounding possible conflict in terms of the community beliefs in this area. The notion that this was a dangerous place was confirmed during these discussions, and Mr Lifu (and others present) indicated that before stopping for any length of time in this area, one should be introduced to the country by someone who could speak 'language'. We asked Mr Lifu if he was prepared to work with us on the project, which would require him to camp with us on the East Coast sites. While he indicated that he was happy to be involved, our timing was not good. The tombstone opening, which is a ceremony marking the end of mourning ritual and obligations (see Fitzpatrick-Nietschmann 1987; Fuary 1991) of an important community figure was to be held approximately two weeks from the date of our conversation. These ceremonies are celebrations involving feasting and dancing and draw together relatives and members of the community, including those who live in far-flung centres. Mr Lifu had an important role in the dancing at this feast and he was reluctant to miss the preparations which include hours of dance practice each day.

He did, however, agree to come out to the East Coast and introduce us to country. We had camped adjacent to one of the large midden sites at Newcastle Bay. As with the area around the 'W' site (and for similar reasons), we learned that this area was not safe for us unless we were properly introduced. We learned that this introduction involved letting the 'old people', that is, the spirits of people who have died, know who we were and what we were doing. In a moving ceremony at the site we wished to excavate, Mr Lifu 'sang out' to the spirits, in language, to let them know this. We were told that there was another important person who should do this for us, and that she would come out at a later date.
One of the most surprising aspects of this meeting with Mr Lifu was to learn that the Chairperson of the NPA Combined Council (Mr C. Lifu) was his brother! Although at that time, the latter lived in New Mapoon, he was originally an Injinoo man. The major obstacle in consulting with the NPA Council was therefore not a lack of knowledge of traditional affiliations, but rather that people were used to working within the power structure of the reserve. In a system that still accepted policies such as 'assimilation' and 'integration', there was little recognition of the authority of traditional ownership.

7.3 Preliminary archaeological work

While waiting for Mr Lifu to join us on the East Coast, we undertook some preliminary, 'non-invasive' archaeological work. This included survey of several sites to choose possible locations for excavation, mapping of such locations and general recording of the site complexes.

We chose to work on a large site located in Freshwater Bay (see Figure 2). This site was less disturbed than the others and had a number of hearth-like features that appeared to be in situ. These were located on a surface that was littered with an abundance of shell, stone and bone material which had been re-deposited with the deflation of the dunes. This deflation is probably a relatively recent event, possibly initiated by destabilisation of vegetation following the introduction of hard-hoofed animals. This may date to the occupation of Somerset, however stock were kept on the reserve and are known to roam in the bush. Older residents of the area can recall the dunes when vegetated, estimating this to be as recent as 30 to 40 years ago. Given that much of the material on the surface was not in situ, this site had only limited potential for illustrating past economies. However, it seemed as if the 'fireplaces' might
Figure 2: The cultural landscape of northern Cape York
allow the development of a temporal framework as well as providing evidence for specific activities.

Once the Freshwater site had been chosen, we set about establishing a base map within which the excavations would be located. This site is large, approximately 200 m by 100 m. The method used to map it involved the establishment of a baseline using a dumpy level, with six datum points along it. These points marked the boundaries of five control zones (A, B, C, D and E). Each of these points was pegged. This was to serve as an anchor for a series of increasingly detailed plans. In the most general plans, large features or generalised scatters of material were to be recorded within each zone using the dumpy level. For more accurate and detailed recording, a camera was mounted onto an aluminium pole with a spirit level and a photographic record of 1 m by 1 m areas was to be taken at varying intervals (see Clegg 1982).

There were, however, endless problems with undertaking this work. Firstly, there were mechanical problems with the vehicle which involved several trips from the campsite into Bamaga (more than 40 km away over extremely rough tracks). Secondly, when we began mapping the site, we discovered that the hairline on the dumpy level was broken and another one had to be air freighted to Bamaga. A part of the camera's motor drive was faulty which prevented the detailed photographic recordings that were to be undertaken with the survey pole that had been especially made for this purpose. The unrelenting south-easterly winds rendered the task of holding the ranging pole vertical almost impossible and provided an on-the-spot illustration of the dune deflation process. Finally, the team became ill with intestinal problems, making work and everyday life difficult and requiring medical attention. At a later date, when discussing these problems with community members, we were told that this was in keeping with the beliefs that surround this area. As we were not
formally introduced at this time, our efforts were being thwarted by the old people who did not understand what we were doing. Our experiences were proof of the fact that we were working (however 'non-invasively') in a dangerous place. It was shortly after this that Mr Lifu provided us with our first formal introduction to the area (see section 7.4).

However, by the time Mr Lifu joined us, we had constructed a plan of the site (albeit much rougher and less detailed than the original intention) and had chosen areas for excavation. These included a number of the 'fireplace' features, a residual section of the dune, and a number of test squares that would cut through the surface onto which the material had been lagged.

7.4 Excavation, participation and working with 'speakers'

Once the tombstone opening was over, Mr Lifu and his wife, Mrs Clara Lifu (nee Rattler) came out to the East Coast and camped with us. Initially, there was some confusion about Mr Lifu's role. While it was never our intention, Mr and Mrs Lifu took over all domestic responsibilities in the camp for the entire period that we spent there. Initially, I thought that there may have been a misunderstanding and that they had assumed that I had employed them to carry out domestic duties. At that stage, however, I did not appreciate fully that as I was a visitor, this was an expression of their hospitality. It was at this point that a co-operative working relationship was truly developed.

7.4.1 Role of the 'speaker'

We learned that the site we were working on was part of a cosmological complex which included Lakes Bronto and Wicheura which are located 3 to 4 km to the west, and which extended down the East Coast from Somerset to Jackey Jackey Creek. We were told that the 'old people' (the spirits of those who are deceased) live by day at the lakes and return to the East Coast sites at
night. Part of the role of the language speaker was to introduce us to country and to inform the 'old people' of our business and intent. We learned that people from the community generally take the precaution of taking a language speaker with them when they go hunting or fishing in this area which they know as Sandago. From this point, we too adopted this term.

7.4.2 Excavation and consultation

Formal consultation with Mr Lifu involved asking for permission to excavate in the areas which had been defined. We explained the excavation process and outlined the type of socio-economic and other archaeological information (including dating) that we anticipated would result. This approach was in line with what was considered at the time to be the best that consultation had to offer. For example, Jones (1985:21) describes his approach thus:

First there was the question of where I wanted to dig, how I was going to do it, what was to be the size of the excavation pit, and how deep did I think it was going to be. The men were aware of the general procedures of archaeological excavation. I stressed the care and seriousness of purpose that would be practised at all times; the slow rate of excavation, the sieving of all the deposits and the painstaking collection of artefacts, animal bone fragments and soil samples. All of these procedures would be done openly and could be scrutinised at all times by members of the Aboriginal community. It was stressed that in the proposal to the ANPWS there would be provision to employ or to second from the Park Service a senior Aboriginal person with local affiliations and knowledge, who might be available to help us during our work.

Once excavation work began, we realised that our expectations were overly optimistic. Firstly, controlled excavation of the soft fine sands which comprise the dunes proved to be almost impossible. This was due to the action of the strong south-easterly winds which immediately began the deflation process. In addition, where we were able to excavate, the sides of the squares were so
fragile that they collapsed with the slightest ill-advised movement or a mere breath of wind. Excavation of the trench (0.5 m wide and 2.5 m long) through the surface onto which material had lagged was abandoned because of this. We found that in spite of using boards and covers, the sides of the trench collapsed overnight. This was also the case with the excavation of the residual part of the dune. Even the cleaning of a section in the latter resulted in its partial collapse. The only possibility that remained was the hearths. These were surface features that had already been exposed by the wind’s action. As such, excavation was more a case of ‘deconstruction’ or systematic disassembling rather than a process of revealing or uncovering.

At this stage, time was running short. I managed to extend my time in the field by 10 days, however this was the maximum that vehicle bookings, assistants time in the field and the heat would allow. The latter was a significant problem for as time wore on the intensity of heat and glare on the bleached sands was considerable.

Given all of these problems and delays, we had time to excavate only two of the hearth features. Superficially, these fell into two categories. These were distinguished by their distribution: those in the first category contained beachrock scattered over an area with a diameter of 1-2 m, while those in the second had a more discrete distribution (see Plates 6 and 7). The two chosen for ‘excavation’ were those that were best preserved in each category. Our procedure was firstly to label all artefacts visible on the surface and to draw a scale plan of these. We then removed the sand in and around the beachrock until reaching the base of the feature. At this point, the rocks were removed and excavation continued to a depth of approximately 10 cm. A locus system was used rather than arbitrary spits as this seemed to fit better with both the process and the nature of the feature. In some ways, this process was the
opposite of conventional sub-surface excavation.

The first feature to be excavated was F11 (Feature 11) which was located in Zone A (see Plate 5). This was a discrete, oval-shaped cluster of beachrock with an approximate diameter of 90 cm. On the surface, the rock was surrounded, and at times partly covered by a layer of coarse yellow sand that had been blown from the beach. This layer had a maximum depth of 4 cm. The beachrock was sitting on a crust of compacted fine white sand which overlayed loose fine white sand. No charcoal, stone or shell artefacts or food remains were located in the excavation of F11. In fact, the feature appeared to be nothing more than a pile of rocks. However, the neatness of the pile, and its location within the site suggested that the stones had been placed here for future use.

The second feature excavated was F1. This was much larger than F11, covering an approximate area of 2 m by 2 m, with two areas of more densely clustered material (see Plate 3). The sediments that surrounded the beachrock in this feature were more compacted than at F11, and there was some charcoal. This was mostly in the form of charcoal-stained sands, but some identifiable specks and lumps were present and one small sample was taken. A quartz artefact was located close to the surface.

F1 was interpreted as an 'oven' that had been somewhat disturbed in the process of removing its contents. The beachrock was presumably used as cooking stones which is interesting in that this type of rock would appear to be prone to shattering when heated. I have, however, since observed its use as marker stones for small fires used to cook a snack (such as a single fish) while out fishing. Moore (1979: 268) states that the Kaurareg of Prince of Wales Island and the Gudang (the people living around Somerset and Cape York which is
Plate 6  Excavation of hearth feature, F11, at Sandago.

Plate 7  Excavation of hearth feature, F1, Sandago.
just west of these sites) had a similar range of seasonal foods and '...identical methods of food preparation'. He describes the *ami* or earth ovens used to cook yams, mangrove pods, turtles and dugong by the Kaurareg (1979: 277):

> Basically it consisted of an area of stones made red hot with a big fire, over which the pieces of turtle flesh were placed, with smaller hot stones on top, then a covering of pandanus leaves, on which the entrails and fat were spread, then more leaves and small hot stones, and over the top the shell of the turtle. The whole was surrounded and covered with tea-tree bark, and finally sand was piled over, making a mound about two metres in diameter and one metre high.

Hale and Tindale (1933: 114) have also described the use of similar ovens in the processing of mangrove fruits. They state:

> When a camp is reached a small, hot fire is made, and for 30 or 40 minutes stones are heated therein. The fire is then raked out, and the mangrove fruits are thrown in amongst the hot stones, which are distributed evenly amongst them with a stick. The heap is then covered with a piece of paperbark, and this in turn is covered with a layer of sand an inch or so in depth. The mass is left undisturbed for about an hour, after which the covering is taken off, and the roasted fruits (now brownish-grey instead of green) are removed.

The size of these ovens and the use of stone in the cooking process supports the interpretation of F1 as an 'oven'. The presence of F11, although chosen because it was superficially different to F1, was an added bonus, providing us with information concerning the use and re-use of the cooking stones. The stones in F11 had either been used in an 'oven', removed and piled for further use, or, they were brought to the site but the cook did not have the opportunity to use them.

While working on the site and in our camp at night, we had many discussions with Mr and Mrs Lifu. Initially, these discussions centred around explanations
of the work we were doing, however after a period of time, they increasingly included references to the beliefs, stories etc. associated with the general area. These included more detailed versions of the Wamera story and more detail concerning the supernatural beings that are said to inhabit this area. These were interlaced with other stories from the historical era. In particular, we were told many stories of the administration at Somerset. We learned that there were a number of burials in the region and that it is believed that these people were massacred during this period. We began to put different components of the East Coast stories together. For example, it is possible that the burials are connected with the belief that these sites are the home of the 'old people', i.e. the spirits of the dead. While we were working on the site, Mr Lifu suggested that the fireplaces we were excavating were perhaps those used by the 'old people' when they inhabited the site at night. This is further explored in Chapter 10.

7.4.3 Archaeology and community beliefs
Towards the end of the field season, approximately 30 to 40 people from the Injinoo community visited us at the site. This on-site meeting was aimed at providing a broad section of the community with an explanation of the processes and reasoning of archaeology and an archaeological interpretation of the site and the excavations. However, while the formal discussions were aimed at illustrating the value of archaeological work, informal discussions were having the opposite effect. I found that the more I learned about the community's beliefs in relation to the landscape, the more challenged I felt about the archaeological interpretations and their potential value to the community. While the results of the excavations were interesting in relation to cooking methods, the use of beachrock as cooking stones and its possible storage and re-use, I felt that this had fallen short of my portrayal to the community of the potential of archaeological work to present a picture of the past. This was exacerbated by the fact that I now knew that the site was
located, physically and cognitively, within a strong cosmological framework. This uneasiness grew as these explanations became more personalised and particular (for example, the suggestion that the fireplaces were still used, albeit by the dead who occupied the site).

I began to wonder about the destructive element of what we were doing. In removing these ‘features’, were we perhaps also removing part of the story? This was especially worrying as those we had chosen were the largest and best preserved. Moreover, we were removing the physical evidence from which such stories are created. What were we offering to replace this? Knowledge of traditional cooking methods is not new to the people of northern Cape York who in fact use a variation of this technique to cook for feasts today. In many ways, it seemed that the ‘new’ knowledge was being gained by us but not by them. The question that was emerging for me surrounded the notion of loss rather than gain. Would the provision of an alternative interpretation of the site result in a net loss or gain in terms of current community beliefs and the potential of the site to play a role within the dynamic of cultural construction? Moreover, if the net result was loss, was this not neocolonialism in another guise? These issues are examined in Chapter 10.

The one element of the process that did have the potential to provide new knowledge was dating of the sample taken from F11. Indeed, the removal of charcoal samples from several of these features offered the promise of a temporal framework for the occupation of the site. However, my interactions with the community led me to challenge this. The temporal framework of occupation that could be put together from such dates was perhaps something that preoccupies archaeologists more than indigenous people. What interest would this hold for northern Cape York people? More importantly, what role could this ‘temporal chronology’ play in the development of beliefs and stories?
Would the provision of a radiocarbon date lock the sites into the 'past' and how would this affect contemporary community interpretations? While I accepted the notion of culture as dynamic, a culture in which stories are constantly created and beliefs modified, I had no wish to be an agent of change in this manner. These issues are explored more fully in Chapter 10.

7.4.4 Outstanding work on Muri (Mt Adolphus Island) and at the 'W' site

At the end of this year, the work that I had anticipated on Muri and at the 'W' site had not been done. While we visited the 'W' site during the first weeks of the field season, work was held up until issues concerning ownership were clarified and consultation had taken place. We planned to take this up with Mr Lifu when he came to work with us. However, once the work at Sandago was underway, it was decided that this work would be delayed until the 1987 field season. This was mostly in response to our developing understanding of the meaning of this landscape and the issues that have been outlined in the previous section. It seemed that of all places along this east coast strip, we had chosen to excavate in two areas that are considered by northern Cape York people to be extremely dangerous. Inangapudan or Fishbone Swamp, where the 'W' site is located, is particularly dangerous and we felt that given this, the delay would provide a longer period in which such issues, and their implications, could be considered.

The work planned on Muri and Albany Island was similarly delayed due to the fact that we had run short of time. However, I had spoken to a number of people about Muri during this field season. I discovered that, like Sandago and Fishbone Swamp, it is connected with the spirit realm. I learned that many people are wary of going to Muri for this reason. Given such difficulties, I decided that the work on Muri could be similarly postponed. I could not help but marvel at the fact that the three locations I had identified for archaeological
work were all connected with the spiritual realm and all were considered to be
dangerous and problematic. While this might have been regarded within
conventional archaeological circles as an incredible run of bad luck, I began to
think that this phenomenon was independently interesting and deserved
further investigation.

7.5 Conclusions
At the end of this season in the field, a number of conclusions had been
reached. Firstly, this had not been a good year from a conventional
archaeological viewpoint. I had managed to excavate only a fraction of one of
the sites at Sandago; I was unable to undertake any work on the ‘W’ site; and I
had not managed to get either to Muri or Albany Island. The excavations we
had undertaken had proven interesting but did not provide the kind of
information necessary to investigate intensification.

On the other hand, I had established a strong link with the Injino community
and had begun to work with custodians and owners. I began to understand
something of the way in which the community viewed the sites and the
landscape of which they are part. I had been made aware that this landscape is
tied into a broader system of beliefs that is richly layered with creation stories
and woven into historical events and community cosmology. I became aware
that ‘archaeological’ sites, including the supposedly secular middens and
campsites, were associated with these stories and that they are part of the fabric
of traditional knowledge within the community. I began to understand that
this construction of community knowledge is an ongoing, dynamic process.
Given this, I began to question what I was doing by introducing archaeological
perspectives into this framework. I began to wonder what the community
really thought about the excavation of ‘F1’ and ‘F11’ and their removal from the
site. It occurred to me that even asking permission to do this may have
imposed an enormous responsibility on those who were involved. I was reminded of a passage I had read in McLaren (1926: 134) who had established a coconut plantation in 1911 at Utingu, some 20 km from Sandago on the west coast. He describes the visit of an eminent ethnologist and his attempts to undertake some research with the people who worked on the plantation. McLaren (1926: 134) says:

As for the natives, they didn't know what to make of him at first. When he began measuring their heads, they were somewhat afraid of him. When he spoke to them of their legends and mythology, they thought him unduly curious, and were not a little resentful. Some of them complained to me, asking what had their heads to do with him, or the tales they had learned from their fathers. But at length they accepted him cheerfully enough - for the reason, I discovered, that Billy Number Five had privately informed them that he was completely mad. They had a most curious respect for madness and were therefore content to allow him to do what he wished with them.

One could not help wondering if the contemporary relatives of these people were not similarly humoring me in my own research; this being the nature of their response to 'visiting madness'. With this in mind, I left the field in 1986 with more questions than answers and a determination to address at least some of the many issues that had been raised.
Fieldwork in 1987: the emergence of a cultural landscape

This year marked a long season in the field which extended from late April until early November. This period was spread, however, between two projects: the original archaeological project and the baseline anthropological project run jointly by Maureen Fuary and me. Anthropological work was aimed at systematically recording genealogical information and tribal affiliations which was essential for consultation, as well as stories, songs, life histories, history of the settlement, etc. that constituted elements of cultural importance to the community. While the anthropological work was initially aimed at facilitating better consultation (that is, through identification of traditional owners and custodians), this work confirmed the validity of the questions raised at the end of 1986. It also confirmed the need for archaeological work to be undertaken conjointly with anthropological work in this region. However, at the beginning of 1987, the assumption was that the initiation of the anthropological project would address some of these problems and provide a forum for discussion of them. In fact, I had largely underestimated the community's need to discuss such matters, and while the formal component of anthropological work was scheduled for the beginning of the field season, this work extended throughout the entire period.

In spite of the questions surrounding it, the aims of the archaeological project remained at this stage to continue the work of locating and excavating sites that had potential to answer the questions that were framed in the original project. Specifically, this involved continuation of the excavation programme that had been planned for the previous year, including survey on Muri and Albany Island.
8.1 Archaeology in the community

Archaeological work involved survey of the north-west corner (around Peak Point) and a coastal reconnaissance of the west and north coasts, including Albany Island. The 'style' of undertaking surveys had, however, changed considerably from that of previous years. In the past, the survey team had worked with one or two individuals from the community. This year, I spent considerable periods of time in the community, working with a much larger group and a broader cross-section of the community. In addition, our interest was directed towards understanding the community's knowledge and interpretation of the landscape as much as the location of archaeological sites.

Several trips were made to an area called 'Marin' which is located in the north-west corner, north of Roonga Point. This area is known for the abundance and 'fatness' of the oysters that are located on the rocky shore. On such trips, we often stopped along the way to hunt (usually wild pig) or perhaps to collect one or other resource. At these stops and at our destination, I would undertake survey work. These trips were useful to local people, allowing them to supplement their diet with wild foods and to remove themselves from the stresses and strains of community life ('to get away from it all'). From my perspective, these trips provided me with an excellent environment in which my companions educated me on various aspects of their ways and beliefs, and facilitated on-the-spot consultation about anything that was found.

Using this method, we located a large scatter of artefacts at Marin. Our initial inspection suggested that the stone was quarried at the site and that artefacts were manufactured on the spot. However, only a preliminary recording of the site was undertaken at this stage as issues of ownership and custodial rights for this area had not been (and are still not) well defined. However, if the
preliminary assessment is correct, this is the only known example of this type of site in northern Cape York. When discussing this site and the general area with local people, we were told that Marin is in close proximity to a place that is important in contemporary beliefs of northern Cape York peoples. The exact location of this place and the nature of practices undertaken here are private, however it is associated with the supply and abundance of certain marine species. It was regularly used at the time of this fieldwork to ensure that these species are found in the surrounding waters.

At other times, my attempts to organise trips with community members was less successful. On such occasions, although I had previously made arrangements, they were unable to accompany me when we arrived to collect them. This may reflect the casualness of community life or the existence of other commitments. However, in analysing this behaviour over a period of time, I began to develop an idea that for some, such trips were a double-edged sword. On the one hand, while the opportunity to engage in this 'culture' work was welcomed by some, there was a certain level of responsibility associated with it. For example, at Sandago I had, with the best motives, requested permission to excavate the hearth features. Once I understood the beliefs that are associated with this area, and with these sites in particular, I realised that asking permission to excavate must have placed something of a burden on those to whom the request was directed. For one thing, this request had no precedent in northern Cape York. In other parts of Australia, Aboriginal people have had experience with mining which may have provided a focus for considering the effects of sub-surface disturbance. It occurred to me that others may not have been prepared to be placed in this position (see also Chapter 10). At the more particular level, by excavating part of the site, I was removing an inherent part of this place around which local stories and beliefs continue to be wound. The decision to allow this to happen requires considerable confidence
in one's spiritual competence and knowledge. In a society that has suffered
significant dislocation and in which the formal process of passing on of such
knowledge has been disrupted, this was perhaps asking too much.

As a result there were times when I undertook survey work with Susan
McIntyre, who was beginning a project on historical sites in 1987 and who was
assisting me in my work. From the community's perspective, working
unaccompanied was not as problematic as in previous years. This was because
firstly, we had some protection in dangerous areas because we had been
formally introduced to country. In addition, we had been given some
instruction in appropriate behaviours. One such trip involved the survey of
Lakes Bronto and Wicheura which, as previously indicated, are located a few
kilometres from the sites at Sandago to which they are linked in the
contemporary belief system. We located a large scatter of artefacts on the
shores of Lake Wicheura. This site has a broad range of good quality raw
materials present, as well as a range of artefact sizes, types and stages of
reduction. In this sense, and given that disturbance appeared to be minimal,
this was an important discovery in terms of the original research problems.
When working without community people, our method was to record only the
location of the site and a general description. This was considered to be the
maximum that could be undertaken in the ignorance of any constraints that
might exist. Interestingly, we had previously, although briefly visited these
lakes but had been unable to locate any sites. When I remarked on this to
members of the community, they assured me that this was because I had not
been 'introduced' at such times. It was only after such formalities that the 'old
people' would allow themselves (or evidence of their occupation) to be
revealed.

This year I was again planning to survey on both Muri and Albany Island. The
attempt to work on Muri was thwarted yet once more. On almost every occasion that I had tried to reach Muri, I had been told that the weather was too bad and/or the crossing too rough. While the sea between the mainland and Muri is indeed treacherous and the weather unpredictable, I also began to understand that there was a reluctance on the part of most people to visit Muri. As I had discovered in the previous year, few people feel confident about going there because it is associated with the spirit world. Certainly many stories abound about experiences that people have had either on or in the vicinity of Muri. It occurred to me that while the environmental considerations were undoubtedly an important factor in preventing us from surveying on the island, it was perhaps also asking rather too much of people to work in this area. At this point, I abandoned plans to work there until this could be clarified. Since this time, McIntyre, who has since undertaken work on Muri, has largely confirmed this. She reports that while there is general concensus that the area is dangerous, some people have been willing to risk that danger in order to exploit resources. However, such people generally do not venture further onto Muri than the littoral zone and all report levels of discomfort and/or misadventure (Susan McIntyre, pers. comm.). The survey of Albany Island, did however, prove to be successful. Several sites were located on the island including a number of rockshelters that had either art, archaeological deposit or, at least in one case, both. The latter appeared to have some potential in terms of a stratified deposit.

We again visited Red Point, travelling along the west coast by boat. On this trip, we stopped at each of the seven 'rivers' which are the landmarks of this (Seven Rivers) country. Several sparse scatters of shell were located at such points, although the evidence was extremely meagre. We did not, however, relocate the exposures or blowouts observed from the air in 1985. While the archaeological evidence of past occupations remained largely hidden from us
on this trip, the landscape was imbued with the presence of its past (and present) occupants through the information relayed by our community 'guides'. As the boat made its way south, we were shown places that mark the stopping place or travels of Chiviri and other story places; an area that was known as a fighting ground between the Seven Rivers and Red Island people; and places where people were known to camp either in the distant past or historical times. Again, on reaching Red Point, the local people who accompanied us ensured our safety in the area by communicating with the supernatural forces that occupy this area.

At the end of this season in the field, approximately 70 sites had been located and the range of known site types expanded. Importantly, sites that had the potential to address some of the problems framed in the original project had been located. These included the site at Lake Wicheura, a number of sites (particularly one rockshelter) on Albany Island and the 'W' site near Jackey Jackey Creek. Most of these were located within what could be broadly defined as the east coast strip and it was now possible to envisage the development of an archaeological picture of life in this area prior to European colonisation. Ironically, as more sites appeared in the landscape, my desire to use this material in a traditional archaeological manner decreased. I began to feel constrained by a developing consciousness of the landscape as the community constructs it. In this interpretation, the past is embedded in the landscape, through stories, beliefs and historical associations. The archaeological sites (like those at Sandago) are important in this landscape because they link the past (both distant and more recent) with the present.

As I came to know the community better and to glimpse their response to people from outside the community (especially Whites) the more implausible it seemed to rely upon 'consultation' as a means of determining Aboriginal
interest in sites. For one thing, the notion of consultation presupposes a relationship which does not recognise the hegemony of western perspectives. This is obviously not the case in contemporary Australian society and perhaps especially in regions such as Cape York that have only just emerged from the reserve system. This is further elaborated in Chapters 9 and 11.

8.2 Anthropological investigations

The anthropological work was initially designed to provide information on community composition and people's affiliation to each other and to country. This work had three major components:

1. the Cowal Creek (Injinoo) Country Survey in which a number of interviews were undertaken with community members;
2. community workshops at which a range of cultural matters were raised, including the issue of tribal affiliation in a contemporary context and the collection, storage and dissemination of cultural material;
3. the production of a report which describes the results of this work and of a register of the tribal affiliations of those that had been identified in the course of the project (Fuary and Greer 1993; Fuary 1993).

Both the report and the register are viewed by the authors as preliminary and dynamic documents that may be added to as the community sees fit.

8.2.1 The Cowal Creek (Injinoo) Country Survey

This project involved conducting a number of interviews with (usually) older members of the community. These interviews focused on the life history of the person being interviewed, on how they identified themselves in terms of tribal affiliation, on others they perceived as sharing this affiliation and on lines of descent. In addition, information on land, including approximate boundaries of traditional territories, place-names, sites of significance, and appropriate practices or conduct associated with sites or tracts of land were also addressed.
The majority of these were undertaken in 1987 by the present author and Maureen Fuary. However, additional material was recorded in 1992 by Fuary (Fuary and Greer 1993). While we were largely directed by the community as to who to interview, our results indicate that they were ensuring that each 'tribal group' was well represented.

As a result of this work, we were able to put together at least a rudimentary picture of pre-contact life. We defined the major 'tribal' groupings and the way in which they related to one another. We attempted to define languages and local organisation and to place this evidence within the broader anthropological pattern for Cape York. We defined leading figures and families (both past and present) within each of these and collected information on technology, food and medicine, seasonal activities and land management practices, relationships with flora and fauna (especially crocodiles), and marriage, feuding, death and disposal of the dead. We discovered that there was a considerable amount of information relating to Frank Jardine and the establishment and occupation of Somerset (see also McIntyre In Prep.). We discovered that people really enjoyed relating stories of the 'old village', that is, the establishment and settlement of Cowal Creek or Injinoo. They told us their experiences in World War II and we heard about life on the reserve. The emphasis on what might be termed 'colonial history' led to the realisation that while people were drawn from different 'traditional' groups, they had more recently forged a new identity. This had traditional affiliations as a base but had been constructed out of the collective colonial experience of northern Cape York peoples.

8.2.2 Culture workshops

The work undertaken in the anthropological project was also responsible for introducing the community to the notion of 'culture' workshops. The first of
these was conducted in August of 1987 and was ostensibly aimed at eliciting
the community's response to the issues of the collection, storage and
dissemination of information collected in the Cowal Creek Country Survey.
The workshop focused on the notion that the community was in need of a
keeping place for cultural information and the idea of a Cultural Resources
Centre was born. As well as providing storage for information relating to the
people of Cowal Creek-Injinoo, the Centre would be a base from which the
community could take responsibility for and control over the use of their
cultural and historical material by researchers, consultants and other bodies.
This Centre has not yet been established, chiefly due to a lack of available
funding, although the community radio station has taken on some of this role.
In addition, since 1990 the community has had Community Rangers who,
amongst other activities, continue the work of collecting cultural information.

The workshop did, however, serve other functions. Firstly, it provided the
community with a forum at which 'cultural matters' could be discussed. A
surprisingly large number of people availed themselves of this opportunity.
addition, the need people felt for this was expressed by the fact that although
many of the participants were elderly, the discussion continued for over six
hours. Even after the meeting formally broke up, discussions continued among
small groups in the outdoor sitting areas of many households. In particular,
several of the younger people in the community were surprised and interested
in what they had learned from their elders. Thus, the workshop (and those that
have been undertaken subsequently) has facilitated, to some extent, a revival of
interest in culture within the community.

The workshop provided several insights into the community. One of these
involved the contemporary manner in which one's traditional affiliations might
be determined. Before European colonisation, traditional marriage patterns
prescribed which of the groups in northern Cape York could marry. For example, Seven Rivers people could marry McDonnel people; McDonnel people could also marry their Whitesand neighbours to the east and so on. The breakdown of these patterns (i.e. 'wrong marriages') which began in the settlement approximately 50 years ago has resulted in a degree of uncertainty amongst some young people as to which group they should align themselves with. Several times at the workshop an older person decided which 'way' a person who found themselves in such a position should 'go'. In this sense it provided a forum for the consideration of such matters and confirmed the authority of older people to determine such things.

The workshop also provided an opportunity for those who had been interviewed in the project to come together. Given that it occurred well after the period in which the initial interviews had been undertaken, people had plenty of time to think about the process and to reassess and/or confirm their own knowledge. For these people and the others who participated, the workshop prompted something of a cultural revival and a focus for notions of community identity. A flavour running through this workshop was the importance of one's traditional affiliations, and the promotion of a community identity, 'Injinoo', that rests on this base. The importance that people place on the history of the settlement is perhaps evidence of the latter.

8.2.3 Injinoo Community Register

Family trees have been drawn on the basis of these interviews and a draft register of all those who appear in the family trees has been prepared by Maureen Fuary for the Injinoo Lands Trust, now the Apudhama Association (Fuary 1993). The register outlines the name of the individual, when they were born, their tribal affiliation and the names and tribal affiliations of both mother and father. The register has approximately 1000 entries, including people living
in the community today as well as those who occur in their genealogies. Although by no means complete, the register provides the community with a source of information concerning traditional affiliation which can be used in establishing ownership and custodial responsibility. As I had discovered myself, the absence of such a document and/or clearly defined knowledge about such matters renders the notion of 'consultation' extremely problematic.

8.2.4 Anthropological work that remained at the end of 1987

At the end of 1987, it was necessary to take stock of work that had been completed, work that had to be done and the implications for the archaeological project. During this period in the field, we had undertaken interviews with a number of people from the community, but we were aware that there were many more to do. Moreover, the task of transcribing, analysing and formulating the information that we had collected was still ahead of us. It seemed that my plan of collecting baseline anthropological information to serve the consultation process was overly simplistic. Certainly, the projects were taking on a life of their own and would require work over a much longer period.

In terms of archaeological interest, the East Coast strip remained as a central focus. Some 'speakers' for this area had been identified and we had established working relationships with some of these people. Problems relating to the identification of traditional owners had been largely addressed and therefore 'consultation' in the usual sense of the term was now possible. However, as my understanding of the community deepened and the complexity of the traditional, historical and contemporary situations became apparent, several layers of problems began to emerge. One of the major tasks that lay ahead was to put together the social history of northern Cape York. This is presented in the following section.
8.3 History and identity in northern Cape York

The relationship between history and identity is sometimes misconstrued as history providing a series of ‘cameos’, a series of chronological representations of identity that can be traced in a lineal fashion. In this account, however, the relationship is perceived to be different. The history of a people, including precocial and colonial experiences is the backdrop and the impetus for the creation of contemporary identities. It also explains the existence of multiple, mutually inclusive identities that are only invoked within particular contexts. This concept of identity has particular relevance for the people of northern Cape York and in this work, for their contemporary notions of heritage (see also Chapters 10 and 11).

Contemporary communities in northern Cape York appear, on the surface, to be an amorphous collection of peoples from as far north as Saibai (an island on the Papua New Guinea border in the Torres Strait) and from further south on the mainland. Some of the groups who currently occupy this area appear to have had no association in precontact times and their shared residence is a feature of successive policies of ‘relocation’ (see also Chapter 4). A preliminary reading of the area typically focuses on cultural differences and binary oppositions: ‘Aboriginal’ versus ‘Torres Strait Islander’, ‘gatherer-hunter’ versus ‘horticulturalist’, or one community or ‘village’ as opposed to another. Even within some communities, differences exist in terms of ‘traditional’ affiliations, one ‘tribe’ as opposed to another. However, it is also useful to look at the historical experiences of these people and the way in which this has worked to produce a contemporary identity, that is only just emerging, that accommodates all of these differences. In the following sections, these differences and commonalities are discussed in relation the contemporary processes of identity construction.
8.3.1 Traditional affiliations

As previously noted, Moore (1979) undertook research in northern Cape York as part of his broader study. This work attempted to reconstruct ethnographic information on pre-contact groups, their relationships and early contact history. Moore based this reconstruction on the journals of O.W. Brierley, who was an artist on the surveying expedition of the HMS Rattlesnake. In particular, he focused on Brierley's recordings of the recollections of Barbara Thompson, a young woman who was shipwrecked in the vicinity of Cape York in 1844. Thompson lived with people from the neighbouring Prince of Wales Island (Muralag) for approximately 5 years, at the end of which she was taken on board the Rattlesnake. Thompson's account relates mainly to the way of life of the Kaurareg, the people of Muralag. However, it also indicates relationships between different traditional groups, including those on northern Cape York.

In addition, Moore (1979) has included the accounts of Jag and Kennett who were missionaries at the troubled settlement of Somerset for a short period from 1867 to 1868. The missionaries were sympathetic to the local people, especially in the face of the Somerset administration, and recorded aspects of their life and history. Moore also compared the ethnographic evidence extracted from these sources with that from the Cambridge Expedition Reports (see Haddon 1890a, 1890b, 1893, 1904-35).

In addition to his documentary work, Moore's concern in his field research was to find archaeological expression of places that were identified in these records. His location of archaeological evidence in places such as Port Lihou on Muralag and at Evans Bay and Red Island Point on the mainland gave authority to the ethnographic accounts. His test excavations in these areas and the radiocarbon estimates obtained, provisionally extend the temporal framework for some of
these observations to around 600 years ago.

Moore's work provides some information on the tribal groupings of people in the immediate vicinity of Cape York. Thus, he notes the presence of the Gudang who lived between Cape York and Fly Point, the Gumakudin whose territory went from Cape York along the west coast, probably to the present site of Injinoo, the Unduyamo who occupied the stretch from Fly Point to Jackey Jackey Creek and the Yadhaigana whose country was between Jackey Jackey Creek and Escape River (Moore 1979: 259). Moore also provides information on totemic clans, land ownership, kinship, marriage, death, the rearing of children and means of social control on the basis of his combined sources.

Sharp (1981, 1992) has also undertaken some fieldwork in the region. In the earlier paper (1981), she briefly describes historical events leading up to the establishment of the first settlement in northern Cape York (Cowel Creek or Injinoo). She also notes the links between these mainland people and the people of Kubin on Moa Island in the Torres Strait. The latter are largely Kaurareg and were originally shifted from Port Lihou on Muralag. Through a succession of 'relocations' they were finally able to settle at Kubin. In this paper, Sharp is chiefly concerned with the story of one man, Wees Nawia, whose life appeared to Sharp to embody the Kubin people's 'spirit of independence'.

Sharp (1992) focuses on northern Cape York and particularly the early contact period, from 1864 up to the present day. In this work, she is chiefly concerned with preferring 'Aboriginal' accounts of this contact and in so doing, redressing what she sees as an imbalance in the way this history has previously been presented. Sharp provides information on precontact traditional affiliations and, like Moore, comments on relationships between groups, places of
importance and the interactions between the indigenous people and the new residents at Somerset. The latter included hostile relations with the Jardines as well as the peaceful terms which characterised the interactions with the missionaries, Jag and Kennett. In many ways, however, Sharp offers little that is new when compared with previous accounts. She does, however, give an account of the establishment of Injinoo and the development of contemporary identities in this region. She devotes the fourth part of this work to the interconnected stories of Jack McLaren (the owner of a coconut plantation on the west coast) and the Wymara family. She uses ethnographic recollections interlaced with literary construction to provide an account which, although unstated, appears to Sharp to typify the stories of northern Cape York peoples.

The material in this and following sections (unless otherwise indicated) is largely drawn from Fuary and Greer (1993). The work differs from previous accounts in a number of ways. Firstly, its focus is primarily northern Cape York, based on extended periods of fieldwork within the community of Injinoo over a long time period. This contrasts with the emphasis in Moore which is more sharply focused on the Kaurareg and that in Sharp which is largely concerned with the stories of particular individuals and the way in which these might illustrate more general historical and sociological processes. Secondly, fieldwork on which this account is based was anthropological in nature. In contrast, Moore concentrated on documentary sources, supplemented by archaeological fieldwork. Sharp’s approach is historical in orientation and while she did undertake some ethnographic interviews, the scope and nature of the anthropological project allows for a deeper and more representative understanding. For example, Sharp’s account of the establishment of the village of Injinoo would appear to be based on a limited number of versions of these events. In contrast, Fuary and Greer (1993) identify problems with this version and indicate potential areas for further work.
Fuary and Greer (1993) was produced at the request of the Injinoo community. Although there was no specific brief, it was intended to have a range of uses including community education and it was meant to serve as a basis for further research associated with claims to land. As such, it is an account drawn from Injinoo people, for Injinoo people. This is evident in the terms used in this report. For example, terms used to describe tribal groups are those that are in current usage within the community today. Often these are what appear to be 'European' terms (e.g. Seven Rivers or McDonnell River) and while it might have been tempting to wring 'traditional' or 'Aboriginal' terms and names from the ethnographic record, this was not done. Moreover, it would not have been easy to do given the weight of colonial experience in this region. Attempts to tie precontact and present groups in this manner are, to a large extent, obsolete. The terms that are used by people to describe themselves today represent contemporary notions of affiliation and as such have most cultural value today.

Language, traditional groups and relationships

Linguistically, the people of northern Cape York are placed in the broader Northern Paman language family, which has several dialects. It seems that before extended and prolonged contact occurred, there were three major 'tribal' groupings. These were the Seven Rivers people who occupied the west coast between the Jardine and Ducie Rivers; the Sandbeach people who occupied the long narrow strip along the east coast, extending from Cape York itself as far south as Cape Grenville; and the McDonnell River people who occupied the inland territory which was sandwiched between the other two (see Figure 3). In some cases, it has been possible to define smaller local and economic units within these groups. For example, the Sandbeach people were further subdivided into northern and southern groups. The 'Whitesand' people occupied the southern section from Cape Grenville to Cairncross Island and the
Figure 3: Approximate customary domains of precontact groups, northern Cape York (after Fuary and Greer 1993).
northern group's territory extended from this point to Cape York itself. Within this northern group, smaller named groups can be defined, e.g. the 'Red Island', 'Somerset' and 'Kingcross' peoples who appear to have had close relations. However, links between groups were not restricted to mainland Australia. For example, the Somerset people were also closely connected with people from Muri and through them with the Kaurareg of Muralag in the Torres Strait.

In addition, while some neighbours had friendly relations, others revolved (at least at some point in the past) around conflict. For example, Red Island people had a problematic relationship with Seven Rivers people, who were their southern neighbours on the west coast. These two groups were known to dispute fiercely their boundary and the locations of fighting grounds are still known today. McDonnell or 'inside' people, sandwiched as they were between the Seven Rivers people to the west and the Sandbeach people to the east, appear to have had good relations with both sets of neighbours. They took marriage partners from the Seven Rivers group and may also have had a similar arrangement with Whitesand people. Three major alliances can be defined just prior to prolonged European contact. These were a northern network that extended out into the Torres Strait from the Cape York-Somerset people; a southern network that linked Seven Rivers to McDonnell people and McDonnell to Whitesand; and a third network that connected all Sandbeach people along the narrow eastern coastal strip. In addition, east coast people were part of the trade network that extended from New Guinea through the Torres Strait and down the east coast, at least as far as Flinders Island (see McCarthy 1939; Beckett 1987; Fuary 1991). Muri would appear to have been a major point at which trade took place.

8.3.2 European contact and settlement in northern Cape York

Moore (1979) has summarised the early voyages associated with survey,
discovery and rescue that occurred in the northern Cape York region from 1836. As previously noted, however, Moore was mostly concerned with the recollections of Barbara Thompson. Thompson's five years with the Kaurareg (from 1844 till 1849) represent the most sustained early contact in the region. Just after this however, the peoples of northern Cape York entered a period of enormous upheaval and dislocation, especially as a result of the beche-de-mer and pearling industries which began in earnest in this area in the middle of the 19th century.

Greer and Fuary (1993) have noted the many affronts suffered by coastal peoples in Cape York in relation to these activities. The nature of this contact was particularly violent and included the abduction of men and women who were sometimes released hundreds of kilometres from home, usually because they were ill and therefore of no more use. Another result was the introduction and spread of a number of infectious diseases which were previously unknown to these peoples. In a relatively short space of time, there was an inevitable interruption and deterioration of traditional life. Ironically, the 'rich environment' of coastal Cape York, that supported intensive occupation and semi-sedentary populations (Chase and Sutton 1981), had become an extremely dangerous place to live. In the interior beyond the coasts, disruption to traditional life was also occurring as a result of the expansion of the cattle industry, which robbed people of access to and use of their traditional lands. As on the coasts, small bands of survivors tended to group together.

It is difficult to imagine the extent of European activity in the area during this early period. Today, visitors to Cape York are impressed by its remoteness and distance from mainstream Australian society and its status as an 'adventure' holiday destination. However, in the past, shipping played a much larger role in both personal travel and the movement of goods. In fact, this area was so
busy that the reminiscences of McLaren (1926) who established a coconut plantation on the west coast in 1911 were entitled *My Crowded Solitude*, a reference to the number of visitors he had from passing vessels.

There were two main European establishments in the study area in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The first of these was the government settlement of Somerset, located approximately 9 km southeast of Cape York and established by the Jardine family who arrived in 1864. Within the space of a decade, the government post had shifted to Thursday Island and Somerset taken over by Frank Jardine. Jardine had extensive interests in the area, which included the cattle station which had a base at 'Lockerbie', a coconut plantation at Somerset itself and a range of other ventures. As previously noted, in the early part of the century, Jardine acquired a partner in the 'Lockerbie' enterprise and the Holland family settled there.

Within northern Cape York, contemporary views of Frank Jardine paint him as something of a despot. He is said to have 'kidnapped' a number of people, including locals and 'native people' from boats to work at Somerset. Some accounts state that he 'blew up' ships in the passage. He is said to have shot people without reason and that he would shoot someone in the back after giving them tobacco. There are several stories of massacres and at least two of these are associated with specific places. In one instance, he is said to have ridden on horseback to a camp that was located on the current site of the Bamaga basketball courts. Only women, children and old people were present, but it is said that he shot and killed all who were there. Some people say that he was especially keen on killing women. In the other instance, he is said to have killed all the east coast people, perhaps because he saw that their yam pounding stones were made of gold. He is said to have forced them to dig a hole and then buried them. The burial place of these people is thought to be
close by Somerset (Fuary and Greer 1993).

Jardine is said to have 'travelled around' in a full suit of armour so that he couldn't be speared. When he slept, he left his glasses on so that people would think that he was still awake. When he was dying, it is said that his body was covered in sores and that maggots emerged from his body. He didn't want to rest after death and stated on his death bed that he was to be buried either sitting in a chair or standing up so that his spirit could 'walk'. In the late 1940s, three government men came to Somerset in response to complaints from people about Jardine's spirit bothering them. They put cement over the hole in the top of his grave where his spirit is said to emerge (Fuary and Greer 1993). Even today, northern Cape York people are wary and nervous when camping overnight at Somerset.

Such accounts do not go uncontested in some European versions of Jardine's story. Establishing the 'truth' of such accounts is not, however, important in the present discussion of identity. It is acknowledged that the accounts today may represent a conflation of many stories of European atrocities in the region, some attributable to Jardine while others might not be. The important point is that the stories belie the nature of contact and early colonial experience for northern Cape York peoples. The virulence of the stories and their focus on violent interaction suggests the events that northern Cape York peoples have endured and remembered.

8.3.3 The establishment of Injinoo

As previously noted, Injinoo was established in the early part of this century as an Aboriginal response to the drastic effects of the European presence in the region. Population numbers had dwindled significantly and there was a need for protection from the exploitation and losses associated with successive waves
of the beche-de-mer, pearling and cattle industries. More specifically, there
had been at least two large massacres of people in the area and other incidents
of homicide which must have had a significant effect on the populations of the
different tribal groups. At about the same time, a group of people were
working with Jack McLaren (1926) in establishing the coconut plantation at
Simpson Bay. These people were living a semi-permanent existence at this site
and were involved in growing vegetables for domestic use. A combination of
all these factors resulted in the establishment of a village which provided
greater security and improved chances of survival.

Questions remain over whether the village was established by northern Cape
York peoples themselves or whether there was some intervention. Fuary and
Greer (1993) suggested that Jardine might have had something to do with it as a
means of removing the remaining Sandbeach people in the Somerset area (but
see McIntyre In Prep. for an alternative explanation based on new evidence).
While many of the Somerset people were either wiped out or no longer in
residence, Sandbeach people (some of whom worked for McLaren) still kept
something of the seasonal schedule of movements which saw them moving up
and down along the coasts. Whoever was behind the establishment, Aboriginal
people played a leading role in bringing people into the new settlement and in
its running. The village was set up by people from Seven Rivers country, and in
particular, Alec Whitesand (also known as Alec Mamoose) and by the
amorphous groups of Sandbeach people, some of whom had gathered in camps
at Utingu (with McLaren) and at Red Island Point. This occurred sometime
between 1911 and 1916. The McDonnell people or 'inside' people appear to
have been more troubled by the notion of the settlement, coming and going a
number of times and finally being brought in against their will in the 1930s
(Fuary and Greer 1993).
While the establishment of the village is largely seen as something of a survival measure, the people who settled in the original village were not necessarily well-disposed towards one another. For example, as previously noted, the Red Island people were said to have built their palm trunk houses on raised poles, with removable ladders, because of their distrust and fear of Seven Rivers people. On the other hand, McDonnell and Seven Rivers people had traditionally been allies and still sought marriage partners within each other's groups. There is still a memory at Injinoo of the first 'wrong' marriage, that is a marriage for which the partners were deemed by precontact standards to be unsuitable. This occurred in the 1930s or 1940s. McDonnell people also had close ties with their eastern neighbours, the Sandbeach people. At the time of its establishment, and up until the late 1920s and 1930s, people in the village fought with spear and woomera.

In 1923, a government teacher and a missionary (both from Torres Strait) were sent to the settlement, reputedly at the request of the people (Sharp 1992). In the 1930s, another Island teacher, Jomen Tamwoy, arrived with his family at Injinoo. He spent the rest of his life there and is buried in a place of honour in the village. His descendants as well as those of his wife's family (a brother and a sister also came to Injinoo) have married into the community establishing a strong personal link between Injinoo and Badu, their 'home' island in the Torres Strait. It should be remembered however that a link with Island people (but especially the Kaurareg) was well established in the precontact period. This contact has continued and Kaurareg people still live in the village and have married into northern Cape York families.

It was in this period, from the 1920s on, that precontact patterns of traditional (and perhaps ceremonial) life began to change. This is not to say that these things were 'broken down' or 'lost', but rather that the way of maintaining and
transmitting knowledge was forced to change. There is a memory in the community of the Island missionary taking the contents of the old men's pouch or bag (secret objects used in sorcery) and throwing them into the sea. In his mind he was ridding the settlement of such old ways, although it is probably more accurate to say that this resulted in a submersion of such activities rather than their extinguishment.

The most relevant aspect of this period of Injinoo history here is the emergence of a collective consciousness, the beginnings of a notion of 'Injinoo'. This notion was built upon the collective need for survival and the need to 'get along' under the circumstances of permanent settlement in, what was for many, country that was not their own. For example, the breakdown of precontact marriage arrangements marked the beginning of new marriage rules which were predicated on the notion of the village as an entity. The adoption of Christianity provided people with a common ontology which again provided a 'glue' with which to draw the disparate threads together. The price of this was the overt disappearance of precontact ontology, although it is more accurate to say that while specific elements of knowledge disappeared, the most important elements have remained until the present day. The most important change that occurred was perhaps in the transmission of knowledge. It would appear that today such knowledge has been handed down to key individuals on the basis of traditional affiliation, but perhaps more importantly, the level of interest they show in such matters. It can be reasonably assumed that in the past, transmission of knowledge occurred on a much broader basis.

8.3.4 World War II

During World War II, the large defence base set up in northern Cape York was principally set up by United States personnel, but was later taken over by the Australian Army. Many local men were involved in the transport of goods and
services between Torres Strait and the mainland during the War, and for those who were not directly involved, everyday life was transformed. The large number of military personnel increased the population enormously and the interactions that resulted were sometimes good and sometimes bad. The War bought the 'pictures' to Cowal Creek for the first time and roads were built in this period for military purposes. On the other hand, it also bought alcohol in the form of methylated spirits, which the soldiers taught the locals how to drink. McIntyre (In Prep.) is currently researching this period of northern Cape York's history. She is focusing on Aboriginal accounts of the War, its significance to them and the contemporary significance of the abundant World War II sites that are found scattered over the landscape.

The significance of the War in terms of identity was that it provided the people of northern Cape York with a platform from which they could reflexively view their position in relation to the world beyond. It provided them with a new view of black-white relations when confronted with black American soldiers who dressed and acted like white people. It emphasised their 'sameness' in relation to the newcomers whose habits, dress and knowledge of the world was vastly different.

8.3.5 The establishment of the Reserve
The four other communities in northern Cape York were established following World War II. The first of these to be set up was Bamaga. In 1946 or 1947, a group of Saibai islanders are said to have voluntarily moved to the mainland, following inundation of their island. They initially settled at Muttee Head, moving to 'Bamaga' (or Ichuru as local people knew it) in 1949. An uneasiness about settling away-from the sea led to the establishment of the small coastal village at Seisia near Red Island Point at about the same time.
In the 1960s, the other groups were 'relocated' to this part of northern Cape York. The Mapoon people were shipped to Red Island Point and then taken to the present site of New Mapoon (which was then known as 'Charcoal Burner'). This was followed shortly after by the relocation of the people from Port Stewart to Alau, and the establishment of the present village of Umagico.

In order to provide a social framework upon which these disparate groups of people could function, the Queensland Government revised the reserve that had previously been created, forming the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA). This was a reserve of some 39,462 hectares that encompassed all of these peoples. It was administered by Queensland Government staff based at Bamaga and the communities in northern Cape York came under the powerful eye of the 'Manager'. In keeping with the Government's previous policies, each of the communities (except Seisia which was seen as a dormitory of Bamaga) had a community council and, as previously noted, representatives from each of these formed the Combined Northern Peninsula Area council. This was nominally the voice of local people in administrative matters although the NPA Council meetings were also attended by the Manager. In the new regime, Bamaga became the focus of government and offices, schools, banks, staff housing, a farm, a sawmill and other light 'industries'. The Queensland Government had long favoured Island people over Aboriginal people and the building-up of Bamaga is largely seen as a reflection of this. The only overt recognition of Aboriginality on the part of the Government was the funding and staging of the Laura Dance Festival, held annually for all Cape York (and later other) communities. This, however, was largely the initiative of the Aboriginal Rangers who worked in Archaeology Branch and was perhaps one of their few successful attempts at highlighting Aboriginal culture.

In 1984 when I first commenced fieldwork in the area, these communities were
bound together by familial ties yet antagonisms and grievances were evident. The former built upon previous notions of collectiveness that developed out of the experience of establishing and maintaining the village of Injinoo. In this instance however the new marriage and familial ties were extending beyond precontact connections. In this respect, the Mapoon people were somewhat different as they were certainly neighbours to the Seven Rivers group. Moreover, it is thought that when the Mapoon mission was established, some Seven Rivers people had 'gone in'. The Port Stewart and Saibai peoples were, however, beyond previous alliances and new terms had to be negotiated to accommodate this. In this sense, the collective experience of the Reserve and the circumstances of life 'under the Act' provided the experiences upon which the new patterns of relationships could be accepted and another layer of identity was added. However, the tensions that are inherent in the grouping of peoples by force and those created and/or exacerbated by government remained. The 1980s was an era of dramatic social change for the people of northern Cape York. This included the breakdown of the Reserve system and the interventionist approach of government and the development of communities as self-governing entities. This is discussed in the following section.

8.3.6 After the reserve

In 1982, the Queensland Government led by Joh Bjelke-Peterson finally submitted to federal, international and internal pressure concerning the legislation and conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people in this state (McKeown 1992). The new legislation allowed for the creation of Deeds of Grant in Trust (DOGITs) to be proclaimed in place of reserves. While the DOGITs fell short of freehold title, they were a vast improvement on the reserve system and gave communities the opportunity for self-government. The Government was, however, somewhat tardy in undertaking this process. For
example, the Injinoo DOGIT was not handed over until 1987.

The granting of DOGITs had several implications for interactions at the personal and community levels in northern Cape York. In one sense, communities were in competition with each other. The carving up of the old NPA reserve was a process of negotiation and persistence and the defining and articulation of old and new associations to land. Injinoo made claim to large tracts of land on the basis of its status as the focus of peoples who had traditional affiliations to the former reserve land. Communities like Bamaga, Seisia, New Mapoon and Uimagico who had either left or been removed from their traditional lands had only small areas (outside of their village precincts) included in their DOGITs. On the face of it, this division appeared equitable, however resentments smouldered, especially in those communities where Injinoo people had married and maintained residence.

Although always present, identities associated with membership of particular 'communities' were emphasised during this period. This was enhanced by the 'coming up' of the communities under self-government. The Councils were under enormous pressure to take on the economic and other responsibilities that were previously those of government, and to do a better job. Many of those who held official positions were extremely taxed at the range and quantity of demands on their time. At Injinoo, the initial aim was for economic self-sufficiency, and thus over a period of years several ventures (such as the community store, petrol station etc.) were established. A large community hall was built with the assistance of a band of English young people from the Operation Raleigh organisation. This was an interesting period in the community, especially as some of the group were black. While previously present in the sense of an awareness of black music (whether reggae, American motown etc.), new styles of music and perhaps also a new international
consciousness of being 'black' became evident. This was especially evident amongst the younger people who had most recreational contact with the group.

Today, the Injinoo community (as is true of the other communities in northern Cape York) has both Island and Aboriginal residents and many who have claims to being both. I rapidly became aware of this 'dualism' early in my fieldwork. On learning that someone had 'Island' ancestors or relatives, I would naively assume that they were 'Islander', sometimes seeking confirmation of this. I soon discovered, however, that people's responses were often contextual and determined by the conversation at hand. Frequently I later learned that the same individuals had Aboriginal affiliations. In spite of this cultural diversity, the community defines itself as 'Aboriginal'. This is perhaps partly because the legislation requires such definition, but is perhaps also a statement about the shifting balance of power, both within the region generally and also within the community. The artificiality of the distinction between 'Aboriginal' and 'Torres Strait Island' people is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in this region. It is extremely unlikely that this broad distinction was ever made in precontact times. Groups were differentiated, however the distinctions may have been based on affiliations at a particular point in time or for a particular purpose.

In the 1990s, a number of developments both within and outside the region have impacted upon northern Cape York peoples. The first of these was the introduction of the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* and the *Torres Strait Islanders Land Act 1991*. This legislation allowed for the transfer of DOGITs, reserves and the shires of Mornington Island and Arukun to inalienable freehold title of their land. This legislation has been criticised both in terms of its scope and the lack of consultation prior to its introduction (see Brennan 1991a, 1991 b; McKeown 1992). One of the most relevant aspects of this legislation for northern Cape York peoples is, however, the broad definition of ownership provided by the
Acts. These are traditional affiliation, historical association or economic and cultural viability. Traditional affiliation refers to precontact connections to land and spiritual associations; historical association refers to a group that has been associated with land for a substantial period; and economic or cultural viability refers to the way in which the granting of a claim might restore, maintain or enhance the group's self-development and cultural integrity (McKeown 1992: 7). McKeown (1992: 8) acknowledges that in this respect, the Queensland legislation is an improvement on the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act of 1976, which has a very limited definition of ownership. However, he has also illustrated the range of potential conflicts that might follow from this broad definition. This includes the lack of definition of 'traditional affiliation' which might be interpreted in a number of ways (e.g. ceremonial connections versus clan ownership). However, he considers the 'historical association' clause could be even more problematic given the number of 'removals' and 'relocations' which have occurred in Queensland. He states:

A more likely conflict is one between competing claims of historical association. In a paper to an Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies conference on Aboriginal land rights in 1981, Trigger suggested that the two most likely bases for a claim on the ground of historical association in Queensland would be that the claimed land was country the claimants were removed from or that it was country the claimants were removed to... Given the amount of forced removal of Queensland Aborigines to government and mission settlements...the probability of both sets of claimants emerging for the same piece of land would seem quite high.

Given the history of northern Cape York peoples, scattered as it is with events and periods of dislocation and relocation, the potential for this type of conflict in this area would appear to be relatively high. Again, this external factor exacerbated the prominence of 'community identities'.

The second development was the devolution of the old Commonwealth
Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) and the creation of ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission). While some individuals had previously been on national committees, the DAA had never had a really strong presence in northern Cape York. This was largely due to the stranglehold that the State Government had via the reserves and the level of control of peoples lives that this afforded. The establishment of ATSIC, allowed more indigenous involvement and given the demise of the State presence, gave communities the opportunity to work within a co-ordinated framework that operated at the national level. In some ways, this provided them with an outlook that went beyond the immediate region which, due to physical and social isolation, had previously not been possible.

The third development was the establishment of the Cape York Land Council. While inevitable tensions surely exist between overarching land councils and communities, the CYLC has provided a funded and resourced body to negotiate with governments and others on aspects related to land management and ownership. In northern Cape York, the CYLC has also provided a mediating role for communities that had become increasingly distanced by historical and legislative events.

The High Court judgement in the Mabo vs. the State of Queensland case, which legally denied the notion of *terra nullius*, and the development of the federal *Native Title Act* have also had implications for people in northern Cape York. At the national level, the Mabo decision may have had the effect of unifying indigenous peoples through the recognition of their rights to land. However, at the local level, and largely because of the policies of the Queensland Government and particularly the history of relocations, *Native Title* claims have, to some extent, exacerbated the existing tensions between communities in northern Cape York.
External events were not, however, the only catalysts for change. At Injinoo, in response to feelings within the community that all of those with traditional affiliations should be recognised, there was a movement to include all northern Cape York peoples, whether resident at Injinoo or elsewhere, in decision-making. This resulted in the setting up of the Apudhama Association, which is open to all northern Cape York elders and cuts across community boundaries. Apudhama are recognised as the responsible body for matters concerning culture and land and to whom primary consultation regarding such matters is now relegated.

8.3.7 Land, culture and history: a summary
The people of northern Cape York have had a minimum of 130 years of social upheaval and dislocation. The period from approximately 1860 to the early 1900s must have been extremely hard for the northern Sandbeach groups who lost land and life at the expense of the establishment of Somerset, on top of the atrocities associated with the pearling and beche-de-mer industries. The latter however seriously affected groups on both the east and west coasts and those inland, the McDonnel people similarly suffered as the telegraph line extended northwards and the cattle industry expanded.

It has been approximately 80 years since the first wave of survivors settled at Injinoo. The intervention of the Government and the church some sixty years ago has meant that specific knowledge of traditional matters such as ceremonies, song, dance, language, stories etc tends to be retained by only by certain (usually) older people within each tribal group. The way in which such knowledge is (and has been) passed on within the community context is not clear. In precontact times, such knowledge may have been passed onto a much broader cross-section of the society through formal procedures (e.g. initiation).
Today, it may well relate to one's 'seniority' within a particular tribal grouping, but is also related to the level of interest shown by an individual in such matters. Such individuals are perhaps the 'speakers' who are the language and knowledge holders for particular parts of the landscape (see also Chapter 7).

However, there is a strong sense of the community, which is today expressed in the use of the name 'Injinoo'. This place name derives from the language of Seven Rivers people and suggests a new period of cultural awareness and the development of a strong community identity. This began with the granting of the DOGIT in 1987 and has been marked by some significant milestones. The purchase of the Cape York Wilderness Lodge (now Pajinka Wilderness Lodge) from Australian Airlines in 1990 was one of these.

This sense of identity is drawn from a range of elements that include beliefs, relationships to land and to other groups, a shared history that drew enemies together in the old village and which endured the long years of life 'under the Act'. The development of creole as the first language of most northern Cape York people is an expression of this shared community identity. Beliefs such as those associated with the East Coast strip have survived the onslaught of European colonisation and as such are important components of contemporary community ontology.

8.4 Archaeological sites in a cultural landscape

The archaeological potential of northern Cape York had improved considerably in this field season. I had now located a number of sites that could provide a range of information within a relatively undisturbed context. These included the Lakes site, a rockshelter on Albany Island and the 'W' site that we had located back in 1985. Each of these sites would require excavation and/or analysis of surface material. In addition, it seemed that a regional programme
of dating and the establishment of a regional chronology could be provided by
the hearths at Sandago. This information could be compared with evidence
from the large number of surface sites that we had located. In other words, the
hard core of conventional archaeological work had only just begun.

Our work with the community had, however, introduced several issues that
went beyond the comparatively simple problems associated with consultation.
For example, it was now impossible to regard the East Coast strip as anything
other than a cultural landscape, i.e. tract of land that is given form and
substance through the beliefs and stories that are associated with it. The sites
within such landscapes can be seen to have meaning and significance at a
number of levels. Certainly, they are important elements of contemporary
ontology and have an important role in the development of community
identities. The realisation of this stimulated several questions. For example,
what effect does archaeological excavation have on these sites and what are the
implications for those who are asked to give consent for such work? A
significant question involved the potential impact of introducing archaeological
interpretations of these sites. This was particularly important given the
hegemonic nature of Western perspectives and the fact that the breakdown of
the reserves was already resulting in significant changes across a range of
issues. I was worried that new interpretations could assume an authority that
had potential, perhaps amongst younger people, to replace the old. I had to
consider the repercussions of this. I was particularly concerned because it was
evident that this identity was predicated on the devastation of the colonial
experience and had developed within the repressive atmosphere of the reserve.
What place could archaeological interpretations have in the construction of
community identity? Moreover, how could the humble process of
'consultation' ensure empowerment of indigenous people in the face of such
issues. I felt that these were significant and deserved greater examination.
They certainly had implications for archaeological work in northern Cape York, but they were perhaps also a factor in the developing conflict between indigenous people and archaeologists in this country and across the broad sweep of lands that have experienced colonialism.

8.5 Conclusion: the evolution of a new thesis topic

This year had consolidated the idea that archaeological work in northern Cape York should be undertaken within a framework of understanding that is provided by anthropological expertise. I had begun to understand the difference between working with Aboriginal people and working within an Aboriginal community. I had observed that this process could lead beyond the scope of 'good consultation' into largely uncharted territory for archaeologists. I began to see the landscape and the sites located within it from an 'Injinoo' perspective and I was grappling with the implications of this for archaeological research.

At the end of this year, the project was plunged into a major crisis. The options seemed to be either to abandon the work altogether or to document this experience and present this as my thesis. It seemed that the documentation of such experiences might be of increasing importance. I had come to understand that while others had expressed similar experiences and reactions, discussion of these had usually focused changes in particular archaeological practices. Pardoe (1992), for example, refers to recording skeletal remains in situ in order to avoid causing offence through excavation. Lewis and Rose (1985) and Veth (1991) have outlined procedures for consultation. In some states (e.g. Western Australia) models have been developed in consultation with Aboriginal people that are aimed at mitigating against practices which might impact upon the cultural integrity of particular places or tracts of land (see also Chapter 9). What I intended was rather to examine the issues that had been raised during
my fieldwork; to document the process by which I had gained certain insights and the broader implications of these. Rather than coming up with practices which would make archaeological work more acceptable, I wanted to explore the notion of archaeology within a community context. I felt that the broad scope of a PhD thesis would allow me to do this. This is further articulated in the following chapters.
Consultation and empowerment

Bowdler's (1992) perspective on the return of the Kow Swamp burial remains provided the international archaeological community with an alternative view of this important issue (cf. Mulvaney 1991). In this paper, she also offers a brief but incisive criticism of consultation, which was the process at the heart of the Kow Swamp debate. She (1992: 104) states that:

'Consultation' with Aboriginal people does not mean giving them the opportunity to sanction what has already been done or decided. It means engaging in a dialogue which allows them the genuine possibility of saying 'no', and preferably before any research has commenced. If that possibility is not admitted, then the Aboriginal position is as powerless as it ever was.

In Australia, 'consultation' is usually seen as the chief means by which indigenous people are empowered in relation to research into and management of their heritage. However, arguments presented in Chapter 8 indicate that a critical evaluation of consultation is necessary, particularly in relation to issues surrounding empowerment. It is suggested that in some contexts, for a range of reasons that are explored in this chapter, consultation may act to further disempower indigenous people and that alternative approaches may be necessary.

9.1 The historical development of 'consultation' and the need for critical evaluation

Almost twenty years ago, Sullivan (1975: 14) wrote:

It is service [NSW NPWS] policy not to enforce sections of the Act where they might conflict with traditional Aboriginal beliefs, and it now requires the applicants for
excavation permits to investigate local Aboriginal attitudes to their project, and state
objections for the consideration of the committee.

This paper was given at a seminar on 'Aboriginal antiquities in Australia' in May 1972. Sullivan was describing the process which became known, in the parlance of the 1980s as 'consultation'. One of the recommendations of the seminar (Edwards 1975: 121) was that a

...means of adequate consultation between such organisations as mining companies,
relics administrations and tourist bodies be evolved in respect of Aboriginal owners
or protectors of relevant tracts of land, art sites and other relics.

At the top end of the country, H. Allen (1978) described work undertaken with Aboriginal people in the Kakadu area of the Northern Territory. He outlined the advantages and the difficulties of combining different perspectives in archaeological work and the way in which an Aboriginal perspective can influence both the aims and process of the project (see also Moser 1995). Allen recognised that working with Aboriginal people could provide the discipline with insights we otherwise would not have. Less clear from this discussion are the benefits to be gained by the Aboriginal people, although there is perhaps an assumption that through such joint work they are able to exercise some control over the process.

While the need for consultation was recognised early, and while some Aboriginal people had been involved in archaeological work since the early 1970s (see Chapter 2), it was not until the 1980s that consultation with indigenous groups became commonplace in archaeological practice. The now much-quoted paper given by Langford (1983) at the Australian Archaeological Association in Hobart in 1982 was perhaps the catalyst for this change. Certainly, it was at this conference that the Australian Archaeological Association was formally requested to define their position
with regard to Aboriginal ownership of heritage and the need to consult with Aboriginal people in relation to archaeological work (J. Allen 1983; Sullivan 1985). J. Allen's (1983: 9) response to Langford (see Chapter 2: 36) illustrates some aspects of the debate surrounding such issues at the time.

Allen's statement places Aboriginal people as being 'among the proper custodians'. In so doing, he denies their primary ownership of and custodial authority over their heritage.

In same year, Sullivan (1983) described the development of the Aboriginal Sites Committee of the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW NPWS). From 1970, this committee advised the Minister and the Director of the NSW NPWS on matters relating to heritage. At the time of its inception, Aboriginal people were not represented on the committee, however by 1979 as a result of a series of changes Aboriginal people comprised the majority. This was a significant step towards gaining control of their heritage for Aboriginal people in NSW. However, there were problems with this system, such as the fact '...that the Committee is not truly representative of NSW Aborigines, nor is it statutory, or with defined powers' (Sullivan 1983: 328). Sullivan recognised that NSW had a long way to go before Aboriginal rights were adequately addressed in this area.

During the 1980s, statutory authorities in all states of Australia introduced a variety of policies and approaches relating to consultation. The notion of consultation was expanded from representation in the bureaucratic process, such as the Aboriginal Sites Committee in NSW, to an involvement with local groups such as Land Councils, Housing and Legal Co-operatives. However, Sullivan (1985: 149) noted that:
Though it is now common for state authorities to request consultation with Aborigines prior to research work, and for archaeologists to carry this out, it is still not mandatory. In the following year, McBryde's survey of Australian archaeology included a section on the ownership and use of cultural resources in which she stated that '...we must also recognise the very real interests of a special kind held by the descendants of their creators' (McBryde 1986: 25-26). Both Sullivan and McBryde make the point that Aboriginal people and archaeologists may view sites differently and that this was a significant issue to address (see also Chapter 10). At this time, consultation was seen as an important (if not the only) instrument of empowerment for Aboriginal people in terms of heritage management.

9.1.1 Consultation and changes to archaeological practice
Changes to archaeological practice have been documented by a number of researchers who have worked with Aboriginal people on archaeological projects. In an optimistic and pragmatic paper, Lewis and Rose (1985) provide a methodology for consultation derived from research they have undertaken over many years in the Victoria River District of the Northern Territory. This paper addresses some of the problems posed by particular archaeological practices for contemporary Aboriginal people. It stresses the ethics and morality of undertaking consultation and provides non-Aboriginal people with an insight into potential areas of conflict. Most importantly, it provides a step-by-step guide for those wishing to undertake archaeological research in this area.

More recently, and perhaps ironically given the controversy that has surrounded this area of research, changes to archaeological practice have come from those who work on human remains. Due to the contentious
nature of such research in this country, the option for those working in this field has been either to adjust their approach or to abandon such studies. Pardoe (1992: 136) has described the way in which consultation has changed for him in the course of his work in this area:

It meant visiting communities...It meant spending time talking to people, formally and informally, being taught good manners Aboriginal style. I learned to carry out consultation at the local football match, at a backyard barbecue or over a few beers on the river bank more than in offices.

Pardoe's experiences have direct relevance to the present chapter. In the statement above, Pardoe is ostensibly describing changes in his own practice as a result of consultation. However, the statement also documents the communities' acceptance of him and the nature of the interactions he had with them, for if this had not occurred, he would not have gotten out of the offices and onto the riverbank.

In the 1990s, some preliminary definition and critique of consultation was undertaken. In some areas, the provision of a 'plain English' report to the community has become a part of archaeological practice. Veth (1991: 65) has described the process he used, including guidelines for work practices and the lodgement of reports, in relation to an archaeological consultancy he conducted in Central Australia. He states that:

What the procedure attempts is to formally ensure greater opportunity for Aboriginal control of the archaeological resource without diminishing the researcher's responsibility for the assessment of archaeological site significance. The time has clearly come for archaeologists to accept that sites are not public property.

A number of practices have been introduced in states such as Western Australia and the Northern Territory to ensure that Aboriginal people can negotiate their level of control with regard to proposals for development on
their traditional lands. In Western Australia, these practices are mostly used in relation to ethnographic surveys, however as archaeological surveys are always undertaken either in conjunction with or following these, they are relevant here. These include the Work Area Clearance Surveys (WAC), the Work Program Clearance Surveys (WPC), Site Avoidance Surveys and Site Identification Surveys (Draft Western Australian Guidelines). Such approaches accommodate the notion that some types of information are accessible only to those of a particular gender or who have attained a certain status (e.g. initiation). They allow for confidentiality of such information to be maintained either by the researcher/consultant and the group or within the relevant statutory authority.

The examples given above suggest that more archaeologists are interacting with indigenous people who are able explain their sensitivities and sensibilities in relation to 'sites' and 'archaeological research' first-hand. This has resulted in many cases in greater understanding and changes in archaeological practice which meet some of the needs of indigenous people. However, while this is undoubtedly a step forward, such changes remain reactive rather than interactive processes. That is, through consultation, indigenous people are able to react to a proposal (whether for archaeological research, development or whatever). They have an interventionist role which allows them to catch, as it were, the most glaring instances where the business of archaeology is at odds with indigenous perspectives. Changes in archaeological practice (which appear to be the focus of the interaction in consultation) are an important means by which indigenous people can ensure that investigation of their heritage does not transgress important elements of their own beliefs and practices. However, such changes in practice do not address the fundamental issue surrounding who has the right to create the 'past'.
The rationale behind the notion of archaeological consultation is that it empowers indigenous groups, allowing them a voice in the construction of the past and the management of their heritage. However, this relationship between consultation and the empowerment of indigenous groups has been the subject of little critical treatment and would appear to be predicated on an assumption that the presence of the former will ensure the latter. In contrast, the findings of this research suggests that this view of the relationship between consultation and empowerment is overly simplistic. It is suggested that there are some circumstances in which the consultation process disempowers indigenous people, and that this may account for the continued dissatisfaction exhibited by some Aboriginal groups toward the archaeological community. In the following sections, such issues are examined in detail.

9.2 The requirements of consultation

During the period in which fieldwork was carried out, consultation with Aboriginal (or Torres Strait Island) people was only formally required in Queensland if the work was to be undertaken on a reserve. This was a matter of policy rather than legislation and is reflected in Section I, part 14 of the 'Application to survey, research, examine or excavate' that was required by the then Archaeology Branch of the Department of Community Services. In such cases, consultation was carried out with the community council, in their role as quasi-landowner. As such, the requirement for consultation had little to do with the rights of indigenous people to control their heritage. Rather, it represented a formal recognition of the community's right to control the movement of people on and off the reserve by their elected representatives on the council. This had been a major issue and one over which they had only recently, since 1971, had some control (see Taylor
1984:315). The establishment of the DOGITs confirmed the status of the community as 'landowner' and the councils as the body to act on the community's behalf.

In recent years, the formal requirements of consultation in Queensland have changed and are formulated in Cultural Heritage Policy/Procedure No. 3 (1993: 11-13). This document was formulated for Environmental Impact Assessment work, however the principles outlined for consultation should also be applicable to research. It states that:

All impact assessments involving Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage places must be conducted in accordance with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocol.

It recommends that in some instances, a full 'anthropological survey' may be necessary, that 'site avoidance' be undertaken where appropriate and that the archaeologist should discuss the project with the 'relevant' Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island people. While such statements exude a 'politically correct' line, it will be seen from the discussion in following sections that without the appropriate infrastructure within communities and heritage authorities, this approach to consultation is hollow and unworkable.

When fieldwork was initiated in northern Cape York, consultation could legally have begun and ended with the Combined Northern Peninsula Area Council. The NPA Council was the body that acted for issues pertaining to those parts of the reserve (which was, in fact, the major portion of land) that were outside the immediate area of the five communities. The NPA Council was set up to provide a structure that could deal with matters of common and sometimes competing interests of the individual communities.
However, this structure was essentially a bureaucratic invention, set up by the Government, along the representative lines of western democracy. That is, the representatives of each community council formed the Combined Council. Similarly, the individual councils were established by the government and consisted of elected representatives in a similar manner to that of local governments elsewhere in the State. There was nothing in the nature of either of these bodies that related to traditional affiliations to land. In fact, given that only one of the five communities is predominantly made up of northern Cape York people, it was more than likely that those with traditional affiliations would be outnumbered on the NPA Combined Council.

9.3 Ethics versus requirements

It was on the basis of this understanding that we began, in 1986, to work more closely with the Injinoo council. While working with this body would not automatically place us in contact with 'traditional owners', it was our understanding that this community served as a focus for such people.

However, there were many factors which might have prevented this process from proceeding further than the Injinoo council. Firstly, the focus on traditional owners was a departure from usual practice within the reserve and the communities. Government policies of 'assimilation' first and then 'integration' favoured the adoption of a system which concentrated the limited power of such communities with the councils, replicating the system of 'government' practised in broader Australian society. On the reserves, the struggle revolved around wresting power from the Government and therefore any expansion of the council's power was viewed in relation to the contraction of that of government. At a more pragmatic level, but none-the-less stemming from the same paternalistic root, the councils often acted as a
buffer for the rest of the community, absorbing the sometimes necessary but not always welcome interactions with outsiders.

From an archaeologist's perspective, community councils are easily identified and located. They are reminiscent of the decision-making process in broader Australian society with which most of us are familiar and the procedures they use (for example, meetings) are more amenable to schedules for field investigation which usually involve short periods in the field. For those who have previously worked in states such as New South Wales where there is a state-based land council structure, one could imagine that the community councils of Cape York are a local version of these. In this sense, maintaining consultation with the council might have been seen as appropriate and perhaps also desirable by both the community and the archaeologist. However, while it is important and necessary to undertake consultation at these levels, there are a number of problems if this is the only level at which this process is carried out.

The most important of these revolves around the fact that archaeological work is associated with land, with the past and with specific sites or places that have links with the past. Information associated with specific tracts or areas of land is usually viewed as the specific heritage of specific groups of people. This is very complicated in Cape York where many communities are made up of people from different 'tribal' groups. This is certainly the case of the Injinoo community whose members trace their traditional affiliations to all of the traditional peoples of the northern Cape York area, as well as some of the islands of the Torres Strait. With regard to the traditional associations between people and land, the community council cannot be seen to be representative. Those on the council may be chosen for their administrative abilities or skills which are directly related to their role as a local
government. However, council representatives are not chosen (at least overtly) in terms of criteria associated with traditional affiliation. It is possible for the members of one traditional group to control the council, with little or no representation from others, at various points in time. Thus, a consultation process that goes no further than the community council has serious flaws if the aim of that process is the empowerment of traditional owners.

It seems that a distinction must be made between the requirements of consultation and the ethics of Aboriginal involvement in archaeological research. An ethical approach should be driven by the premise that wherever possible, those Aboriginal people with the closest traditional links to the landscape should have the most significant involvement. Furthermore, it should be obvious that the models of consultation may only be applicable within limited contexts. Thus, the model developed for example in New South Wales will not necessarily be useful in northern Cape York. In fact, it is obvious that a significant contribution might be an examination of processes in different contexts and the development of appropriate approaches.

However, there are many inherent and pragmatic problems with regard to this. Firstly, it has been up to this point largely the responsibility of the individuals on councils and archaeologists to develop this consultation process. For example, the recent guidelines provided by the Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage outline the anticipated outcomes of consultation but do not provide any framework for this process. Obviously, the nature of the process which results is largely subject to the ethics of both parties. This system ignores the fact that archaeologists have a vested interest in securing a positive response to their proposals and the
existence of factions within communities and the possibility that councils are not representative in terms of traditional matters. This is a major problem in undertaking archaeological work in Queensland and is especially problematic given some of the difficulties outlined in the following sections.

9.4 Locating traditional owners

One of the most difficult issues that directly impacts upon consultation in northern Cape York is the problem of defining and subsequently locating traditional owners. An appreciation of this problem and an understanding of the implications for consultation can be obtained by reference to the historical factors impinging on Aboriginal people in northern Cape York since European contact. As previously noted, these include the early dislocation of people as a consequence of European expansion through the beche-de-mer, pearling and cattle industries. The survivors of this period congregated in a few settlements for protection and support, but everyday life was still predicated on old alliances and enmities, requiring compromise (e.g. changes in traditional practices) at some level in order to maintain such settlements. This was exacerbated by the presence of the Church and the State who represented the new way of life. This breakdown included the beginnings of 'wrong marriages', one of the outcomes of which has been a degree of confusion surrounding the tribal affiliation of the children (and grandchildren) of such unions. Obviously, precolonial patterns of definition can not always apply. This problem has now affected several generations of people within the community and is overlaid by the Torres Strait system of 'island adoption' that is practised there. New rules have had to be established to deal with this.

Over the years, the price of community cohesion was some degree of loss of individual group identity. Survival of important and private cultural
information was largely ensured by the instruction of a few key individuals in each generation. Such individuals may have inherited this knowledge via their bloodline, adoption, or in some cases, their respect and interest in such matters. In many ways, their knowledge and control over the supernatural aspects of the landscape is evidenced (and perhaps manifested) in their knowledge of language. I have termed such people 'speakers' because they are each recognised within the community as being someone who has knowledge of customs and particularly language. Because of this, they are able to control, to some degree, such supernatural forces. Government intervention in the region has also exacerbated the problems associated with the maintenance of traditional associations. The relocation of various groups of people in this area has meant that those who have traditional affiliations there have become, to some extent, disenfranchised of their traditional lands.

It is remarkable that these communities in northern Cape York have continued to live side-by-side, managing all of these underlying problems. However, this in itself presents another problem. As intermarriage between communities has occurred and due to a certain degree of flexibility of residence, particularly amongst the young, locating traditional owners can be a logistical nightmare. This is further exacerbated by the fact that many people have left the the area and now live elsewhere. This has enormous implications for the process of consultation.

9.4.2 Identifying and locating a broad base of traditional owners
It should be obvious from the above that information on the relationship between people and particular tracts of land is not always widely known or immediately obvious to a broad group within the community. Secondly, some people reside far from their traditional lands and in some instances, several generations have not, for one reason or another, seen the country of
their traditional affiliation. The result of this is that there is a heavy burden of responsibility placed on those who do live in the community, especially those who have knowledge of traditional matters.

Once such problems were identified in the original project, it was addressed by the introduction of the Cowal Creek Country Survey which was aimed at establishing the traditional affiliation of community members, identifying others with the same affiliation and where such persons resided. This work has culminated in the report (Fuary and Greer 1993) and a register of the individuals who were named in the project (Fuary 1993). The latter is seen as a dynamic document that will be refined and added to over time. Tools such as these provide the community with a base upon which to enter into a dialogue with a potential researcher. In addition, in recognition of the different role of councils and the need for a representative body, the community has established a landcouncil of traditional owners made up of members of all groups. This body, known as the Apudhama Association oversees matters of heritage and facilitates negotiations such as those between researchers and the community.

It should be noted, however, that this process involved considerable time and anthropological expertise which was separate to the original project. Few archaeological projects have access to these resources of time and personnel. However, if this work had not been undertaken our claim to 'adequate consultation' would have had little validity. We would have been obliged to rely upon a few key individuals (as we did in the beginning) rather than a broad base of traditional owners.

Reliance on such key individuals or 'speakers' has two important consequences. Firstly, those who are not consulted (perhaps because they do
not live in the community) may feel disempowered because they have no role in this process. Secondly, as mentioned previously, it places a heavy responsibility on those who have been. They are required to make decisions without necessarily having the benefit of consulting with other members of the group, who may live hundreds or even thousands of kilometres away. Moreover, in many instances, these questions that are presented in 'consultation' often have no precedent. The excavations of hearths on the East Coast strip are a good example of this. In this instance, the 'speaker' was asked whether permission could be given to excavate (that is, essentially remove) the hearths. These hearths or 'fireplaces' have a specific place within contemporary community cosmology in that they are the theatrical 'props' around which stories and beliefs are woven. They are also important symbolic representations of the past in the present. Thus their removal may well impinge upon the cosmological integrity of this place. Taken in this light, granting permission to excavate could be seen as an onerous responsibility, and one that does not have a 'right' answer.

Given the arguments outlined above, and especially where the project is the first introduction to archaeological work for the community, consultation can only be seen as adequate if it includes the broadest possible base of traditional owners. A knowledge of historical factors and their effects upon the movements and location of Aboriginal people in this State has not normally been taken into account (in any formal way) in terms of consultation. This has resulted in a number of misconceptions. For example, until recently, the absence of traditional owners living on or near traditional lands was interpreted as being indicative of their obliteration. This discussion demonstrates the inadequacy of such an approach and the need to address this issue (see Chapter 11).
9.5 Consultation and community domains

Trigger (1992: 79) has described the two separate domains that existed at Doomadgee in northwestern Queensland during the period in which he undertook fieldwork:

In the late 1970s and 1980s there were two distinctive arenas of social life at Doomadgee which, to use local Aboriginal parlance, may be characterised as the 'Blackfella' and 'Whitefella' domains. These were arenas of material, intellectual and social activity which indexed a high degree of social distance between Aborigines and Whites.

Trigger asserts that while the contrast between conditions and standards between the two domains was a stark reminder of differential social status, the 'Blackfella' domain provided the community with something of '...a defence against constant administrative intrusiveness and attitudinal ethnocentrism on the part of White Australian society' (Trigger 1992: 101).

A number of domains can similarly be distinguished in the communities in northern Cape York. These are the:

1. the village domain which includes the physical space in which Aboriginal and Island households are located within each community, the 'weekenders' or camps that people use on weekends, and the interactions that occur within such space;
2. the 'business' domain which is located physically at the stores and supermarket, the government offices, the schools and the hospital and which includes the types of interactions that occur at such places and at particular events (e.g. basketball, football etc);
3. the European domain which is centred on the households and types of interactions that take place amongst the non-Aboriginal or Islander residents (e.g. employees of the Departments of Health, Education or the then Community Services).
Aboriginal and Island people in northern Cape York do not usually participate in the activities that surround the European domain. Indeed, at the time of fieldwork, social interactions within the European domain tended to be even further restricted to the specific Department in which one worked. Therefore, the teachers tended to socialise together, as did the hospital staff and as did those who worked for Community Services.

The business domain was utilised by both Aboriginal and Island people as well as Europeans. Workers employed in institutions (such as the schools, the hospital, the DCS office) were drawn from both groups. However, the institutions themselves were representative of broader Australian society. As such, Aboriginal and Island users do not always feel comfortable operating within them. For example, standard Australian English is generally the language used within this domain and while most people understand English, it is usually not their first (or perhaps even their second) language. On a number of occasions I was asked to accompany people to the hospital, for example, to facilitate better communication.

The village domain is characterised by the daily round of village life. While Island languages are used in some communities, the language which is most commonly used is 'Broken' or Cape York creole. Europeans, even those who work within a community, do not usually operate freely within the village domain. For example, in 1987 there were at least three Europeans working for the Injinoo community however they resided on boats in the creek and did not, at that time, tend to socialise at the household level. Just as the 'Blackfella' domain at Doomadgee provided a defence against white intrusion, so the village domains in northern Cape York provide a retreat in which people feel more powerful. For example, they speak in their first
language, kinship structures dictate many social interactions and one can operate from a position of familiarity and a knowledge of one's place within society. This is in stark contrast to the other domains which are reminders of the system which until recently disempowered people in almost every aspect of their daily lives. It seems obvious then that consultation should only take place within the village domain and that it is only here that interactions between archaeologists and Aboriginal people will be on something of an 'equal footing'. This does, however, prompt a discussion of how one enters the village domain as a non-Aboriginal or Islander person, for it is not as simple as merely locating oneself physically within the village.

9.5.1 Entering the village domain

Trigger (1992) has stated that the only non-Aboriginal people who operate within the 'Blackfella' domain at Doomadgee are those who are outside of mainstream white society or who, like himself, could '...operate socially like a Blackfella and (for a time at least) appear not to be too uncomfortable living in similar material conditions to Blackfellas' (Trigger 1992:86). The ability to operate in this way was usually established by a period of residency within the 'Blackfella' domain.

In the original project, the breakthrough in consultation which occurred in 1986 can be attributed to a number of interrelated factors. These included the location of consultation within the Injinoo community, the inclusion of anthropological research, the anthropologist's experience in the region. This experience was most evident in the fact that she was fluent in Torres Strait creole. The use of a local language provided us with the means of communicating in the most effective way, particularly in the case of older members of the community. The importance of striving for the best means of communication is emphasised if one is trying to translate complicated
archaeological concepts and methods to those outside of the discipline. Obviously, the use of English in this context would not have provided the community with an empowered base upon which to make a decision in terms of the research. In addition to the more straight forward issues surrounding good communication, this knowledge of language implied a knowledge of customs, ways of thinking, spiritual beliefs and lifestyle. This is the type of knowledge that is necessary if one is to 'operate socially' within the village domain. In this sense, the use of language implies the appropriateness of parameters within which discussion and negotiation can take place.

After a short period of working with community people in 1986, we were also placed within the kin network. This confirmed our status within this domain and afforded the community some control over our actions. This concept of incorporating people into the kin network is perhaps almost an inevitable response to a prolonged presence within the village domain. However it is also related to the use of language and the knowledge that this implies. From the community's perspective, this incorporation provides them with a further sense of empowerment as negotiations are undertaken within a familiar structure and not those usually associated with Black-White relations.

9.6 Competing needs: the discipline vs. the community

Another important area that should be analysed in terms of the consultation issue involves the difference between the needs of the discipline and the needs of the community. As described in the following chapter (Chapter 10), the connection between archaeological research and its contribution to indigenous identity has received little critical attention in archaeology. However there appears to be an unstated assumption (on the part of
archaeologists) that any information about the 'past' will be of use in this process. This assumption justifies all archaeological work as having a potential contribution. While archaeological research may have a role to play in this area, this has not yet been clearly defined. This lack of definition allows us to continue with the assumption that the work we do will, at some point in the future, be of use to indigenous Australians.

9.6.1 The community's needs for research

In 1985, it was evident that the people of northern Cape York had an urgent need to collect and record information that they felt was relevant to their expression of themselves. As previously noted, I found myself recording stories, songs, place-names and language words. My perception of the community's need for this type of expertise was such that the 'Cowal Creek Country Survey' was initiated and undertaken in 1987. In the light of this, I suggest that consent for the archaeological project may have been motivated, not by an inherent interest in archaeological work, but by a desperate but unformulated desire to define and record these elements of identity. The persistent requests for this type of research which have continued from my first visit until the present led to a questioning of the basis on which consent was given for the original project. Once this was identified, a number of potential research topics came out of the dialogue surrounding 'culture'. The first of these was the need to record oral histories due to the seniority of community members with strong cultural links.

Another topic that came out of this dialogue was the significance of historic sites, particularly Somerset and the World War II sites, to the local people. It became apparent that while such sites were the focus of European activity in the area, the local people had spent a lot more time living and working at and around them (see also Susan McIntyre's In Prep.). While it is not
suggested that research topics should always be chosen in this way, it is true that some of the most innovative topics have been devised in this manner. Furthermore, such topics are fairly certain to meet the needs and therefore approval of the traditional owners.

9.6.2 Aboriginal perceptions of archaeological research
This lack of definition may also have led to some confusion on the part of some Aboriginal people who may perceive archaeologists, anthropologists, sociologists, historians etc. as an amorphous group of (usually non-Aboriginal) professionals who work on 'cultural matters'. The precise role or approach of one area of study is thus lost within the general business of 'Aboriginal studies'. The difference between archaeology and the other disciplines listed above is that, on the whole, the information that the latter collect is 'filtered' through the perceptions, concerns and preoccupations of the people they are working with. In this sense, the information collected by such disciplines (but not necessarily the analyses produced) may be relevant to Aboriginal people concerned with the definition of identity. Archaeological research is not filtered in the same way. Aboriginal people have little interpretive input into archaeological research, except when interpretations enlist ethnographic accounts. On the whole, the use of early ethnographic accounts provides an opportunity for the ancestors of contemporary groups to have an input rather than the groups themselves. Consultation remains the chief means by which Aboriginal people are able to have an input into archaeological research although this by no means provides them with an interpretive 'filter'.

The differences between the needs of the discipline and the needs of a community are perhaps best illustrated in terms of their different notions of 'heritage' and thus heritage management. For many Aboriginal people,
'heritage' is defined, as the dictionary defines it, as a birthright (see also Greer 1993). This definition of heritage links it with the notion of identity, that is, those symbolic elements of a society that serve to define it. This is in contrast to an archaeological view of heritage which is concerned with the preservation of a 'representative sample' of the archaeological resource base for the purposes of archaeological research. This approach to heritage and heritage management may only have a limited contribution to make to issues of identity (see Chapters 10 and 11). However, archaeologists in the public sector have played a primary role in heritage management in this country. In northern Cape York archaeologists are strongly associated with 'Rangers' and heritage management and I was often referred to in the community as a 'Ranger'. This title related initially to the perceived connections with Aboriginal Rangers from the Queensland Government's Archaeology Branch, and more recently with the work undertaken by Community Rangers employed by the community. This connection between archaeology and heritage management may have reinforced the perception that archaeologists and Aboriginal people have similar perspectives on the 'past' and those aspects or elements of Aboriginal societies that are defined as 'heritage'.

Given the arguments outlined above, it is suggested that consent for archaeological research may be granted on the basis of mistaken perceptions and because of community needs for research. If this is the case, then this has important implications for the continued perception of consultation as an empowering process.

9.6.3 The implications of research

Another factor involves adequate consideration of the implications of research. For example, when specific consultation began concerning the
excavation of a particular group of middens, it became apparent that these middens were an integral part of a story place. That is, archaeological structures, i.e. the 'ovens' and piles of 'cooking stones', feature in a contemporary explanation of supernatural activity in this area. It also became obvious that a large responsibility was being placed on key individuals by asking them to make a decision concerning the removal of a portion of that story place. In this instance permission was granted, partly due to a trust that had been established between the individuals involved and me. In addition, the opportunity to focus on Aboriginal (rather than Torres Strait Island) culture may have been a factor. In 1984, the National Party had been in government in Queensland for more than two decades. Historically, the Government supported Island people and culture at the expense of Aboriginal people (see Chapter 8). This has been a sensitive issue in areas such as northern Cape York where communities are made up of both Aboriginal and Island people. It is possible that some people felt that by allowing the excavations to go ahead, as requested, that a cultural revival would gain momentum. It is also true to say that if given a number of options, the excavation of such places might not be favoured. This is an important point, because it is highly likely that many (if not most) archaeological sites in northern Cape York are associated with story places.

In other instances key individuals have agreed, in principle, to assist in relocating sites. However, for many and various reasons, the sites are not located. Either they are unwell on the day, or there is important family or community business to attend to, or so many detours are taken that time runs out. It is possible that in these circumstances, the people involved are uncertain of the implications of what they are doing. On one level they appreciate the attention to cultural matters but ultimately are uncertain of the consequences of revealing any private and/or important information
they possess. This is perhaps most critical in communities where there has been fragmentation of traditional knowledge. There is a fear associated with becoming involved in important cultural areas without the deep and necessary knowledge, which often focuses on language, that may be required. This situation is exacerbated if, as with excavation, material is removed from the site.

Another implication of this type of research involves the dissemination of information. This falls into two categories. The first are the archaeologist's legal obligations. In Queensland, permit holders are required to furnish the Government with a list of sites for inclusion in the site register. However, if many archaeological sites form part of story places, what assurance can be given that privacy will be maintained. To my knowledge, the Queensland register does not accommodate such requirements. Access to the register by researchers and the general public is restricted via the permit system, however such limitations do not necessarily apply to the Government itself.

Apart from the legal obligations, there is the question of professional publication. Firstly, how can the researcher explain the true implications of community information entering the international academic community. The publication of information relating to the community necessarily introduces problematic areas of ownership and control.

9.7 Consultation and empowerment
The aim of consultation is usually seen as part of a process of empowering Aboriginal people with regard to heritage. The rationale behind this approach is that even if legal control rests with the state and its servants, Aboriginal people are able to judge (and perhaps veto) research to which they have serious objections. The integrity of this process is reliant upon the
notion of 'informed consent': that is, free and willing agreement based on a sound knowledge of the issues involved. I suggest that this is unlikely to occur within a context which is characterised by hegemony and differential access to knowledge. In the following sections, an examination of this proposition is undertaken in relation to key factors such as historical relations between indigenous and non-indigenous people in northern Cape York and the differences between these two groups in terms of access to information and knowledge.

Australian archaeologists, with some exceptions, are not usually indigenous. Such individuals are drawn from, and therefore represent, the dominant non-Aboriginal sector of society. Moreover, while indigenous people live and operate in a broad range of settings in Australia, many either have lived, or are currently living in communities which were created on the model of a reserve or mission. In Queensland, and especially in Cape York, life 'under the Act' was a reality until less than a decade ago. It is not easy to define specifically how this might reflect upon consultation, however it certainly influences the interactions between indigenous and non-indigenous people. In some instances, deference to dominant-sector views still prevails. In others, there is a resentment borne of decades of inequality. Such factors obviously affect the process of consultation and the quality of outcomes.

In addition, access to modern systems of communication are a relatively new phenomenon in many parts of Cape York. Television was only introduced into communities in 1980s and there are cultural and physical barriers that limit access to the print media and other systems of communication. It is impossible to envisage that under such circumstances, 'informed consent' is likely.
Given the arguments outlined above, it would seem that 'consultation' does not empower indigenous people. Rather, it should be evident from this discussion that there is duplicity in this process. That is, the involvement of indigenous people in the process of consultation apparently gives the process authenticity. However, the issues raised in this research suggest that this 'authenticity' is questionable and the process flawed. This has implications for archaeological research, but perhaps more importantly it requires urgent attention within the area of heritage management (see Chapter 11).

9.8 Conclusion

In spite of the fact that archaeologists and heritage managers have been engaged in defining and refining this notion of consultation for more than 20 years, we have found ourselves in the 1990s up the proverbial 'dry creek'. In 1991, the Australian Archaeological Association (AAA) introduced a new Code of Ethics. This had been developed and ratified at the World Archaeological Congress in the previous year and was adopted in a modified draft by AAA at their annual meeting. One of the unfortunate aspects of this Code of Ethics is that as a generalised and 'ideal' (and necessary) document, it does not address the pragmatic aspects of how to maintain this Code. For example, the section regarding 'Rules to adhere to' includes the following (Davidson 1991: 64):

1. Prior to conducting any investigation and/or examination, members shall define and ratify all the indigenous peoples whose cultural heritage is the subject of investigation. If no such indigenous people are found the site should be left alone and declared significant.

2. Members shall negotiate with and obtain the informed consent of representatives authorised by all the indigenous people whose cultural heritage is the subject of investigation.
In the light of discussion in this chapter, it can be seen that abiding by such rules would be and is sometimes extremely complex. What is needed is an ongoing critique of the practice and process of archaeological work, in many different contexts, if we are to get beyond the simplistic solution of guidelines which are difficult to abide by under existing frameworks.

It is suggested that while the aims of consultation might be directed towards empowerment, this is only achieved if the process is undertaken with the appropriate cultural heirs and if it takes place within a context in which those being consulted can maximise their sense of empowerment. It is suggested that the concept of 'consultation', as a reactionary rather than an interactive process, does not empower indigenous groups in the context of northern Cape York.

It is argued in this chapter that the agreement (and perhaps even enthusiasm) of the community to the original project stemmed, at least in part, from a desire to record and collect information relevant to the construction of identity (see also Chapter 10). Such material is and should be drawn, wherever possible, from the people themselves; that is, it involves a process of extraction of information from the community. Archaeological knowledge can only be, at best, complementary or additional to this. Furthermore, the need to record this information was driven by a sense of urgency that information should be collected before those who had most to offer had passed on. This suggests that although this was by no means apparent to either the community or myself at the time, the agreement to the project was coloured by other, and quite specific, aspirations and hopes. The suggestion that agreement to the archaeological work may have been predicated on false hopes prompted an examination of several issues. Firstly, so strongly was this message transmitted, that a separate (although related) project was initiated. It was largely through the
anthropological project that many of the understandings that have informed this work were identified. In the following chapter, alternative approaches to archaeological research and heritage management are examined in the light of these findings.