PART III

MANAGEMENT ISSUES RELATING TO THE HERITAGE OF NORTHERN CAPE YORK

Plate 21: Meun Lifu and Katua Rattler – Cape York Rangers
Chapter 10

MANAGING THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES OF NORTHERN CAPE YORK

10.1 Introduction

In Part One I discussed the theoretical background to historic heritage management in Australia, and outlined the clear separation of the consideration and management of indigenous and non-indigenous cultural heritage as ‘prehistoric’ (indigenous) and ‘historic’ (European) heritage. In Part Two, I endeavoured to present a history of the Cape from the viewpoint of the Aboriginal communities that currently live in Cape York. What should have been clear from Part Two is that indigenous people understand the recent history of Cape York in quite different ways to the ways in which that history has been written thus far, and that this relates to the differences in the way in which time, place and landscape are understood by Aboriginal people. It should also be clear that post-colonial history is incredibly important to Aboriginal people in this area because of the many changes that have occurred over this period. In this, the third part, I will outline the current state of play of heritage management in Cape York, focussing particularly on the way in which natural and cultural heritage have been managed separately, and outlining why such a position is at odds with indigenous models of heritage management. Finally, I suggest an integrated model of cultural and natural heritage management for the shared cultural heritage of Cape York.

This current chapter explores

- the current state of play regarding heritage management in Cape York,
- the interrelatedness of natural and cultural values and
the effectiveness of current practices both in delivering outcomes for the community and in their adoption and implementation by the community.

From an indigenous perspective there is no doubt an assumption that traditional custodianship is heritage management. This diverges from traditional Western heritage management as practised in Australia in two main ways. Firstly, this is contrasted against a clear tendency to date for non-indigenous accounts to focus on an sanitised and hero driven approach to the colonisation of the country which is exacerbated by the specialist practice of separating the management of indigenous and non-indigenous heritage into two often mutually exclusive strands/professions. Secondly, Aboriginal communities clearly do not conceptually separate natural and cultural values and their management (see for instance Bird-Rose 1996; Morphy 1995; Strang 1997; Greer 1995). In contrast however, in Australia as in Canada and the United States, there is an entrenched separation between the management of natural values and cultural values. There is increasing discussion of the need to ‘integrate’ the management of these values as exemplified for example in the Visions Symposium in NSW (Visions for the New Millennium, NPWS 1998). However, in practice these interrelated values are managed, funded and conceptualised separately.

These two points will be discussed at some length in this chapter in light of indigenous aspirations to exert responsibility for heritage and land management in northern Cape York.

10.2 Relationship with Country today
Clearly the Aboriginal communities in northern Cape York maintain an intimate relationship with the land and sea around them but this is against a background of competing use, management and ownership from other groups within Australia mainly Queensland
National Parks, green lobbyists, mining companies, tourist and tourism operators, Queensland Fisheries and operators in the fishing industry (see Smyth 1994; Rigsby 1981; Chase 1994; Sutherland 1996; Rigsby and Chase 1998;).

10.2.1 Natural area management in Cape York

Cape York has long been an icon area for the conservation movement in Australia. Geoff Moseley then Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) had this to say when he introduced Peter Stanton’s seminal work on the identification of proposed protected areas in Cape York.

The Australian Conservation Foundation believes that Cape York Peninsula is one of the most important areas for nature conservation in Australia. A comparison with other great Australian natural areas such as Fraser Island, South-west Tasmania and the Alps readily comes to mind. Cape York however, has something none of these posses in anything like the same extent – vastness.

North of the 16 degree latitude the Peninsula covers an areas twice that of Tasmania, and while the rest of the tropical world is being transformed by agricultural development, the Peninsula still retains much of its virgin quality. What is more it is situated opposite the northern part of the Great Barrier Reef. Where else in the world is the chance to save such a wide range of natural types of country, including the marine environment on such a scale as the north east tip of Australia (Stanton 1976:5).

More recently the Queensland and Federal governments have recognised the significance of the natural values of the area and this has resulted in a number of state parks, terrestrial and marine, and the Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef world heritage areas. Consistency in comparing protected areas across Australia and measuring the level of protection afforded to Australia’s natural heritage on a world stage is achieved by the allocation and use of an internationally defined set of management categories, known as IUCN (World Conservation Union) categories. There are six IUCN protected Area Categories, although only the first four are generally funded under the National Reserve System Program (this is the Commonwealth/State Government co-operative program for the establishment of protected area reserves). The six categories are:
Category Ia: **Strict Nature Reserve**: Protected Area managed mainly for science. Area of land and/or sea possessing some outstanding or representative ecosystems, geological or physiological features and/or species, available primarily for scientific research and/or environmental monitoring.

Category Ib: **Wilderness Area**: Protected Area managed mainly for wilderness protection. Large area of unmodified or slightly modified land and/or sea, retaining its natural character and influence, without permanent or significant habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural condition.

Category II: **National Park**: Protected Area managed mainly for ecosystem conservation and recreation. Natural area of land and/or sea, designated to
a. protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for this and future generations:
b. exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area: and
c. provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.

Category III: **Natural Monument**: Protected Area managed for conservation of specific natural features. Area containing one or more specific natural or natural/cultural feature which is of outstanding value because of its inherent rarity, representative or aesthetic qualities or cultural significance.

Category IV: **Habitat/Species Management Area**: Protected Area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention. Area of land and/or sea subject to active intervention for management purposes so as to ensure the maintenance of habitats and/or to meet the requirements of specific species.

Category V: **Protected Landscape/Seascape**: Protected Areas managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation. Area of land, with coast and seas as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, cultural and/or ecological value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area.

Category VI: **Managed Resource Protected Areas**: Protected Area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems. Area containing predominantly unmodified natural systems, managed to ensure long-term protection and maintenance of biological diversity, while providing at the same time a sustainable flow of natural products and services to meet community needs.

The aim of all countries that have adopted the IUCN categories is essentially to develop a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system, which forms the backbone of their land management and conservation program. The existing names and classifications of park categories in state systems within
Australia cannot necessarily be taken to indicate which IUCN category they meet. The various state legislations pre-date the IUCN categories and the level of interventionist management and visitor access in Australian Parks is often defined by management documents (Plans of Management) and restrictions in statutory definitions embedded in legislation.

In order to assess and plan a National Reserve System comprised of a representative sample Australian natural landscapes there has been a great deal of work undertaken over recent years to describe the different bio-geographical regions which can be used as the basic units for description, assessment and ultimately acquisition and management strategies. The Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) is a biogeographic framework for regional planning of conservation and sustainable resource management (Thackway & Creswell 1995: see Appendix C).

There is a growing problem in that the protected areas system in Australia (and the world) is being subsumed into a focus on the conservation of biodiversity only (significantly humans have been excluded from practical consideration in the application of biodiversity).

The development of a representative system of protected areas is but one of the conservation management measures available to jurisdictions as we endeavour to conserve biodiversity on a landscape scale. The Draft National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity clearly incorporates the principle that the conservation of biodiversity will not be achieved through reserves alone, but rather will depend on managing threatening processes over as much of the landscape as possible. Principle 8 of the draft National Strategy recognises that viable protected areas are only a component of an overall conservation strategy and program, and that these areas need to be integrated with measures to protect biodiversity outside formal reserves (Environment Australia; Protected Areas Homepage).

Despite Cordell’s rather optimistic assertion that ‘today the IUCN recognises and accepts the principle that cultural diversity and
biological diversity need to be conserved together if they are to prosper’ (Cordell 1994:13-3), there is little evidence to suggest that this is understood, accepted or translated into protected area management strategies in Australia or other similar parts of the world such as the US and Canada. For many purists in the conservation arena whether conservationist or scientist the more restrictive protection category i.e category 1a and b are the only categories that provide true long-term protection. These people would argue that categories II and V which relate to National Parks and marine parks are only effective in conserving natural systems and biodiversity if they restrict recreation and human egress through strict zoning and statutory management plans. Hence there is continued pressure on protected area management organisations (e.g Queensland National Parks and National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW) to effectively elevate category IV and V parks through increased legislative or regulatory restrictions on use and access, to Category I and II status.

While the official definition of protected areas adopted by the Australian government does mention cultural resources. It is a secondary adjunct to the protection of biodiversity.

Protected areas (e.g national parks, nature reserves and marine parks) are defined internationally as ‘ areas of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means (http://www.biodiversity.environment.gov.au/protect/intro.htm).

The Natural Reserve System Strategy which is the document by which the Commonwealth and the states seek to design, create and manage the protected area reserve system does not mention cultural heritage at all.

The attitude of scientists, conservationists and protected area managers to cultural values ranges from an off hand disregard which relegates them to a secondary or non existent role in any reserve design or plan, characterised by ‘Well if there are sites there
we'll do the right thing by them and we can work out what is there once its reserved’ to the treatment of cultural heritage as an intrusive element in a landscape that must be taken back to an assumed prior ‘natural’ state. For an example of the latter see the long running debate over the historic huts in Royal National Park in NSW (NPWS files A/2230C, 92/A/12746C and 92/P/1262C).

Much of our society’s current approach to biodiversity springs from the school of ‘deep ecology’ (Sessions 1996). The dismissal or denial of cultural heritage by many nature conservationists and scientists is based on the conviction that humans do not have a greater right to exist than any other species and that other species have an equal right to prosper and flourish. It therefore follows that wherever possible natural systems and species should be encouraged and the evidence of human intervention in the landscape eradicated and their further impact prohibited. There are 4 fundamental characteristics of deep ecology:

1. The well being and flourishing of human and non-human Life on Earth have value in themselves. These values are independent are independent of the non-human world for human purposes.

2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realisation of these values and are also values in themselves.

3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.

4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires such a decrease.


It is relevant to note that the focus in the debate over the role of cultural heritage in protected areas is about the evidence of human impact on nature and usually centres on the removal or remediation of Western or post contact cultural heritage. So for instance, in a symposium on Wilderness Management one speaker asserts that he acknowledges that virtually all natural landscapes have been subject to interaction with and exploitation by humans and that the
management of such areas should 'consider this history' but that in his view there can be

…no justification for retaining remnants of exploitative activities in wilderness. If such items are considered to be of heritage value, they should be removed and placed on display elsewhere to demonstrate the priorities of the past generation (Lembit 1993:189).

The implication of this statement is of course that the priorities of a previous generation were wrong and are now being put right. There is little or no concern about the intrusion of pre-contact or so called' prehistoric cultural heritage which is easily transformed into the 'natural' realm (see also Byrne 1998:90).

There are two reasons for this hostile focus on contact and other remains from the historic period. The first is pragmatic, post contact relics or cultural heritage items such as the huts in Royal National Park are likely to attract more humans and therefore prolong the impact or intrusion of people onto the natural system. Roads in National Parks, Wilderness Areas or areas of identified high conservation value which have not yet been gazetted as parks (e.g Cape York) increase the ease of access for 4wheel drivers and other users and therefore open up new areas to human impact. In this way they can be seen to contribute to loss of habitat and biological diversity. Similarly, suggestions that Aboriginal owners or custodians wish to set up an out station in a protected area to carry out cultural practices is likely to cause serious concern and controversy amongst deep ecologists because of associated activities like prolonged camping, hunting and resource use. On the other hand the cultural heritage of the distant past in their minds has been depopulated and is associated with old concepts of the noble savage in harmony with nature. This belief has its roots in the period of 'Enlightenment', 'the period when the notion of opposition between nature and the state of society or of education suddenly gains great prominence…the status of nature becomes much higher in this period…' (Bloch and Bloch 1980:27).
In this period philosophers such as Rousseau argued against the progress of culture and idealise pre-industrialised ‘man’ as a man in harmony with nature.

In the later discourse on inequality (1755) he goes further by contrasting social man (man created by man), whom he sees as depraved, enslaved and unhappy, with man in the ‘state of nature’ (which includes group life on the family level) whom he believed would have been good, free and happy (Bloch and Bloch 1980:28).

10.2.2 Wilderness

The culmination of the deep ecology approach in Australian conservation is the concept of ‘Wilderness’. The primary value recognised in Wilderness protection is biodiversity and the opportunity for that biodiversity to evolve free of human impact and intervention. It would seem however that the ecologists and scientists have taken the concept of wilderness well beyond the definition used by Myles Dunphy, considered by many to be the father of wilderness in Australia.

Wilderness or primitive bushland...one of the really indispensable necessities of modern existence in its soundest sense, for where else can man go to escape his civilisation...more and more people want back the forested and mountain wilderness which has been lost...to preserve for the human race that connection with things natural and wholesome which is now more than ever necessary (Myles Dunphy 1934 in Moseley 1994: 205).

Somehow the concept has progressed from the concept of natural places in which to revive and restore the human spirit to places from which all but certain humans should be excluded for the benefit of non-human species.

While the Queensland government has proved loathe to develop and implement Wilderness legislation because of its pro mining and natural resources development focus, it has not stopped the identification of Wilderness areas through the National Wilderness Inventory project (Lesslie, Abrahams and Maslen 1992), nor has it silenced the long campaign by environmental groups to have wilderness qualities in Cape York protected.
Wilderness definitions vary slightly but can be taken to mean the wildest areas where natural processes rather than human intervention currently contribute most to the landscape. The wilderness value of an area is assessed based on the following criteria:

- Biophysical naturalness
- Apparent naturalness
- Remoteness from access
- Remoteness from settlement

*(Moseley 1994:211; Lesslie 1992 et al.)*

Wilderness legislation in other States, e.g. NSW, provides for the highest IUCN category protection allowing only passive recreation, i.e., walking and no mechanical intervention. The level of seriousness with which this human-free focus is approached can perhaps be judged by the somewhat amusing case of Bob Carr (the NSW Premier) being air-lifted into a remote wilderness area in NSW in 1998 by helicopter, only to spark a media debate about whether or not this breached wilderness restrictions and constituted a potential threat to the human-free development of the biodiversity. Even fire management in wilderness areas is a matter for controversy (see debate in Barton 1993).

‘Wilderness’ as envisioned by most of its proponents today is an anathema to Aboriginal people. The concept that land should be ‘left to itself’ abandoned if you will, and that people should be excluded is not a model of custodianship with which they are familiar. This is not to say that there are not areas from which Aboriginal people would like to see ‘others’ excluded but generally the Aboriginal relationship between the land and custodians remains intimate and at times interventionist.

Cape York Peninsula has long been hailed by environmentalists to be a large wilderness repository and due to the various large-scale
development proposals such as silica sands mining on the East Coast and bauxite and kaolin mining on the West Coast, they have long agitated for its protection.

In the state elections of 1991 the green groups ran a number of candidates throughout north Queensland and Cape York Peninsula and were clearly shocked at their poor performance. They had assumed naively that there was a high correlation between Aboriginal aspirations in the Cape and their own and that Aboriginal people would support them in their quest for increased protection through statutory protected areas. In reality however Aboriginal peoples viewed the conservation movement as another ‘threat’ to Aboriginal control of their lands. The creation of National Parks and reserves was just another example of a vested interest group taking control of the land away from them and excluding them from using it. In this way many Aboriginal people saw little difference between Comalco’s proposals and National Parks.

Since that time the green groups have spent considerable time and energy in building links with Aboriginal communities and peak bodies and coming to grips with Aboriginal aspirations for the area. Generally, there is now a much higher level of understanding of Aboriginal attachment to land in sectors of the green movement. In 1981 Rigsby (1981) challenged the Australian Conservation Foundation to consider two things in pursuing the fight to the conservation of wilderness in Cape York Peninsula i.e

1. It is ethnocentric (culture bound) and mistaken not to recognise that many Cape York Peninsula Landscapes and plant and animal communities either have been or may well have been substantially modified by the work of Aboriginal people over perhaps 40,000 years of occupation. This statement applies even to the Jardine and East Cape York Peninsula areas that meet the narrower A.C.F. criteria. The ‘primitive’ and pristine character of the Peninsula environment ended a long, long time ago, just after Aboriginal people became part of the ecosystem.

2. It is true that large areas of the Peninsula are ‘free of human occupation’ today, but it must not be forgotten that their depopulating is de to several historical processes. Among them
On the surface it appears that wilderness proponents today understand and are sympathetic to Aboriginal interests and land management practices or at least the political climate has changed to the extent that they have to acknowledge them. However, there is little evidence in land management and conservation agencies that specialists support or believe in the efficacy of Aboriginal practices.

It would seem however, that there could be a correlation between the concept and management of wilderness and those places where spirits and devils are most active. These areas tend to be areas from which if given the choice Aboriginal people would like to see others excluded, largely for their own safety. There also seems to be a remarkably high correlation between these places and the areas of highest assessed conservation value. If conservation groups where to focus less energy on trying to convince or change Aboriginal views about the value of an unpeopled landscape and more on understanding the sentient nature of the Aboriginal landscape in Cape York and the interrelatedness of natural and cultural values they might find that common ground that they are seeking. This would require a re-definition of Wilderness at least in Cape York Peninsula to incorporate the cultural element.

10.2.3 The ‘Cape York Land Use Study’

In 1994, I and a colleague Shelley Greer, (McIntyre & Greer 1994) were commissioned to write a profile of the 5 Northern Peninsula Area communities (i.e Seisia, Bamaga, Injinoo, New Mapoon and Umagico) as part of the CYPLUS Indigenous Management of Land and Sea Project & Traditional Activities Project (Cordell 1994). The Cape York Land Use Study known as CYPLUS was a joint Commonwealth and Queensland state project. It was a broad-scale, multidisciplinary assessment of the resources and values of the
Peninsula to guide future land use and planning in the area. In scale, design and timing it was a precursor to the Regional Forest Assessments carried out as joint Commonwealth and State projects in Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and South East Queensland.

Despite well known Aboriginal interest in most of the Cape York Peninsula area and the predominance of Aboriginal people in the population of the Cape York area, Aboriginal interests and values were only included as an after thought and only once a Labour Government came into power in Queensland. As in the Regional Forest Assessments, cultural heritage was not considered to be a major consideration in the resource-based assessment of the values of the area. Again there is the assumption that cultural heritage values will be localised to isolated structures or sites and that these can be conserved/managed within any tenure or proposed land use and recognised via listing on the Register of the National Estate. In fact this exclusive focus of the Australian Heritage Commission on the assessment of National Estate values in such projects with no integration of these into State government statutory protective mechanisms means that even where high conservation values are identified there is no long term protection nor a process for incorporating their protection into the long term management of the area.

The *Indigenous Management of Land and Sea and Traditional Activities Project* represented a belated attempt to identify and document Aboriginal interests in the area but it was not resourced with adequate funds to cover field visits or community consultation. Given the tokenistic resources available the methodology employed was to commission ‘specialists’ who had a known research interest or community presence in each of the communities to write the reports.
In the case of the Northern Peninsula Area Communities the authors however felt it necessary to visit the communities and discuss the project. Given limited time and resources the outcome of these profiles were brief and at the request of the communities concerned did not include a list of important economic or social places. Communities naturally felt very reticent given their past exclusion from the CYPLUS project to supply details to the government of places that were important to them for cultural purposes, including resource use. Few people in the communities had heard of the project and those that did were suspicious of its aims, linking it to proposals for silica sand extraction, bauxite mining, extension of National Parks into Aboriginal lands and fisheries controls.

In excess of 64 individual studies were undertaken of which only 1 was an Aboriginal project. Joint State and Commonwealth teams compiled information from all the various studies and came up with three thematic overview reports, which summarized the information now available for Cape York Peninsula. These reports were:


The overview documents suffer because they again regard the value ‘type’ as separate independently measurable entities. For example In Overview Report #3 which deals with ‘Society and Culture’ while there are clear statements as to the all encompassing nature of indigenous interests in the landscape one gets the impression that these could have been written about almost any Aboriginal group in any part of Australia. For example
Most Aboriginal communities retain close links with their land and have strong understanding of its religious importance. This generally reflects as a web of interrelated places interwoven with each other – not as individual “dots on the map” of “sacred sites”. There are also archaeological sites which increasingly are of contemporary importance to communities as evidence of past associations with the land, and may be politically useful to land claims. Historic places are also important to Aboriginal people as part of their recent past and their links with non-Aboriginal settlement on the Cape (CYPLUS 1995).

While there is little wrong with this statement it is merely rhetoric when it has no interplay with the other resource-based studies undertaken. For instance in assessing the National Estate Values of Areas for possible inclusion on the Register of the National Estate there is no assessment of the value of these areas to the Aboriginal Community (who in many cases are the legal owners of the nominated areas eg Lockerbie Scrub and parts of the Jardine River Catchment). There is an assumption that by stating that this consultation has not been undertaken, as an exclusion of the projects brief, somehow means that the outcomes of the project are valid and that consultation and an assessment of Aboriginal values can be appended to this at some later unspecified date. This is clearly a result of the separation of natural and cultural values in the assessment process and a belief that somehow these can be operated as independent assessments with their own exclusive methodologies.

It is now accepted that not enough work has been done to identify and assess cultural heritage values in the region and Natural Heritage Trust funds are being used to try and patch this information gap. However there is a fundamental problem that works against the likelihood of a positive outcome and this is that indigenous communities are being asked to provide information to the government so the ‘experts’ can make decisions about the future of their land and resources.
10.2.4 Relationship between biodiversity and other values and the non-indigenous community

Many scientists and conservationists do not favour the term ‘natural heritage’ at all. The inclusion of the word ‘heritage’ implies a human ownership or stake hold in non-human species, which is antithetical to their view of equity amongst species. Terms like biological diversity (biodiversity) and species habitats etc are preferred. In this way for instance they can make a separation between an agreed scientific definitions of say ‘old growth’ and the social value or attachment that some people might have to places that they perceive as old growth. The separation is that the scientific definition is ‘correct’ (as it meets their criteria) and the expressed community value is ‘incorrect’ as it is not based on their criteria.

In identification of ‘heritage’ there are no correct or incorrect values. You cannot tell someone for instance that while they might feel they are attached to a place they are actually wrong. Instead we talk of ‘thresholds’. Thresholds are used to translate heritage values and places into a regime of statutory protective mechanisms. To some extent these thresholds are discussed and agreed to by the community for example the Australian Heritage Commission through public consultation and the NSW Heritage Office through the Heritage Council of NSW. In this way government departments and others involved in heritage management use agreed thresholds to sort places into protective regimes without (at least in theory) challenging individual or group attachment to those places. Protection is given to places that meet the threshold.

On the other hand, in the old growth scenario scientists define the boundaries not by human attachment but by observable defining criteria. The power in the assessment process lies with the scientist or expert who assesses the vegetation to ascertain whether or not it has these scientifically observable traits.
10.2.5 Aboriginal attitudes to the land and caring for the environment

Aboriginal people have a very different attitude to the land and the relationship of human and non-human species and other elements of the landscape. We have seen from previous chapters that the country itself in Cape York is alive not only with plants and animals but also spirits, short people and red devils. This is true of all Aboriginal lands in Australia although the spirits and beings may be known by different names. So for instance we get a very similar picture from north-western Australia:

For many Aboriginal people, everything in the world is alive: animals, trees, rains, sun, moon, some rocks, and hills and people are all conscious. So too are other beings such as the Rainbow Snake, the Hairy people and the Stumpy Men. All have a right to exist, all have their own places of belonging, and all have their own Law and culture.

Many of the super-ordinary beings interact with people. Stumpy Men, for example, give people new songs, as do the Munga Munga women. Many of these beings also act as guardians of country – taking care of the people who belong there, and harming people who do not belong there. They are powerful and unpredictable beings, and are often associated with particular places where people ought not to go. Some of these beings are regarded as secret and thus are not to be discussed publicly; they guard the country especially during ceremonial activities when people and other beings may be particularly vulnerable (Rose 1996:23).

We see from this that while Aboriginal there are areas from which some humans should be excluded, the reasons are cultural rather than based on a desire for equity amongst species. So rather than despairing of all that humanity has become or feeling shame about humanities impact on other species and their continued viability, exclusion from these places is more likely to be a matter of concern about the safety of others and in some cases the inadvertent effects on resource abundance caused by offending spiritual custodians.

The relationships between people and their country are intense, intimate, full of responsibilities, and, when all is well, friendly. It is a kinship relationship, and like relations among kin, there are obligations of nurturance. People and country take care of each other. I occasionally succumb to temptation to sort these relationships into categories - there are ecological relationships of
care and social relationships of care, and spiritual relationships of care. But Aboriginal people are talking about a holistic system, and the Aboriginal people with whom I have discussed these matters say that if you are doing the right thing ecologically, the results will be social and spiritual as well as ecological. If you are doing the rights spiritual things there will be social and ecological results (Rose 1996: 49).

This is not to say that Aboriginal people do not see any value in scientific or specialist advice on how to manage the environment especially where this relates to remediation of the impact of non-indigenous land uses such as pastoralism, agriculture, tourism and mining. In many communities in Cape York, Aboriginal people feel strong concern for the rate of environmental change brought about by development pressures. They also are concerned about loss of knowledge about country brought about through government practice of forced removal of people from their homelands and high mortality rates which have both contributed to the break down of traditional knowledge transfer processes. However, their attitude is that the role of the specialist should be to offer assistance and advice and generally communities deeply resent ‘rules’ introduced to control traditional practices. Such rules are different to negotiated management practices, which are shown to be mutually beneficial. There are areas of convergence between cultural responsibility such as increase rituals and practices and the protection of spirit places and western conservation philosophy aimed at the conservation of ecosystems, although there are also many areas of divergence.

So for instance in the matter of fire and the implementation of community fire management regimes there are conflicting ideas on the part of scientists and specialists who argue that in many areas of the Cape the long period of time since regular firing regimes have been in place have led to changes in biodiversity which will now be affected if the land is now burnt. This is not an argument that is well understood by Aboriginal people.

The ambivalent quality of fire—its power for destruction as well as regeneration—is ever present for many Aboriginal people. They also know that people of
European origins understand fire quite differently. Aboriginal people have brought fire within the domain of human control, working with it rather than against it. Settlers, in contrast have sought to control fire primarily by suppressing it, and then fighting it when it refuses to be suppressed (Rose 1996:70).

Externally imposed rules about firing the vegetation are generally ignored by Cape York communities. Given the isolation of parts of the Cape and the lack of resources experienced by land and sea management agencies there is little value in applying such rules to communities in Cape York as they cannot be enforced.

10.3 Trying to play by rules blo whiteman

In recent years as Aboriginal and Islander communities in Cape York have finally thrown off the restrictions of the ‘reserve’ era and emerged as both large community landowners and local government authorities in Cape York, government departments and non-government organisations (NGO’s) have realised that any effective management of the land and sea environment is dependent on their co-operation. This has led to a change in the make up of committees and other stakeholder advisory mechanisms, which now regularly include positions for Aboriginal representatives. To a limited extent there has also been increased participation in the workforce of the various authorities as positions have been identified as Aboriginal positions.

Aboriginal people have been quick to recognise that their views on the environment and specifically on the management of natural and cultural values are not always taken seriously. They are considered under sufferance due to their powerful position as stakeholders/landowners but their input has often been devalued because of their lack of scientific expert credibility. Indigenous response to this has been varied and ranges from political agitation for different processes, abandonment of co-operative process such as committees because of frustration at not being taken seriously, through to attempts to jump through all the hoops and attain the
same specialists skills. There has for instance been a tendency as elsewhere in Australia for Aboriginal communities to adopt some of the scientific jargon, acquire white environmental advisors and to establish with variable success models that mirror the protected area model for land management.

Because of the documented and widely appreciated natural values of the area there is a pressure on communities to adopt a protected area model of land management for at least those areas outside the village limits. This model or the version understood by the indigenous communities has to some extent been embraced and modified by the communities as evidenced by the eagerness of the communities to develop and train indigenous rangers and initiatives such as the Kowanyama Land Management Unit (Sinnamon 1994). Although Sinnamon also claims that Kowanyama’s Natural Resource Management agency is committed in its fight to prevent the government from applying a protected area regime to Aboriginal Trust lands it is apparent that this is not a matter of a philosophical divergence in the model of management but a concern for the autonomy and land ownership rights of the community (1994). The problem with much of this is that it assumes that the protected area management model is superior to indigenous holistic approaches to land management and it privileges the precepts of the scientific paradigm over the cultural one.

10.3.1 The emergence of indigenous rangers
In recent years indigenous rangers have emerged as community response to the increased legal responsibility for the day-to-day management of land in Cape York. The term ranger is understood and accepted in the context of natural area management and the concept is readily acceptable to indigenous groups on the Cape not only because they are anxious to exert day to day management of their land but because the term ‘ranger’ visually recalled as a uniform and vehicle embodies for many recognition, authority and
practical management skills. While some individual rangers are traditional owners of at least some of the land that they manage, traditional ownership has generally not been a selection requirement for the position. For the most part funds to employ rangers would not stretch to employing a representative of each traditional owner group in a community even if it had been a selection requirement (although many communities state this as an ultimate objective if and when funds become available). Some community rangers are also community elders, although once again this has not necessarily been the normal case.

There are problems in this direct transfer of a ranger based natural protected areas model to Cape York. These problems of course can be overcome and are not presented here to invalidate the model but to assist in its refinement. Firstly, in many cases where participation in a formal ranger-training program (e.g Tropical North Queensland TAFE course) is involved in the duties of a ranger, elders may be inadvertently discriminated against as they are often older, with more distant or less official schooling and have a lower literacy level in English language. The role of the ranger in Cape York communities is therefore a custodial one i.e they are responsible for caring for the land according to the wishes of traditional owners and community elders.

Secondly, it means that Aboriginal people are never on an equal footing. They are participating under western rules and there will always be someone more experienced and more ‘expert’ on the other side of the table. They have become reliant then on a range of white spokes people and advisors. So much so that even their own administrative structures must employ such people to be able to operate (for example see Cape York Land Council and Balkanu). This is not to denigrate the service that these people provide which is often essential given the current framework.
This has not been a sudden phenomenon. While it is true to say that indigenous resource management has always taken place in Cape York, it has not been constant in either the range of resources managed or the methods used to manage them. This is of course due to the major disruptions to traditional lifestyles and systems of knowledge transfer in Aboriginal communities caused by the white invasion of this cultural landscape and the usurpation of land management rights. In hindsight it is apparent that Aboriginal people had a complex land management system which had developed over time and which had modified the landscape to suit their lifestyle. It is equally clear that the early European settlers and the colonial government had no inkling of this relationship or the changes which would ensue once this system was disrupted.

Under white occupation Aboriginal management of land and sea resources did not cease but rather was radically restricted in area, confined in the most part to the immediate environs of reserves and missions. Religious and government educators also played a role in the breakdown of traditional environmental management systems by de-valuing traditional knowledge and practices, and often actively forbidding rituals, ceremonies and language. Of course some aspects survived, particularly resource use, but many of the custodial practices did not. In some instances the environment has so radically altered from long periods of abandonment that traditional practices no longer apply to that landscape.

In recent years the Cape has seen a tourism explosion. Just 10 years ago it was difficult to get permission from the government to enter parts of the Cape. Now parts of it are subject to 15-20,000 visitor vehicles per year. Other modern land use activities such as mining and commercial fishing are heavily industrialised and therefore their impact on the environment is on a much larger scale than such industries in the past. The resultant environmental pressures are way outside the scope of traditional experience and
indeed exceed the resources of the Queensland Government in this region.

There have been various attempts by Aboriginal people to respond to these pressures over recent years by tapping into non-Aboriginal Land management initiatives where possible including:

- **Archaeology Branch Rangers:**
  The Dept. of Community Services employed Aboriginal and Islander people as "Rangers" in the Archaeology Branch of that Department up until the late 1980’s when that department went through a restructure. The employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Rangers may be viewed as a limited response to the demands of Aboriginal people regarding management of cultural aspects of the environment. It also reflects the lack of understanding that most non-Aboriginal people had about Aboriginal cultural concerns and their custodial responsibilities and aspirations. The basis for management of these ‘sites’ was largely for their antiquarian value.

Not all DCS Rangers were Aboriginal; some were Islander people now living on the mainland. All rangers were subject to the control of the Department and could be transferred to various geographic locations. In many cases the rangers may have had difficulty in managing sites to which they had no traditional rights of access. There were no formal processes of consultation with communities that had custodial rights for these sites. And these rangers were not answerable in any way to the custodial owners. All sites and relics belonged to the Queensland Government. The inclusion of indigenous rangers in the management of heritage was therefore offered on the basis that indigenous people were being offered the opportunity to participate in Western environmental management practices and structures. This initiative cannot therefore be seen as contributing in anyway to
the local indigenous communities’ control of their heritage or a stake in its management.

In some places such like Bamaga, sites such as Somerset\textsuperscript{31} and Lockerbie were actively managed in recognition of local values, despite not being covered by the legislation at that time. This was a clear example of indigenous rangers being responsive to community concerns and managing places of value to the community despite the lack of statutory protection. With the transfer of the Archaeology Branch functions to the Dept. of Environment and Conservation, this system, which was at best patchy, came to an end.

- **Savanna Guides:**
The Savanna Guides were established in the gulf area in the late 1980’s. The focus of the guides duties were cultural or eco tourism. While some Aboriginal people (e.g from Kowanyama) participated in this program they did not “own” it. In 1985 Aboriginal communities in Cape York gained limited tenure over some of their lands through the Deed of Grant in Trust system. As communities took over more infrastructure and land-use roles they began to become increasingly concerned about how to balance the needs of the community and modern day environmental pressures against traditional values.

- **Kowanyama Land Resource Management Unit:**
Communities began to see an area in which they required training. One community in Cape York took the initiative to establish a system of environmental Land Management so that when training became available they were well placed to gain the most benefit from it. Kowanyama developed the Land Resource

\textsuperscript{31} Somerset was actually bulldozed by DNA which later became the Dept. of Community Services acquiring responsibility for archaeological sites.
Management Unit, which covers a variety of land based functions including the Ranger Service. The Land Resource Unit is responsible to the Committee of Elders.

- **The Community Ranger Program:**

  With the hand back of some Aboriginal reserves and mission sites through Deed of Grant in Trust (D.O.G.I.T) in Queensland, Aboriginal and Islander people again gained some legal control over the management of their lands. It soon became clear to many Aboriginal communities that the land that was being returned was in a degraded state and that there were many competing demands placed on the environment many of them outside the range of pressures managed by traditional land management skills (e.g. commercial fishing, tourism, community infrastructure development, mining etc.). Clearly resources and skills were needed to manage and in some case rehabilitate the environment.

  The Aboriginal communities approached Cairns TAFE through the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council (ACC), requesting a course to train Aboriginal community employed rangers in Natural and Cultural Resource Management.

**10.4 The Role of Elders/custodians**

Terms such as ‘elders’, ‘traditional owner’ and ‘custodians’ have entered the popular literature/press as Australia generally struggles to come to terms with issues such as land rights, native title and Aboriginal deaths in custody. In many instances these terms are used interchangeably although to many Aboriginal people in Cape York and elsewhere they have very different meanings. It is worth then distinguishing between these terms as I see them applying to communities in Cape York and have subsequently used in them in this chapter.
Traditional Owner: A traditional owner is any person who is accepted within an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community as having a familial relationship to a tract of land. In some communities a person is defined by ‘rules’ of connection such as being related through their mothers side or their fathers side. In other communities, which have suffered more disruption, especially where many children have been removed the term is taken to mean anyone with a direct blood-tie relationship to the land managed by the community. Actual practice is sometimes a mixture of both.

Elder: Amongst traditional owners there are some people who are recognised as having a leadership role and more of a say in relation to matters relating to the land, culture and society generally because of their special knowledge of cultural practices (including magic) or relationship to specific localities. In Cape York elders often have a knowledge of traditional language relating to particular areas. A person’s position as an ‘elder’ is not defined by their age! This is in distinct contrast to most popular use of the term in the press which describes old people regularly as ‘community elder’. It also contrasts with the use of this term in places such as NSW where often the term is used now to refer to any elderly community member as a term of respect based on age.

Custodian: A custodian is someone who is recognised as the appropriate carer for a site, place or tract of country. A custodian may be an elder or someone elected from amongst traditional owners. Community rangers if backed by authority from a committee of elders or with consensus from traditional owners from a particular area are regarded as ‘custodians’. A custodian does not necessarily own the land himself or herself but is authorised to care for it within proper practice for the owners or in the case of orphan country for the sake of the spirits and the land itself. It is not uncommon for communities in Cape York to concur that a person with strong historic ties to a place should act as a custodian.
10.5 Managing a Shared Heritage

Clearly there is a responsibility for a shared ownership of the shared history of the development of contemporary Australia. This means that owners and custodians have a complex responsibility to manage not only what is important to them but to consider and somehow account for what is important to 'others'.

Heritage management, particularly cultural heritage management, is increasingly being seen as a field in its own right in Western civilisations. It has principles, charters and guidelines that define the parameters of the field and it has a suite of specialist disciplines as its tools of the trade. These include conservation architecture, history, archaeology and increasingly anthropology and interpretation specialists.

Given the specialist dependency of the heritage management field in Australia is it a support framework or a nemesis to indigenous custodianship? The role of 'community' in heritage management is enshrined in documents such as the 'Burra Charter', however in practice it would be true to say that community involvement is limited to the specialist 'consulting' with the community often by way of allowing a mandatory period for comment on a draft document. Local knowledge is in this way used to corroborate or test specialist conclusions or proposals.

In other words, the specialist: -

• works out what is best, and,
• constructs the meaning of the place, item or landscape based on the theoretical framework of their discipline(s), and,
• community knowledge is used to corroborate or endorse that meaning and outcomes.
Under such a model it is unlikely that fundamental challenges to the specialist view arise, unless from other specialists, as only they have the qualifications to comment on the technical basis of the opinions/ conclusions.

### 10.6 Managing Both Natural and Cultural Values

'Heritage' management on the other hand should be about the identification, conservation and management of multiple values, accounts and histories. Isn't it a curious point that we do not separate out the natural and cultural environment in archaeological studies it is only when we come to the present day that we treat these values as if they are separate? For instance the archaeological record often reveals information about the natural environment in the past. Indeed, archaeologists scrutinise the evidence for such signs. Was it wetter, warmer, colder? What plants and animals were present? What impacts both positive and negative did people have on this environment? The lists of environmental and biodiversity based questions which have been asked and researched to date goes on and on. To go one step further, except for the farthest reaches of time there is no ancient environment that can be studied where people have not been likely to have some effect or interaction with nature. Why is it that we now think that it is acceptable to study biodiversity and natural values as if they are somehow independent and unrelated to human activity, health and culture?

Theoretically through effective community-based investigations and interpretation these apparently conflicting values and histories can be accommodated and explored. The relationship between natural features and conditions and sites and places can also be emphasised.

- Why did white settlers constantly comment on the isolation and yet Aboriginal people had extensive active social networks throughout the same area? For example see My Crowded
Solitude (McLaren 1926) and also recall the army’s surprise at the distance travelled by people from Lockhart and the level of information exchange (Marks nd: 31).

- Why did planes crash and why is their location both a constraint and a benefit in regard to their conservation?
- Why were shipwrecks so prevalent and how did this contribute to the establishment of the first settlement in the area?
- How has the Aboriginal/Islander economy changed over time and what things have stayed the same and how does this affect the biodiversity of the area?
- How did the environment effect the development and effectiveness of the area in terms of strategic and support roles in World War II?

Significantly ‘choices’ can be made about what is interpreted, presented and conserved based on the significance of the place, so, for instance, scientific evidence is not privileged over community tradition.

The identity of Aboriginal and Islander people within the study area is inextricably linked to their relationship with the land and sea around them. Many people learn to operate a dinghy and outboard before learning to drive a car (if they ever do). They are dependent on their environment for cultural practice and sustenance and this includes hunting for food and ceremonial purposes, ceremonial activities, escape and respite from crowded community living, travel routes to homelands and relatives and so forth.

10.7 Conclusion

There are some archaeologists who have expressed concern that ‘…recent changes to the heritage policies of all Australian governments (both Federal and State) now privilege an Aboriginal interest in heritage above all other interests’ (Murray 1996a: 202). From the discussion in Chapter 2 it should be clear that this is far from the case. In practice through the artificial separation of Aboriginal (prehistoric) and European
(historic) heritage, Aboriginal people are excluded from consideration in a large amount of their heritage where it relates to the history of Australia over the past 200 years. In this chapter we have considered how Aboriginal control of their heritage in the Cape York area is further undermined by the separate consideration of natural (defined by the scientific concepts of biological diversity management) and the cultural (defined by the non biophysical impacts of humans on the landscape) heritage. In light of this discussion Murray’s concerns reveal the archaeocentric view of heritage which plagues many of our profession and conflates the concepts of ‘heritage’ and ‘archaeology’.

It should be clear that the separate and independent consideration of natural and cultural values does not work in Cape York if it does anywhere and that the current range of protective mechanisms and agency driven participatory management programs for environmental management of the Cape do not adequately allow for indigenous control and management.

In particular the international juggernaut of the protected area model designed, imposed and managed by specialists pays scant regard to the intimate and local relationship of people to the landscape in Cape York. The Australian concept of Wilderness has been largely developed by urban-based white Australians in an effort to a) secure the biodiversity of the planet (by statutory gazettal of someone else’s backyard, in this case the Aboriginal and Islander communities of Cape York Peninsula), and, b) secure places of respite and renewal from the stresses of the modern urban and industrial lifestyle. This concept is alien to Aboriginal views of custodianship and the overtones of restriction and exclusivity are likely to be strongly opposed by indigenous communities.

On the other hand it would seem that Aboriginal communities have a clear concern about aspects of environmental protection, they are
concerned about how to educate and control visitors, they see certain areas as unsafe and would like to control access into these areas, many of which coincidently have high conservation values. They are also seeking to understand the impacts of modern developments like mining and tourism on the landscape, cultural sites and resource abundance, while at the same time acknowledging that the rate and level of impacts from such activities are often outside their expertise to assess. It would seem therefore that there is plenty of scope for a dialogue to be developed if the process recognised Aboriginal community ownership and if governments and non-government agencies were prepared to develop a different range of statutory protection not bound by the definitions in current legislation. It is against this background that we must consider the management of the cultural landscape of the last 140 years and it is through such a process that a shared heritage can be acknowledged.
Chapter 11

SUSTAINING THE STORI: THE ROLE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

Part II of this thesis recounted the recent history of northern Cape York and tried wherever possible to integrate the archival record with an indigenous voice in relation to those events and their consequences. Chapter 10 looked at the vexed question of the artificial divide between natural and cultural heritage and what it means in terms of heritage management in Cape York. This chapter looks at some of the places that illustrate the recent history of Cape York that Aboriginal people have identified as important. In looking at these places and the management issues associated with them it addresses the following questions:

- How can essentially Western disciplines such as ‘archaeology’, ‘heritage interpretation’ and ‘heritage management’ contribute to indigenous custodianship? and,
- How can those government agencies responsible for heritage conservation, work with communities to support the retention and conservation of a vital community heritage which will both sustain community members and provide educative and tourism experiences for other Australians and inbound tourists.

To ensure that information in this section is not misused, it is not appropriate for any information in this section to be used by government agencies for the purpose of constructing or enhancing registers or inventories of sites. This project did not involve
comprehensive surveys for heritage sites nor was the information collected to create government site registers. At present the Queensland Government’s register of Aboriginal sites is problematic as there is no public access at all (pers.comm. M. Rowlands 1999). This means that information added to registers effectively leaves the community domain and is not accessible to planners and developers or bonafide researchers to aid in responsible planning and site management. Hence, the register is not a viable protection or planning mechanism for communities throughout Queensland.

11.1 Identity, Culture and Heritage

Before one can start to discuss “heritage management” or even assess the impact of archaeology as a method, one needs to have a understanding of the nature of culture and identity in Cape York and the interrelatedness between historical accounts and that identity. In particular, it is necessary to understand how communities see their own identity. This as others have discovered is hard to achieve from the position of ‘outsider’.

From the work of previous researchers in northern Cape York (see Chapter 3) and from the personal accounts of Cape York people incorporated into this thesis, it is evident that identity and culture in Cape York communities are complex concepts for ‘outsiders’ to understand and yet seemingly straightforward to those ‘inside’ the communities. For example the issue of ethnicity is not straightforward in many communities. In Injinoo a person might identify as Aboriginal, Islander (of a particular island) or more generically as a ‘mainlander’ depending on the situation or social context. Complex intermarriage networks and/or past relocations (forced and voluntary) all contribute to the ways in which an individual may choose to identify or be identified in any given situation.
Greer has explored the relationship between archaeological investigation and identity (Greer 1995:210). She in turn draws heavily on Fuary's (1991:3) discussion of the development of notions of 'identity' and 'ethnicity'. Greer points out that in some areas, such as Cape York, "...individuals may subscribe to a number of identities that are invoked in particular contexts" and thus "...a number of identities may exist even at the local level" (Greer 1995:207). This concept of co-existing difference and similarity is relevant to any discussion of identity in Northern Cape York and has particular implications for the discipline of archaeology and its effect or contribution to 'identity'.

I have previously referred to a quote from Moore (1965:127; see also Chapter 3) which referred to the 'lives of the Cape York tribes' having already been 'disrupted by influences from the Torres Straits by the time of first European contact'. This quote reveals an 'outsiders' perspective on cultural identity in relation to Cape York communities, particularly those at the northernmost part of the peninsula. The assumption that Islander influence was/is a "disruption", suggests that Moore sees homogeneity amongst Aboriginal cultures in the area and separateness from Islander culture. It is true that there are differences between people, which allows them to identify as Islander or Aboriginal at a community level. There are always people who are fully integrated into each community and who would identify differently on the individual level. However, if the influences observed related not to the Torres Strait but to Aurukun, would Moore have seen this as a disruption? Certainly Aboriginal people in the northernmost communities and Lockhart see more difference between themselves and Aurukun people than between themselves and Islander people. The idea that the physical entity of the continental coastline is a cultural barrier is more to do with our Western view of the sea as a barrier than with reality. In contrast Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this area see the sea as a landscape, which is continuous with the
terrestrial landscape. The story of Chiveri or Kwoiam (see Chapter 7) provides a powerful demonstration of the connections between mainland, the seascape and the islands of the Torres Strait.

I have argued also that European concepts of power and intellectual and political progress have dominated the understanding of the relationship between Islanders and Mainlanders. For example the concept of ‘colonization’ referred to by Moore, must be regarded almost totally as a European concept with no place in Aboriginal or Islander culture, associated with alien concepts of taking other people’s country. While undoubtedly, communities did expand into unoccupied country or country in which clan group numbers were dwindling for whatever reason, no doubt they would explain and facilitate this move through the emphasis of connections through marriage (Peterson 1983:142).

In practice archaeology focuses heavily on investigations of similarity and difference as it looks for continuities and disruptions in the archaeological record and uses these to draw conclusions about culture, history, affiliations, innovation and displacement between different groups of peoples (eg. O’Connor 1996; Morse 1996). Therefore one would expect that the cultural heritage of northern Cape York as manifested in the archaeological and story places could be interpreted to show evidence of these continuities and disruptions.

To date whenever the heritage resource of Northern Cape York has come to the attention of administrators, government regulators and non-government heritage organizations, it has done so where it is consistent with contemporary national identity and its associated heritage themes. Little or no consideration has been given to how this national identity may or may not be compatible with local indigenous identity. So for example the heritage of the European pioneering endeavour has been emphasised and that has coloured
the interpretation and directed the funding expenditure related to Somerset (see for example Lawrence and Reynolds 1986 and Lawrence, Scott, Cutler & Lawrence 1987); monuments have been erected to Jacky Jacky and Kennedy for their ill fated expedition, and a monument has been erected on Possession Island commemorating its acquisition by the European invaders. Similarly, the theme of pioneers struggling on the wild frontiers is so revered in Australia that families have returned to ‘lost places’ (after Read 1996) throughout the Peninsula leaving small commemorative plaques and square concrete monuments to ancestors, that stand like lonely un-maintained shrines littering the landscape. Examples of these can be seen at Lockerbie and Somerset (see Figure 2).

Another national theme relates to the role of Australians in World War II. There are no publications relating to any of the battles or wartime activities which that were fought from the bases in Northern Cape York that relate to the impact of the war on local Aboriginal communities or the interaction between the forces stationed there and the local people. Little attention has been given to the experiences of the service men that were stationed there and the difficulties of adjusting to the country and climate. And yet there must have been many stories that could be told. Of course this is because of the focus on military ‘heroism’ and in part to the data sources from which these accounts are drawn. RAAF history sheets were recorded throughout the war and have been used as the basis for official histories. These history sheets rarely included any information that might elucidate ‘relationships’. They merely recorded events and to consider relationships or inter-relationships involves a high degree of inference (see Appendix E). It would be difficult to seem heroic while recounting the loneliness and isolation of time spent at a seemingly forgotten radar station in the gulf country or the dependence on local Aboriginal missions for the basic of life, no matter how vital was the role to the defence of the nation. The Aboriginal communities, which to varying extents
supported and tolerated the various wartime forces, have largely disappeared from the wartime history to the extent that some visitors assume that they were evacuated. No wonder then that the documentation of World War II sites has been undertaken by State and Commonwealth agencies with little consultation with Aboriginal communities.

A national heritage depends upon the prior acceptance of a national history. This is the writing and usually more important, the teaching, of an historical narrative that explains the distinctiveness of a nation through time stressing its longstanding and fundamentally different characteristics from other nations and most usually tracing an unbroken evolution from as far back in the past as possible to the present (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996:46).

Byrne has discussed the acquisition of Aboriginal heritage relating to the deep antiquity of occupation of the continent as a way for settler Australians to deepen the history of the nation.

What was involved was not an appropriation of the Aboriginal past by Anglo-Saxon Australians but an appropriation of that past for and by the nation. In the act the geographic mass of Australia took on a meta-persona which subsumed the identity of all cultures within it (Byrne 1993:145).

In the past heritage studies and work in northern Cape York have been limited but where they have occurred they have largely ignored the local voice and the end result has been the establishment of a heritage which is at best irrelevant and at worst in conflict with local community identity and heritage. This is exacerbated by the tiered system of significance ranking linked to funding that is promoted throughout Australia. Commonwealth government funding is directed to places of national significance and state funding is prioritised on the basis of State significance leaving few funds for those places assessed as being of local significance only. Increasingly significance is assessed against a framework of State and National historic themes that inadequately deal with the range of social and indigenous values.

11.2 Place and Identity in Northern Cape York.

Place is an essential ingredient in people’s sense of identity in Cape York today. Stories may be about people but they are also about ‘place’. It is clear that this is also recognized by non-indigenous
sections of society in Australia as knowledge of named places and demonstrated attachment to them is accepted as evidence of Native Title and people’s right to speak for country. New concepts such as archaeology are absorbed easily into this relationship with the land. Archaeological remains are also explained through the relationship of people to place and may serve as acceptable evidence that stories, claims and realities are in fact true.

Others have discussed the possibility of conflicting or at least different histories and meaning being reflected in places and the way in which we choose to interpret or present these under the label of heritage ‘dissonance’ (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996). Byrne (1996) has coined the term heritage ‘erasure by substitution’ to describe the way in which governments and the heritage industry avoid acknowledgement of heritage dissonance relating to sites of human disaster and conflict. In such cases he observes

> For the most part there has been no concerted effort to physically eradicate the remains of these events. The remains are there but at a public level they are neutralised and rendered voiceless (Byrne 1998:18).

Clearly some sites provide particular interpretive challenges and opportunities for the heritage manager. There is of course the potential for messages to be misread or for the transfer of unintentional messages and there is the chance of alienation of the community or sections of it that may be uncomfortable with some of the heritage themes conveyed. However there is also the opportunity to facilitate cross cultural understanding and reconciliation through the consideration and interpretation of such places.

Somerset is one such site (Figure 2). It is a site which one might assume would be an anathema to local Aboriginal people including as it does graves and massacre sites as perpetual reminders of past
violent dispossession. If there is any one site in northern Cape York, which represents repressive occupancy and the end of the old ways, this is it! From the symbolic trespass of Jacky Jacky, to the establishment of the settlement and the erection of barriers and restrictions through to the final bulldozing of the site in opposition to Aboriginal wishes by the Department of Native Affairs in the 1960’s, over one hundred years of repressive activity has centred on this site and left its mark in stories, relics and icons. However contrary to what one would anticipate, the regard in which this site is held cannot be easily categorized. The site has become a complex monument to all of the history of white occupation in the Cape and the persistent survival of local culture but it is also a living site occupied by ghosts of conquerors vanquished by age and a decaying system, spirits of the Bipotaim people who occupy the east coast campsites, short people who guard the forests from intruders and red devils along the stony coast who have continually claimed this area as their own territory. The landscape of Somerset has become absorbed into the complex cosmology of the Aboriginal people who live there.

The interconnection of places is an important feature of identity. A place is important as the focal point of a story but most stories are also part of a bigger story. In the Bipotaim, places which otherwise might have remained nameless where created by heroes who moved through the landscape endowing it with features. Somerset too, is linked with other places both through the activities of Bipotaim people and those of the Jardine family who also moved across the landscape seeking their fortunes and in the process creating havoc and catalysing change amongst the local inhabitants. Any consideration of Somerset therefore must also look at the cultural landscape of the East coast. Here large Aboriginal campsites such as those at Putta Putta, from Bipotaim cover the sand hills. The sites are occupied by the spirits of ancestors who continue to occupy the sites and guard the landscape. Activity in
these areas is proscribed by ritual and tradition. Injinoo residents and members of other communities continue to camp and exploit the resources of the area. However there is a recognition of these large campsites as belonging to others and permission must be sought to safely occupy the area. Aboriginal people recall a massacre site behind the dunes at Putta Putta, not far from Somerset (pers. comm. Meun Lifu 1986). Frank Jardine reportedly rode to the camp and killed all the Aboriginal people who were camping there.

Somerset is also linked to Lockerbie, another of the Jardine family homesteads, and to Vallack Point. While these are important historical sites they are not imbued with the same spiritual qualities by Aboriginal people as Putta Putta and Somerset themselves, despite both places having historically been the scene of insurrection and resistance. At Vallack Point, the outstation operated by Alex Jardine, some of Jardine’s Aboriginal stockmen (not from the local community) joined forces with local Aboriginals to ambush the homestead. Lockerbie was reputedly (Anne Hall pers. comm. 1987) the scene of multiple raids by Wymara in his guerrilla style resistance to Frank Jardine. Other places are known through their associations with Jardine’s exploits. An example is Mosby Creek, where Jardine killed a camp of women and children.

In the following sections in this Chapter I have selected and describe places, which are both important to the communities concerned and also representative of the stori blo mainland as described in Part II (Chapters 5-9 inclusive).

11.3 Places Which Illustrate The Story In Northern Cape York
How can heritage reflect and support local identity? The following section describes some of the places that are indicative of the local heritage of peoples in northern Cape York as it has been describe in Part II of this thesis. This is not an exhaustive list nor is it a full
recording of each of these places but rather an overview of places, condition and significance. There are of course many more cultural heritage sites and places in northern Cape York and many others that I visited that are not detailed here. The communities concerned identified all the sites described as being significant to their cultural heritage and they are considered here on that basis.

These places were identified over field seasons principally in 1987 and 1988 although during the course of discussions and subsequent field trips additional sites were also visited. The sites were selected by Elders who were recognised within their communities as being knowledgeable about such matters.

After talking to people about their history (this is Bipotaim, pastaim, and diskaintaim and the slightly anomalous wartaim), I asked them to identify places from these times that were important to them. My main guide and advisor in this was Meun Lifu although at various times the Rangers from Injinoo, New Mapoon, Umagico, Weipa and Old Mapoon accompanied me to places and/or introduced me to people who knew of places. In the case of Lockhart River I only spent one brief visit of a week in 1987 looking at sites relating to World War II and mining. Once again Meun Lifu and his wife Clara provided an introduction into the community via their family. The sites were shown to me by the brother in law (now deceased) of Mrs Rene Hobson.

The places were photographed during the original site visit and in the case of a sample of the most significant places were more fully recorded during subsequent visits. It was intended at one point to map all World War II sites with the aid of the army but this did not eventuate. The sites were too large and too geographically dispersed to attempt this alone.
11.3.1 The legacy of pastaim
This period of time encompasses events from early European settlement up to and including the earliest memories of those living today. By definition this time division is expanding as people grow older and die and younger people mature into adults and the custodians of heritage. World War II is on the cusp between historical time and now as it recedes into pastaim. The same can be said for the end of the mission era and even the discovery of bauxite and the events surrounding its initial exploitation.

11.3.1.1 Invasion and Settler Activity
As we have seen there are many places that attest to this period. There are massacre sites for instance associated with the Kennedy expedition and there are individual stories from up and down the Cape regarding the expansion of white settlers and the consequent displacement if not death of Aboriginal people. For example, Silver Plains station at Port Stewart was a prime example of treacherous dispossession (see section 5.6 and the documentation relating to the removal of Port Stewart people Appendix B). Other places, for example, Utingu, seemed to develop through experiences that seemed more harmonious and of mutual benefit (McLaren 1946; Sharp 1992).

Somerset:
Somerset is located on the north east coast of Cape York Peninsula it is approximately 9kms Southeast of Cape York or the ‘Tip’ as it is known locally and to tourists. It is directly opposite Albany Island (see Map 2 and Figures 7, 8 and 9). The historical background of Somerset is outlined in Chapter 6.

The settlement of Somerset occupied the two headlands Somerset Point and Sheriden Point, either side of Somerset Bay, and from the Bay itself back into the elevated area immediately behind the bay for a distance of approximately 700m. There is considerable relief at
the site with elevation varying from sea level at the shoreline to over 40 m at the plantation site (see Plate 4). Figure 7 shows the general extent of the site today. The cross section in Figure 7 indicates the changes in the elevation of the site from Somerset Point to Sheriden Point.

The surrounding vegetation is tropical rainforest although the coconut plantation itself is likely to have originally had slightly sparser vegetation due to its elevated sandy soils. Since being cleared for the plantation the area has been slow to regenerate. The slopes down to the bay and the garrison area are covered in thick vine cover and there is no visibility at ground level due to the thick cover of leaf litter in these areas.
Figure 7: The Site of Somerset today.
Figure 8: Detail of Residency and Plantation area, Somerset
In the bay itself there are mangroves fringing either end of a sandy beach. The sand extends to just above the high water mark. As the bay is so sheltered there are no dunes instead the area beyond the sand is grassed and shaded by native fruit trees making this a popular picnic area. At low tide there are sand and mudflats that extend out to the low water mark from which point coral reef extends out into Albany Passage. At the south-eastern end of the beach just inside the mangroves a freshwater spring has been turned into a well.

The geology of the area is interesting in that this is one of the few places on the northern mainland where weathered sandstone outcrops. There are sandstone shelters to the northwest of Somerset Bay with Aboriginal art dating to the pre and post contact period. Most of the northern part of Cape York is granitic and there are few rock shelters or art sites. The sandstone extends to the offshore islands, and Albany Island for instance has several rock shelters around its shoreline.

Initial mapping of the site was undertaken by David Lawrence and a team from James Cook University (Lawrence, Scott, Cutler & Lawrence 1987). Lawrence kindly provided me with a copy of his initial draft field map, which I was able to take into the field in 1987 and annotate during a field inspection. The current Figures 7 and 8 are based on this recording.

The settlement of Somerset was divided across this landscape with the Imperial Garrison located on Somerset Point, the northwest headland (Area 3 Figure 7). The customs office site, the graveyard, wells and jetty foundations occupy the low-lying area of the beach.
and the area immediately behind it (Area 2 Figure 7). On the high
ground immediately behind the bay and east to Sheriden Point were
the magistrate’s residency and the planned township, which later
became the site of the Jardine homestead and copra plantation
occupies the south-eastern headland (Area 1 Figure 7).

For these newcomers who planned to wrest the land from both the
Aborigines and nature, the modification of the landscape was a
statement of ownership, power and intent. Bender points out that ‘in
the contemporary Western world we ‘perceive’ landscapes, we are the
point from which the ‘seeing’ occurs. It is thus an ego-centred
landscape, a perspectival landscape, a landscape of views and vistas’
Bender 1993:1). Understanding this provides an insight into the
reasoning which saw the wholesale modification of a small bit of land
at the northern most part of the Colony of Queensland (see Plate 4).
This creation of a landscape of conquest provides the rationale for the
energy expenditure that went into the construction of the endless stone
walls that terraced the headlands and which are still visible today
amongst the encroaching tropical forest.

There are no substantial structures remaining at the site apart from
the extensive but overgrown stonewalls and terracing. The
Queensland government bulldozed the house itself ostensibly
because it was seen as a fire hazard. The veracity of this excuse is
clearly questionable as there are no other settlements or homesteads
nearby and the bush is burnt off regularly anyway as part of seasonal
burning practices. It seems clear that the building was really bulldozed
to prevent Aboriginal people from choosing to live there. This was
during a period when Aboriginal people were being concentrated back
into the villages after a brief period where some had been encouraged
to settle on small farms.
The visible physical remains of the settlement are scanty. In Area 1 there are scattered remains and relics dispersed across the homestead and plantation site. There are several graves no longer maintained, secluded within the bush on the margins of the plantation. Few coconut trees remain alive in this area, although in the late 1980’s the lines of the plantation were still visible. The small hut known as the ‘caretakers hut’ remains but post dates the Jardine involvement at the site.

In Area 2, the most obvious remains are the graveyard, the monument to the Kennedy expedition, and the stonewalls that can be glimpsed either side of the access road. There are several posts remaining that were part of the jetty and boathouse, and a well that still provides freshwater to travellers is located in behind the mangroves at the southern end of the beach.

Area 3 is the more difficult to access, as it requires one to travel through thick scrub up the side of the northern headland. The garrison site is overgrown and there are no extant structures. However there are stone edgings that probably relate to small gardens around the barracks and several bottle dumps have been located as well as a look out across Albany Passage, which is cut into the bedrock (see Plate 22).

The site has substantial archaeological potential, particularly when compared to other sites on northern Cape York. Given the length of occupation of the site and the varying numbers of people there and the amount of interaction with outsider groups there is the likelihood that even given the extensive disturbance that the site has suffered, there is subsurface material.
Significance:
Of all the places discussed here, Somerset is the place most widely known to all Australian people. As the site of the first seat of government in the region and the earliest settlement it is symbolic of the hopes and dreams of the new Queensland Colony and the individuals who sought their futures there. The place is a testament to the massive disruption that European invasion caused to the Aboriginal people of the region and their resilience in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. Ultimately too, Somerset is the place from which Europeans retreated away from intractable nature. It set the scene for progressive invasions and retreats in the Cape with the intervention of the missionaries and their retreat (or as old people in Mapoon see it ‘abandonment’); the reserve years and the rule of the reserve managers, which ended in 1984. Perhaps this experience of
Europeans as an ephemeral if somewhat disruptive presence explains why many see the tourists as a passing nuisance. It is reported that some Native Americans had a word for Europeans, which meant ‘the ones who are passing through’ (Allison 1999:273). History would suggest that this is an apt description of Europeans in northern Cape York.

For local Aboriginal people Somerset is also significant as a place where short people, red devils dwell. While Somerset Bay is a popular camping place for tourists few Injinoo people will stay there overnight. The resources of the area including the native fruit trees on the beach area make it a regular stopping point during the day but the nearby East Coast area is preferred for overnight stays. Occasionally young men will venture into the scrub hunting wild pig but many have stories about experiences where short people have tricked them and got them lost. It stands to reason that Frank Jardine who dominated the area throughout his lifetime still haunts the area in spirit form adding another unsettling element to the sentient landscape.

**Management Issues:**
The principal management issues that relate to the site, its integrity and the likelihood of long term conservation are accessibility and visitor impact, lack of onsite management and supervision, visitor safety, and the lack of interpretation or sympathetic planning. In 1984 a Conservation Plan was prepared (McIntyre 1994) which addressed these and other issues for the site. However, due to a lack of funds and expertise the Injinoo Community has not implemented the plan and management proceeds in an adhoc manner each dry season when tourist numbers are at their peak.
Accessibility and visitor impact: tens of thousands of four-wheel drive vehicles per year visit this site as it is on a main (although dirt) road. The site is listed in many guide books, most of which emphasise the pathos of the failed settlement, the isolation and struggle of the invading Europeans, and what was once there over the physical reality that there are scant visible remains (Pike 1983).

Lack of on site management and supervision. There is no onsite management presence at Somerset. In view of the high visitor numbers and the fact that these vehicles drive through the site there is great potential for damage to occur to the site. During my time working with Injinoo rangers I attended a number of routine patrols of this area and on various occasions found tourists

- polluting the well (the only source of fresh drinking water for kilometres) by washing themselves, shampooing their hair and washing their clothes in it;
- knocking down coconut trees from the remnant plantation to get a coconut;
- driving their vehicles through the stone walls to get past a boggy patch on the road;
- driving across the homestead site (through a fence) because they were too lazy to walk across and see what was on the other side;
- driving across the homestead site to avoid a sandy patch on the access track;
- removing brass nameplates from the Jardine graves for souvenirs;
- sleeping on the graves (considered by the community to be not only sacrilegious but dangerous and foolish);
- hunting through the site and surrounding forests with steel bows and arrows and various firearms;
Signage does not adequately protect the site from the potential for damage and desecration. As recommended in the Conservation Plan (McIntyre 1994:36), an on site presence is required at least during the peak tourist season.

Visitor Safety: As there is no nearby official or ranger presence in the area, visitor safety remains an issue here as in many other parts of Cape York. In addition to the usual hazards which might include snake bite, crocodile attack, and vehicle accident there is the added concern of the generally dangerous nature of parts of the surrounding scrub. In the main it is recognised that visitors to the area do not like to travel far from beaches and roads and so the risk of people straying far into the realm of the short people is currently minimal, although some community members express concern about campers sleeping near the graveyard. Any interpretation of the area previously occupied by the garrison or the forested areas would need to be by way of guided tour with some familiar with the way in which to safely traverse the area.

Saltwater crocodile attack remains a very real possibility as tourists often swim here and have even been discovered skinny dipping at night. Saltwater crocodile warning signs appear to have only limited success in educating the visiting public.

Lack of interpretation and sympathetic planning: The challenge in presenting a site such as Somerset arises from its status as an archaeological site. Apart from signs, which announce the presence of the homestead and graveyard, there is no onsite interpretation. There are a couple of plaques privately erected one to commemorate the Vidgeon - Jardine family and one the Kennedy expedition but in themselves these do not adequately reflect the significance of the site.
Permanent weatherproof signage is very expensive and is only part of the answer to adequate interpretation at the site. Ideally site interpretation should be by guided tour so that people can experience the site. For this to work of course the management of the site needs to be planned. The first step is to limit vehicle access to the site. It is not possible to protect this site given the number of vehicles that pass through it each year. The Conservation Plan prepared by the community (McIntyre 1994) recommended that the through road to Fly Point be closed to all but emergency and authorised traffic and that a Visitors Centre be built on the junction of the Somerset and Lake Bronto roads (Figure 9). At that point people could pick up a guide and proceed either to the east coast or Somerset. Tourist camping would either be prohibited altogether at Somerset or heavily restricted and managed (see Figure 9).
Figure 9: Proposed conservation area, Somerset and east Coast
11.3.1.2 Other Colonial Homesteads and Outstations

Of course the heritage from this period is not simply represented by this one place. In the Northern Peninsula Area alone it would be sensible to integrate the management of other Jardine family homestead sites such as Lockerbie (Figures 2, 9 and 10) and Bertie Haugh (Figure 1). There is also the site of Utingu (Figure 2) not far from Somerset which was occupied by Jack McLaren (McLaren 1946) from 1911 until 1919, although there is little to remind one of its past use.

Lockerbie Homestead Site

The site of Lockerbie is located approximately 20kms west southwest of Somerset on the road from Bamaga to Cape York and Somerset (Figure 2). It is set on the edge of a sparsely treed plain on the foothills of the Carnegie Range. There is a distinct vegetation change from the plains in front of the homestead site to the rainforest covering the hill, which rises directly to the southeast of the site. The red soils at Lockerbie are richer than the sands at Somerset, which is reportedly why Jardine established a farm there. Freshwater is available from wells, which are spring fed.

I first visited this site in 1986. In 1987 I returned accompanied by Ann Hall nee Holland whose father and brother had worked at the site. Mrs Hall was re visiting the site where she had spent part of her childhood as research for a family history she was writing (Hall 1989). In 1988, I surveyed the site (Figures 10 and 11). At that time the site consisted of a grove of mango trees of different varieties, stone edging around what was once a garden, mounds which were obviously foundations for structures of some type, a number of wells and a spring. In addition, there were more recent stockyards and a house which had been used by stockmen in the past but which was now used as an
Figure 10: Site plan, Lockerbie
Figure 11: Detail of garden and old homestead area, Lockerbie
occasional weekender by a person from Bamaga who held a lease over the area.

No plans or maps could be found of the Lockerbie Homestead however Ann Hall recounted her memory of the site (Anne Hall pers.com 1987). The mounds that can be seen to the west of the stone gardens were the location of buildings. She remembers 4 houses in succession being located at Lockerbie. The original Jardine residence burnt down and a weatherboard building was built in 1938 on Frank Jardine’s old kitchen site, another house was built in 1946 with an additional building in 1947. Mrs Hall also recalled avenues of coconut palms, which she says were cut down by the army during the period in which the family was evacuated from the area (i.e. 1942-46). Aboriginal people apparently worked on the property and were camped nearby. She remembers Mary and Charlie Lifu camping near the springs. A men’s ceremonial site was apparently located about 2 km along the Punsand Bay Road. She recalled that a ‘corroborree’ site was located at Black Hill near a campsite.

Lockerbie dates to the latter part of Frank Jardine’s life when he diversified his farming operations. He and his family established an experimental farm of sorts here including growing multiple varieties of mangos, limes, tea, cassava, and rubber trees. Dick Holland and his family later occupied the site while Jardine employed him. People from the local Aboriginal community of Injinoo (then Cowal Creek) worked the property (Anne Hall pers.com 1987).

There is little official documentation dating to the period of Frank Jardine’s occupation and Mrs Hall’s memories of the site relate to the later use of the site for cattle grazing by her father Ginger Dick Holland and her brother Stan Holland. However excavations at the site in the vicinity of the foundation mounds may help to
understand the changes that have occurred at this site and verify the sequence and purpose of the structures.

**Significance:** The site has community value to the people of Injinoo several of whom had immediate family who worked there or in the cattle industry associated with its occupation by the Holland family. The site has historic significance because of its association with Frank Jardine who established a diversified garden there growing mangos, tea, limes, cassava and rubber. The site also has significance as a site of resistance as Wymara a Yadhaigana (or Mapoon Mission records say Seven Rivers) man reportedly inflicted raids on the property, on several occasions emerging from the cover of the scrub on the hill.

In addition Lockerbie scrub which provides a backdrop to the homestead site is another province of short people. Lockerbie scrub is notorious amongst the local community for encounters with short men that ‘make your head go round’ or in other words leave you confused and lost. Experienced hunters have wandered for several days in the scrub before finally making their way out, often emerging close to where they entered the scrub with no idea of how the got lost. There has been talk of re cutting Jardine’s bridle track from Lockerbie to Somerset to offer tourist the opportunity to travel between the two places on horseback but for safety reason such a group would have to be accompanied by a language speaker. It is interesting to note that Lockerbie scrub has significant natural values and the preservation of this area not only safeguards the home of the short people but contributes to long stated natural heritage conservation objectives in northern Cape York.

**Management Issues:**
At the time of survey recording, the site had archaeological potential, although there were unsubstantiated reports of bottle
collections having been made at the site by descendents of the white settlers. As the site is located so close to the Bamaga-Cape York Road it has always had a high level of visitation. In fact the road runs through what was part of the gardens and mango plantation. In addition, the ‘Croc Shop’ (a transient shop selling cold drinks and trinkets) set up across the road from the main site for several years during the dry season and directed tourists over to look at it. This visitation had led the Aboriginal Rangers (then employed by Department of Community Services) to fence the stone gardens off sometime in the early 1980’s, so that vehicles didn’t drive through the mangos and disturb them.

The archaeological value of the site may have been severely compromised in recent years as since my recording of the area, a non-indigenous person has moved in and severely vandalized this site (field visit 1994). Despite heritage laws protecting this place, this person has bulldozed part of it and set up a sprawling makeshift squatters residence in the location of the old homestead and gardens (Plate 23). Unfortunately the fence erected by the rangers so many years ago to protect the site leads many uninformed tourists to assume that what was inside the fence was the whole site. This person obviously knew little about the site and assumed they were not adversely affecting it. On the contrary however the disturbance is severe and includes laying a cement slab digging latrines and cutting down part of the historic mango plantation. Ironically she told me that she was occupying the site to set up a tourism enterprise to interpret the site to tourists! Prior to this disturbance however the garden layout was visible, the area where structures had been located were evident by mounds of rubble and there was a scattering of material between the gardens and homestead site and the wells (see Figures 10 & 11). Without appropriate planning controls in place in the region this type of uniformed exploitation remains an ongoing risk to the heritage of northern Cape York and almost without fail destroys the potential
of the place to inform visitors or to support cultural tourism enterprises.

Plate 23: Destruction of Lockerbie homestead site

Most of the other homesteads in Cape York other than Somerset, relate to the later establishment of the cattle industry in the area. However a Cape-wide heritage management strategy should look at the contribution of all the stations to the heritage of the area including the involvement of local Aboriginal people in the cattle industry as practised at these places (for a generalized history of Aboriginal involvement in the cattle industry in northern Cape York see May 1983). Such places are likely to have strong values to both Aboriginal people and those non–indigenous people whose families have worked the properties. It has become unfashionable to recognise that non-indigenous Australians can form deep attachments to landscape and that for many people there is a spiritual dimension to their perceptions and feelings about places.
It is clear that there is considerable heartache amongst pastoralists in northern Queensland over the demise of their livelihood, which is forcing the small family operators to sell out to large generally non-resident pastoral enterprises. Economic values are likely to be the predominant interest of non-resident pastoralists and also overshadow other expressed values for pastoralists facing the imminent loss of their livelihood but it would be an oversimplification to draw a black/white dichotomy here (for such an argument see Strang 1997 and 1999). In many cases the division between pastoralists who run family based operations which have spanned several generations, and Aborigines is false, as Aboriginal people have married in to the cattle farming families (for example at Bramwell Station the matriarch Theresa Heinemann is from Old Mapoon). Contrast this to the work of Peter Read in documenting ‘attachment’ (Read 1996) and for a more complex view of non-indigenous Australians relationship with the land and the issues of Aboriginal ownership (Read 2000).

**Patterson and Punsand Bay Telegraph Stations**

Patterson Telegraph Station site is located on the west coast of Cape York approximately 11km north of Bamaga (Figure 2). Although abandoned with no structures remaining the reserved area is still indicated on the current 100,000 topographic map series (Thursday Island Series R631 Sheet 7376 Edition 1-AAS). The area is lightly timbered and includes approximately 3km of beach frontage. The area is bounded in the north by Laradeenya Creek and in the south by Paterson Hill.

The site is one of a series of telegraph stations associated with the construction of the original telegraph line from Cooktown to Thursday Island. The line connected Australia to the rest of the world. The route for the line was surveyed by J.R Bradford who left Cooktown on the 6th June 1883 and arrived at Somerset on the 29th August 1883.
There were telegraph stations built at Fairview, Musgrave, Coen and Mein, Morton, McDonnell and Paterson. The Paterson Station was later moved to Peak Hill in 1894. Work commenced on the telegraph line in 1885 and was completed in September 1887 (see Appendix A).

The buildings at each of the telegraph stations were of a standard design.

All stations ...were built like forts to protect staff and equipment from the ‘wild blacks’. The buildings were constructed of heavy gauge galvanised iron and on two diagonally opposite corners, a protruding gun port was built. Each port gave a clear view along two sides of the building as well as forward viewing. All windows were fitted with steel shutters which could be bolted from the inside... some water tanks were built inside the building so that no-one had to venture outside for water, nor could the blacks spear the tanks or poison the water. The buildings were built on special stumps and under the building was protected by iron also. There were a set of stairs going down from inside the house as well as an external set...The buildings comprised a number of rooms surrounding a closed in verandah area with open verandah at the front. They were officially described as eight roomed (Sheehy 1987:16).

Despite the robust sounding descriptions of these buildings only Musgrave remains. The Army Engineers rebuilt the later building at Punsand Bay near Peak Point in 1942 when they took over the line. There are only fragmentary remains of this site visible today. These include coral lined garden beds, a small concrete structure approximately the size of a phone booth (Plate 24) and rusted pieces of equipment scattered across the surface.

Significance

The construction of the telegraph line was an important step in ‘securing’ the north. Imperial Germany had a foothold in New Guinea and in 1883 the Queensland Colony decided to annex Papua. It provided the colony of Queensland with a connection to the outside world (particularly England). For many years, first as the telegraph and later as the telephone line, it connected the isolated communities and stations along the Cape. Many of the stations became a focus for Aboriginal activity and settlement and retain special significance to Aboriginal people today as
homelands. Some became targets for resistance to the European invaders.

Management Issues:
Unfortunately little remains at these sites. There is limited archaeological potential at some of the sites including the one at Peak Point near Punsand Bay. There are few visitors to these sites because there is so little to capture their interest and most tourists would be unaware of the location of the stations.

The McDonnell site has been resettled as an outstation by Mrs Miriam Crow and it is known by its Aboriginal name Attambayah. Interpretative attention and conservation works should focus on the Musgrave station, which is still standing. Musgrave is now a cattle station, which operates as significant tourist operation as a café during tourist season each year.
11.3.2 The Legacy of the Mission Period

Until recent years archaeologists and anthropologists have largely avoided studies of Aboriginal missions and the missionary period in general. Swain and Rose say that this is due in part to the assumption prevalent prior to the 1960's that

...Aboriginal cultures could not adapt to rapid change...that responses lying between these polar opposites [i.e. complete traditionalism and total assimilation] were decried as embarrassing and unfortunate bastards whose existence was best ignored. Certainly these 'sports' were not considered worthy of serious scholarly investigation (Bird-Rose and Swain 1988:2).

Research into this period has gained popularity and credibility since a growing number of Aboriginal people have begun to actively
research their own families and communities creating something of a demand amongst professional researchers.

What are we recording when we describe the Mission period? Contemporary observers of the Missions in Cape York as elsewhere, focussed on the exploits, and achievements of the Missionaries themselves. There was an untried assumption that such endeavours resulted in an improved lifestyle for the Aboriginal communities involved and this view is rarely challenged (for an exception see the official enquiry into events at Mapoon Mission station). Nowadays, this era is viewed with the benefit of our political awareness and hindsight and the focus is often on oppression and loss. Very few heritage professionals understand and describe the time as interpreted by those that lived it. Is the heritage of the mission era one of nostalgia for the past, perhaps pride in ones endeavours working on the mission or one of loss, heartbreak and alienation? Mission heritage is the most difficult for everyone to come to terms with. Nearly every white person who writes about this period (who isn't a Church representative) deals with the subject very emotively. There are some sad, frustrating and outrageous actions and events documented from this period and so to some extent this is perhaps understandable. However it is advisable to guard against telling people how they should feel, for example that white Australians should feel guilt and Aborigines that they should be angry. Sometimes people experience such a pressure to experience these emotions that people feel they will be attacked or at least judged if they do not express these sentiments.

This obscures the real heritage of the period. It is rarely as clear cut as the politically correct would have us believe. Aboriginal peoples reaction to the mission period involves complex layers of emotion and attachment that should not be denied. All communities feel the impact of the double-edged sword that best represents the missionary endeavour in Cape York. People who once lived on a
mission sometimes feel anger; they may also feel frustration and inadequacy when they realise how much cultural information or family history they have lost. However, at other times they feel homesick for the people and the mission environment, for a time when it appeared there were clear and common village objectives to work towards. Many feel pride in the accomplishments of this period, for example, the Church building at Mapoon. Many Aboriginal people are Christians who formed strong bonds with the missionaries and other church members and who do not believe that all the old mission way were so bad especially when they look around at the problems facing their communities and kids today. While it may not be logical or necessarily popular with the young in each village many old peoples strongest feeling are feelings of betrayal and loss at the Churches' perceived abandonment of them.

Young people in Cape York, on the other hand, never experienced the missions first hand and generally regard with abhorrence the stories of their elders that reveal the discipline and lack of personal autonomy characteristic of mission life. Some also feel cheated of their culture and a sense of belonging to the homelands of their parents and grandparents, particularly if they were forcibly removed from it as in the case of Mapoon. However despite this, or maybe because of this, they may see places at the old mission as important ties to the past and as symbolic of the survival of their culture and heritage. In a large and unfamiliar landscape a structure or a named place from their grandparents or parents stories becomes an important icon representing a much broader story and providing a physical link to their heritage. Such places serve to bring the past into the present reinforcing the continuity of ownership of the landscape.
11.3.2.1 Structures and Fabric

Maintaining structures in the tropical environment was a problem throughout the history of the missions. Resources for renovating and rebuilding structures essential for mission operations always occupied a large part of annual reports to the Board of Missions and also was one of the main features of Mission daily Event Diaries maintained by each of the missions. For example in the annual report to the Board of Missions for the period 1949-51 the following report regarding buildings was given:

The government of Queensland erected three cottages on Thursday Island for use of our Mission natives during their stay on the Island for medical aid and other reasons. Mr Cane supervises the property with the help of a native caretaker. A new cottage has been completed at Aurukun; but though the timber for the new Manse is on the ground it has not been possible to proceed with the building.

Many of our buildings are old. Originally built of galvanised iron they are hot to live in. Some are in need of renewal; others are utterly inadequate for their purpose. The climate is hard on the buildings. A new house (Manse) has been completed at Thursday Island. An attempt has been made to finish the Mission Houses and install refrigerators. The Mission house at Mapoon is in good repair now but the Church is falling down. Money for the new Church at Aurukun is being collected. Weipa has had installed an electric light plant; the schoolhouse is almost complete and several tons of concrete have been used there and on the other stations for foundations etc.

Some serious talking is being done on the question of removing all the buildings at the present site of Mapoon to Red Beach nearby. This would answer the question of rebuilding worn-out structures.\(^{32}\)

Difficult to maintain without a ready and to some extent captive workforce at hand, it is no surprise that the buildings deteriorated rapidly once the missions ceased. In most cases the buildings, structures, vehicles, boats and landscapes associated with missions have either been lost or altered beyond recognition. In 1990 I visited Old Mapoon with a group of elders and rangers from the Mapoon community. At that time very little remained of the mission buildings most of which had been destroyed at the time of forced removal of Mapoon people to discourage them from ever

\(^{32}\) Extract from the Queensland Aboriginal & Foreign Missions Committee- Report to the Board of Missions of the G.A of A 1949-51 Records of the Presbyterian Board of Missions in Mitchell Library MLMSS 1893 Item # MLK02570
returning. The Mission House however had been spared that fate but all that remained of it was a skeleton of the old structure, the rest having been destroyed by nature and vandals. At the time of our visit however it was still recoverable as an historic building either for maintenance as a ruin or rebuilding to a habitable structure. However, a year or so later I heard that it had been completely burned to the ground. The graveyard, the almond tree and small ephemeral traces are probably all that now remain to attest to this very important place.

Plate 25: Graveyard at Old Mapoon

Around the same time I visited Aurukun and discovered that the main dormitory building of the mission still stood in the middle of Aurukun village. It was more intact than any other mission building I had observed in Cape York and was the last remaining mission dormitory in the Cape. At that time I approached the Aurukun Shire Clerk and suggested that he apply for a heritage grant to restore the building to a useable state. He responded however that it would
be better demolished and that it was likely to be burnt to the ground. Somewhat grudgingly he agreed to me preparing an application for heritage assistance funding through the Qld government. Unfortunately the grant was unsuccessful because it did not meet the priorities that year. Soon after the building was completely destroyed by fire by persons unknown.

In 1991 the Church at Aurukun still stood although being a simple structure of fibro, iron and wood and no doubt subject to many repairs and renovations over the years. It is not clear how much original fabric remains in the building. At the time that my photographs were taken the church had just been renovated and a number of internal decorations and paintings had been removed and discarded. The steeple made by the Mapoon people, which was moved to Aurukun at the time of the forced removal of people from Mapoon is still on the church.

The mission hospital and missionary’s residence at Weipa still remained (as at 1991), although with very little original fabric. CDEP teams have renovated these buildings for community use with whatever materials the community had available but have not had the benefit of conservation plans or heritage advice to guide their work.

At Lockhart River, I did not get the opportunity to visit 'Old Site' where the mission was situated but in 1986 both the church and school buildings were substantially intact (Anderson 1987). Architecturally these buildings were interesting, utilizing bush timbers to achieve some classic church features such as arched doorways. At that time the buildings were well roofed so there is a chance that these buildings are extant.

Though most of the buildings relating to the mission period in northern Cape York are either derelict, or destroyed, it is clear
when talking to people who recall the mission days (Stephen Mark pers.comm 1991; Clara Bond nee Martin pers.comm. 1987) that the places which they occupied in the landscape are still held dear in people’s hearts. It would be a mistake to assume that Aboriginal people did not care for these places or that they had consciously set out to destroy them. Nevertheless, most of the buildings marking 70 years of missionary endeavour across northern Cape York have been effectively eradicated. While many people, particularly the elderly, in these communities speak with fondness of the missionary days the government has failed to respond with appropriate heritage conservation and community councils are ill equipped (in both skills and funds) to deal with the conservation requirements of built heritage. Community members who grew up on the missions often express a sense of loss and abandonment when they speak of the mission days. They may acknowledge on the one hand that the missionaries cost them a lot of information about their culture (particularly language) but they recall positive aspects of those days including friends and family and the freedom to carry out certain activities such as employment all of which was lost or forcibly taken from them in the ensuing era of government control through the reserve system.

Some people particularly from the middle-aged bracket have begun to research their community and family histories and avidly collect photographs of mission days and stories of mission days are eagerly sought from those left to remember them. Graveyards remain at each of the mission sites and are important sites to the communities concerned. Given that many markers in these graveyards were wooden, and the area prone to termites and cyclonic weather, a lot of information has already disappeared from them. It is imperative that work is undertaken to map and identify as many graves as possible as more and more people are trying to piece together the histories of their families and the geographic map of that history.
Significance:
Christianity has had and continues to have a strong influence in many Aboriginal communities and there is a strong attachment on the part of Aboriginal people in Cape York to the places and structures associated with the mission period. The Mission stations in northern Cape York as elsewhere in Australia restructured lives and social affiliations and for some communities (for example Mapoon) life on the mission is the tradition that they remember.

Of course much of the heritage of missionary effort lies not in structures and places but in song, practice and ritual. Many community songs, not only hymns but also children’s and popular songs are derived from that period. Also church services, practices such as house and tombstone openings and even bora ceremonies (Thompson 1988), have all been influenced by both pre missionary tradition and missionary influences.

Plate 26: The church at the Sacred Heart Mission, one of the few stone mission buildings.

33 many of these songs have a moral such as girls should be wary of boys and so forth. For example a commonly sung local song in Injimoo is ‘One starry night’ which describes a group of girls going for a walk, being approached by some boys to walk with them but the girls told them to go away because otherwise the boys would get the girls into trouble.
Management Issues:
This thesis is not a heritage identification and assessment exercise. It is not my intention to tell people which items must be kept nor is it to provide a list of places to be added to state and national registers. Rather I have tried to distil my understanding of the history of this period and of the connections that local people feel to that history. Therefore this will provide a sound-starting place for discussions between heritage management agencies and communities about how the former may assist those communities to conserve what is important to them.

The complex emotional response to mission heritage can only really be found through oral testimony. In interpreting the physical remains of mission sites it is essential that archival research be supplemented by oral histories. This of course adds an element of
increased urgency to the conservation of this heritage, as there are dwindling numbers of people alive today who can provide this sort of testimony.

What is inarguably important is ‘family’. Increasingly Aboriginal people are researching their family trees and mission records are an invaluable source of information. Graveyards, however, while not always very informative because they do not tend to be well marked and are in bad repair, are important physical connections to family. Each of the missions had cemeteries and as well as being important resting-places of spirits they are also poignant reminders of life. Without question funding should be provided by heritage agencies to communities to map, record and maintain cemeteries for community records.

There are so few remaining mission buildings in Far North Queensland that the government should assist communities to retain these buildings. There is a great tendency in Aboriginal communities to tear down old places as soon as possible to build new ones. This is partly because the government has for many years provided housing funds on a replacement basis. In other words communities are given funding for new places to replace old substandard buildings and conditional on the demolition of these older buildings. This was an effective way of getting rid of a lot of physical evidence relating to management of reserves, which are a potential embarrassment to the government now that there are large numbers of tourists accessing the area. This policy not only affects the erasure of the recent heritage of Cape York but it also serves to quarantine the memories of those people who lived through those times. Without the physical evidence of the buildings to illustrate the story it is easy for young people in the communities to shrug off the stories and adults often express frustration that they are unable to make the young realise just how much has been achieved in a relatively short space of time. Should any buildings
remain, the focus should be on finding a community re-use for the building and communities should make all decisions about the re-use. Mapping the places in the mission landscape would provide an insight into changes in land use associated with mission life and the areas of continuity in practices.

11.3.3 The legacy of World War II

World War II sites feature heavily in the local heritage of the Cape York Peninsula, particularly in the most northern area, Coen and Lockhart River where there were significant airbases. Northern Cape York and the Torres Strait were seen as strategically important areas to the defence of Australia and the protection of allied shipping lanes during the war. The area was also significant in supporting the war in New Guinea and the Pacific. Higgins Field and Horn Island landing strips were part of a chain of aerodromes from Townsville to Port Moresby.

The war years saw massive construction activity with the building of roads, jetties aerodromes, radar stations and other infrastructure. As well as the large areas that underwent physical transformations there was of course a major social impact. Not only did Aboriginal communities have to adjust to the large temporary male populations but also once again they had to adjust to sharing their landscape with outsiders. What is more, the armed forces demanded exclusive rights to occupation and of course traffic within certain areas was curtailed. In the case of the northern most part of Cape York Peninsula and Thursday Island around 363 Japanese colleagues, friends and acquaintances were imprisoned and communities had to adjust to the news that these friends of only days before were now considered to be the enemy. Some local people actively participated in the war effort via the Torres Straight Light Infantry Battalion. Others supported in other ways through the supply of fresh food and the supply of coast watch information. A wireless network was established and controlled by
Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion at Thursday Island. Such stations were set up on Horn Goode, Daru, Hammond and Prince of Wales Islands. On the northern Peninsula itself stations were established at Somerset, Bamaga, Mapoon, Weipa, Aurukun, Edward and Mitchell Rivers, Lockhart River/Iron Range and Coen. It was no accident that these stations were set up adjacent to Aboriginal communities as they relied on the infrastructure and access facilities provided by these communities.

Table 1 below provides an overview of physical remains that are to some extent visible and/or likely to be present in the archaeological record at places in Northern Cape York and those Torres Strait islands in immediate proximity.

11.3.3.1 Airbases, landing fields and crash sites:

**Higgins Field and Iron Range**

Airbases, landing field and crash sites are probably the most obvious of the World War II sites in Cape York. Of the landing fields and airbases probably the bases at Lockhart (Iron Range) and Bamaga (Higgins Field) probably provide the greatest heritage potential, due to both their size and their strategic importance during the war. The physical evidence at Lockhart River which included two landing strips is less disturbed than at Bamaga, partly because one of the strips, the Claudie strip, is no longer used and has been reclaimed and protected by regrowth vegetation.

At Higgins Field (now Jacky Jacky airport) there are plane parts in the terminal as a monument to the war effort. The defence site at Higgins Field was larger than the current airport and extended into the surrounding bush to accommodate all the personnel and paraphernalia associated with an operational base and RAAF headquarters. In the surrounding bush land today there are still the roads and lines of stones from stone edged campsites, piles of rusting fuel drums and other metal and a number of crashed
planes. For example Plate 28 shows a water tank that has been adapted for an unknown purpose still standing in the bush not far from Jacky Jacky airport.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Radar Station</th>
<th>Airfield</th>
<th>Signals</th>
<th>Navy site</th>
<th>Portjett</th>
<th>Operatio nal Base</th>
<th>RAAF Station</th>
<th>Crash site</th>
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Table 1: Summary of remains associated with WWII places in northern Cape York.
There is evidence of the war effort up the entire length of Cape York. Further south the Coen (for location of Coen see Figure 1) airstrip today is the replacement strip built by the Department of Civil Aviation on instruction from North Eastern Area Group Headquarters (see Figure 12). The landing strips constructed during the war have become an essential part of the current services available to people in Northern Cape York today. At the outset of the war the existing local strip closer to town could not be viably converted to an all weather strip nor extended to cope with the type of allied aircraft used. The infrastructure development that occurred in Cape York put a heavy financial burden on the federal government and the cost of requirements and the fight for allocation of funds to meet those costs dominates a lot of the files dating to that period (see Appendix G). Not only were the costs burdensome but also the selection of suitable sites was also difficult. Much of the reconnaissance had to be done on horse back as prior to the war

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**Plate 28: Modified Water tank, WWII**

**Coen and Iron Range Airfields**

There is evidence of the war effort up the entire length of Cape York. Further south the Coen (for location of Coen see Figure 1) airstrip today is the replacement strip built by the Department of Civil Aviation on instruction from North Eastern Area Group Headquarters (see Figure 12). The landing strips constructed during the war have become an essential part of the current services available to people in Northern Cape York today. At the outset of the war the existing local strip closer to town could not be viably converted to an all weather strip nor extended to cope with the type of allied aircraft used. The infrastructure development that occurred in Cape York put a heavy financial burden on the federal government and the cost of requirements and the fight for allocation of funds to meet those costs dominates a lot of the files dating to that period (see Appendix G). Not only were the costs burdensome but also the selection of suitable sites was also difficult. Much of the reconnaissance had to be done on horse back as prior to the war
little money had been spent on the development of Peninsula roads or infrastructure. There were two strips developed at Lockhart River only one of which is in use today the other proving to be less safe and more costly to maintain.

Originally it had been planned to facilitate a large operational air base. Coen already had a small fairly rough landing strip when the decision was made to develop the potential for an operational base at this location. The old strip however was not suitable because in was too close to the town and the area was low lying and inclined to be swampy. An all weather landing strip was required by the proposals so a new landing ground was developed (Figure 12). The strip is still there today and operates as the Coen airport.

Due to concerns that the Coen Strip might not be accessible in all weather conditions due to cloud over the range it was decided that an emergency back up landing strip would be constructed at Iron Range. This latter site also had the advantage of have a nearby shipping access at Portland Roads and so it proved of greater convenience than the Coen site.

The Iron Range airfield and the improvement of the access to the jetty area at Portland Roads were constructed by the 46th Engineer Regiment of the U.S.A.F.I.A. (Australian Archives A705/1 Item7/1/1484). The difficulty in selecting suitable sites in unknown terrain and the high costs of constructions of these airfields is discussed in interdepartmental correspondence (Appendix G). It is clear that the communities in Cape York would not have attracted such costly infrastructure if not for the needs generated by World War II.
Figure 12: WWII landing strip, Coen
DC3 and Beaufort Plane Crash Sites

Known crash sites are protected by local Aboriginal communities as far as resources allow. One such site is the DC3 crash site between the current Jack Jacky airport and Bamaga Village (Figure 2). This crash site is at the end of the runway. It is fenced and signposted for visitors and is accessible from the main road from Cairns to Bamaga. On the 5th of May 1945 a DC3 ‘Courier’ (VH-CXD) crashed as it attempted to land at Higgins Field at 5.20am (see AA Series MP1665/1 Item 1/101/1072). The pilot and four crewmembers were civilians. Two U.S nurses were also aboard. The plane was carrying a shipment of frozen meat to forces in Merauke, New Guinea when it crashed. It missed the runway and crashed amidst tents full of sleeping men. All on board were killed but amazingly none of those on the ground were seriously injured. Although the area has been ‘cleaned up’ the faint mounds which were the bases of the tents can still be seen so it is possible to imagine the shock, horror and relief at their escape that the soldiers camped there must have felt. The mounds are probably only visible because the site was fenced (originally by Department of Community Services Archaeology Branch Rangers) and so has been protected from land clearing activities. The fencing of the crash site has resulted in the campsite seeming to be strangely isolated from the surrounding landscape. At the time of the crash the surrounding areas would have housed many people in large camouflaged camping areas.

As one might expect at a large operational air base there were many crashes in its vicinity. Many of the planes landing there were returning home damaged from action in New Guinea and elsewhere in the Pacific. In July 1944 a Beaufort bomber crashed near Fishbone Creek adjacent to the airfield. Three RAAF crewmen were killed. Despite being so near what is currently the Bamaga airport the crash site is well shielded by vegetation. Local
Aboriginal communities have fenced off this area so it is not publicly accessible. The crash itself is cordoned off and local feelings are that the spirit of the dead are nearby and so the site should be left undisturbed.

Plate 29: DC3 crash site, Higgins Field
Plate 30: Beaufort Bomber crash site, Higgins Field

11.3.3.2 Radar Stations, water tanks and workshops

Landing strips, crashed planes and concrete gun emplacements (such as those still visible at Thursday Island) are some of the more easily recognizable remains from the war. However many of the sites are less easy to interpret and consequently are more prone to damage and disturbance through ignorance. The large bases such as Iron Range, Horn Island and Higgins Field had substantial infrastructure associated with them. Higgins Field for instance had a cluster of other important places around it including Red Island Point and Mutee Head.

Mutee Head

At Mutee head there were both army and air force units. The remains of the radar tower can still be seen as can the concrete foundation of the bitumen coated water tank (see Figure 13) and the large Jetty supports. The army built both of the latter features, and also the weir and the water reticulation system that was in use by the five northern peninsula area communities up until its
replacement in 1999. The history sheets for the Number 52 Radar Station located at Mutee Head mention a number of interactions with the local Aboriginal community of Cowal Creek (see Appendix D). However I was unable to find similar references in army records.

The history sheets also contain references to social excursions to neighbouring places such as Somerset. For example the record for November 26 comments that ‘The commanding officer took a party to Somerset and a lot of coconuts and mangos were brought back’ (Appendix D).
Figure 13: WWII water tank, Mutee Head
Roonga
The remains of an army workshop is still visible at Roonga (Figure 14). Defence forces in this area had to be self-reliant. They had to be able to service and repair equipment including vehicles and earthmoving equipment. This site includes undercut areas presumably to facilitate access to the underside of vehicles. There are large iron support girders, concrete and timber.

Another such site is the army site at Red Island Point on the road to Galloways (Figure 15) that consists of scattered remains including a piano frame, iron water tanks, numerous 44 gallon drums, some wooden framework, concrete, postholes and a pit (probably a latrine). Local sources seem unclear as to the purpose and function of this site. No archival information was uncovered which referred to it specifically. It may have been a recreation centre given the location of the piano frame. It is not far from the village of Seisia at Red Island Point, where the remains of a shark proof swimming enclosure built for the soldiers can be seen.

Like most other WWII sites the buildings have been removed and the timber foundations left are partially burnt. The area is subject to regular burn off at bahnggrass taim. This is the annual burn off during the latter part of the wet/early dry season and once buildings are no longer present the need for care would not be considered. There is potential to learn more about the site but recording and mapping surface artefacts and features. There is also some limited potential to recover additional information through controlled archaeological excavation, which might assist in its interpretation.
Figure 14: WWII workshop site, Roonga
Figure 15: WWII site, Red Island Point
**Significance**

Clearly one of the legacies of the war period in northern Cape York was the infrastructure that was to become part of the basic structure of life on the Peninsula for the next 50 years. This sudden change to the living conditions of both Aboriginal and non-indigenous people living on the Peninsula affected both accessibility to other places and the provision of goods and services.

These sites are of varying significance to local Aboriginal communities. In the main they are recognized as part of the history of the area and people are generally aware of their location. If people come across previously unknown sites while travelling or hunting they recognise them as ‘something to do with the wartaim’. But for most Aboriginal people in northern Cape York unless they or their fathers were involved in the assisting the defence forces or served in the Torres Strait Light Infantry (TSLI) Brigade the sites are a curiosity only. This is likely to be different to how such places are viewed in the Torres Strait Islands where both more men served in the TSLI and the war had a much more dramatic social impact.

Crash sites tend to be of more significance than other sites because of the loss of life. Aboriginal people respect these places and protect them as far as limited financial resources allow. It is recognised that these places are occupied by the spirits of those killed.

The significance of these sites to the broader Australian community is actually very similar. For most people visiting Cape York these places are curiosities only. There is no interpretation apart from a plaque at Jacky Jacky airport and so the historical importance of the area to Australia’s (and the Pacific) defence during the war is not understood. Once again the sites are likely to have a very
personal significance to those who served or whose parents or grandparents served at these locations during the war.

**Management Issues**

Many sites consist of little more surface evidence than piles of rusting fuel drums and scatters of burnt timber and rusting iron. Such sites tend to be affected by road works and in areas were space is more limited (such as at Seisia and New Mapoon) by community expansion activities). Most sites have some but limited archaeological potential for subsurface remains. The most sensitive in this regard of the sites that I have visited are Thursday Island gun emplacements, Higgins Field, Lockhart River airfield sites, Mutee Head and various crash sites. Apart from the crash sites each of these places had large numbers of people located at them over a significant period of time. Many of the sites are today overgrown. As they clustered near infrastructure and in fact generated new infrastructure they have tendered to experience continued re-development pressure. For example in recent years there have been major upgrades to the road leading to Jacky Jacky Airport (once Higgins Field aerodrome). The widening of the road and its relocation to a slightly deviated route has impinged into the campsites that surrounded the airbase. Obviously after the cessation of hostilities a lot of material was removed and salvaged by the defence forces themselves and since then in an isolated area where building materials are scarce material has been recycled to the extent that most World War II sites appear ephemeral. They are often indicated by piles of rusting fuel drums and other scanty and unsalvageable remains as well as overgrown tracks road and campsites edged with stone. The two biggest issues affecting the management of these places are firstly lack of sound planning for ongoing infrastructure development which incorporates a concern and respect for heritage values, places and items and secondly the lack of interpretation to explain what these places are and their historical significance.
11.3.4 Evidence of Changing Government policies and community life

One of the challenges facing communities in northern Cape York as in other parts of Australia is to protect the emerging heritage while struggling to meet the day-to-day requirements and aspirations of community members. Most communities have under-developed planning processes. It is usually the younger to middle-aged people who are involved in the community councils. Often traditional custodians and knowledgeable elders may not always be consulted over basics such as where to put the community sewerage works and so forth. Where people are asked it may be that they feel pressured by the urgency of the village ‘need’ to agree to developments. Some communities have instituted safeguards to ensure that traditional custodians are involved in such planning decisions regarding land. In Kowanyama for instance the council does have a planning arm – the Land and Natural Resources Management Office and it has a traditional custodians component as well called the Council of Elders (Strang 1997:141; Sinnamon 1994). Together these two groups advise the community council on such matters. Injinoo community established Apudhama, an association of traditional custodians relating to Injinoo lands, with the intention of providing a similar function of advice to council on all land related matters. Unfortunately however, its founder Mr Daniel Ropeyarn fell ill soon after founding the association and had to move to Cairns for treatment. He has since died. Without his guidance the association did not survive through its formative period and failed to achieve a strong relationship with the council. It ceased functioning soon after Mr Ropeyarn left.

This whole planning issue and its relationship to heritage conservation is not unique to Aboriginal communities but is exacerbated wherever socio-economic factors are such that there is a pressure on emergency catch up works such as the provisions of adequate housing and basic hygiene and living standards. The other factor that mitigates against an active heritage identification
and conservation program is a lack of funding. Funding for heritage conservation is a luxury outside the budgetary capacity of most communities in northern Cape York most of whom subsist on Community Development and Employment Funding (CDEP). Specific (limited) heritage funding is available through competitive grants schemes via both the Commonwealth and Queensland state governments however this is not allocated according to local community priorities but to State and Commonwealth government priorities. For example Commonwealth funding is available for the management of places on the Register of the National Estate or for thematic identification programs to identify and nominate places to be included on the Register of the National Estate. State funding allocations for cultural heritage in Queensland are extremely limited and rarely make it to places this remote. They are usually focussed on conservation of buildings and structures rather than archaeological sites.

Communities need to consider retaining and adaptively re-using places and structures that have become unsuitable for their constructed use. For example housing conditions including size and design have altered markedly in northern Cape York. In 1986 at the time of my first field trip to Cape York, many people were living in small-unlined galvanised houses of about 12sqm of total floor space or less. Thus the average house was slightly larger than a single room in an average Sydney home such as my own. As the houses were unlined they were hot, drafty, wet and humid in the wet season. They were extremely hot to cook in, even if people were lucky enough to have gas stoves. There was no hot water at all in Injinoo when I first went there and showers were usually in a separate galvanised structure ‘out the back’. Many houses officially had multiple adults and many children living in them although in reality given the conditions houses were often used more as cupboards for storage (this is they held the things people owned such as bedding, clothes and so forth) and most of the living happened outside under the mango or almond tree on benches.
made of pallets or marine ply or what ever came to hand on top of fuel or flour drums. These benches were the hub of family life and I have many memories for instance of sitting with Mrs Esther Peters on her bench and listening to her stories ranging from her life as a child at Red Island Point to the latest village gossip.

These houses have rapidly disappeared over the intervening years (much to the relief of those who had to live in them) but older people will sometimes remark on the positive aspect of ‘how things were’. For instance people note that many people now keep more to their house, and the communal focus of the bench has lessened. No one would advocate going back to the old houses but they are important illustrations of the substandard living conditions that Aboriginal people have had to endure from the earliest reserves until very recent times. Tourists now visit these places and see new construction activity and large 3 or 4 bedroom homes with running water and indoor bathrooms and must wonder what all the fuss has been about in relation to housing conditions in remote communities. It is important to keep physical examples of the range of housing that has characterised communities over the years. In addition to being just as valuable to history as government buildings and private residences in southern cities, they are important statements about our society. They are powerful educational aids in bringing home to non-indigenous Australian the history of Aboriginal people and the reserve system in Australia and also for young children in the communities to help them understand what their parents and grandparents have achieved for them in terms of the development of their communities. The tendency is however to demolish these places that were often sub standard. This is exacerbated by the funding arrangement for housing in communities, which for many years has been ‘replacement’ funding. The government over the past 10 year period has striven to improve not just the living conditions for Aboriginal people in remote communities but also its image in relation to those living conditions. Therefore, the government through its housing strategies seeks to tear down this
evidence of past inequity, in effect to erase the heritage of injustice, and it has found a way to make communities collude in this erasure of their own heritage.

What strategies can communities put in place to effectively conserve not only ‘old’ heritage but the legacy of diskaintaim? What should be the role of State and Federal governments in supporting these initiatives?

Communities need to conserve and find other non-residential uses for these buildings that are significant to their recent past. Government heritage agencies could assist in this process by providing heritage expertise to work with the communities and tailored to community needs, and providing funding for the identification and recording of such buildings in the communities. Conservation works and financial assistance should focus on viable adaptive re-uses for such structures.

Not all places of cultural heritage value need to be conserved by the collective group (i.e. community council or government). Some places, while valued collectively by a community, may be within private (family) management. Often the relationship with particular places is a very personal thing and people re-affirm their connection with those places through the act of caring for them. An example of this type of place is freshwater springs. As elsewhere in Australia, springs in Cape York are important. While today communities can exist away from springs because of reticulated water systems, in the past such places were truly the font of life. On most of the islands in the Torres Strait, water is relatively scarce when compared to the mainland. Water shortage on Thursday Island for instance has plagued the white settlers since their first year of settlement. Attachment to and dependence on springs has therefore remained a strong characteristic of people living on the islands in the Torres Strait. Springs (like the freshwater lakes on the east coast of Cape York) were created in the Bipotaim by those beings
that shaped the landscape. Springs are named places within the landscape where spirits live, guarding against threat and abuse. While visiting Hammond Island with Kaurareg rangers in 1991, I was shown one such spring, which was regularly tended by the family that depended on it.

It would be beneficial for community by-laws to explicitly recognise the beneficial relationships between the human and spirit landscape and so promote and encourage the retention of such custodial relationships. This may sound a strange recommendation to outsiders but is perhaps more understandable if one knows that the by-laws of many communities do already explicitly acknowledge the local cosmological landscape but that recognition focuses on puripuri or black magic as it is also called.

Plate 31: Named springs are important stori plesis

11.3.5 Stori places and bipotaim sites and social value

The heritage emphasis in northern Cape York should reflect the on ‘social’ or community value to indigenous communities, in addition to historic value. A place, structure or site is important not simply
because it is old but because it means something to the community i.e. it contributes to community identity. In this way community councils or other community organizations need to also protect those places in the natural environment, which are important in the everyday lives of community members. If necessary, this means protecting such places from development or use/overuse by tourists where this affects community members’ ability to enjoy, use or experience the place. For example Laradeenya, not far from Lockerbie (see Figure 2) is an important recreational area for people in the five communities at the tip of Cape York. It is a favourite swimming hole and is free from the dangers of crocodiles and marine stingers, which exclude swimmers from other areas for the whole or parts of the year. The place is especially important to people from New Mapoon because it is within their small Deed of Grant in Trust (D.O.G.I.T) lands, which they manage, and to people from Injinoo because they have traditional and historic connections to the land there. However, when I last visited this site in 1991, at the request of New Mapoon Rangers it was being destroyed by the encroaching gravel mining operation, which was located nearby. Earth moving equipment had pushed soil into the swimming hole and the surrounding area was also bulldozed which affected its amenity as a recreational area. The solution requires co-operation between two different community councils as at that time the gravel quarry was operated by Bamaga Council while the swimming hole is in Mapoon Community D.O.G.I.T lands. This gravel quarry operates with no environmental controls, as do many of the operations, which have been initially run by the Queensland government as operations or enterprise with the Reserve system and have simply been handed over with no rehabilitation or other safe guards to the communities to run. Clearly the government has an obligation not only to ensure that its operations are ecologically sustainable but also where they have not been, to ensure that they are brought up to industry standards before handing them over to the communities. Community councils of course need to bring themselves up to speed rapidly on matters such as ecologically
sustainable development and environmental impact assessment as their people’s attachment to the landscape is fundamental to their role as owners and custodians. The rapidity of change due to development pressures and tourism and facilitated by more and larger equipment has the potential to catch people unawares and perhaps irreparably impact places of significance before people realise the danger. This should not be a taken as an objection to progress and development but rather a call for governments to ensure that they are applying at least equivalent environmental standard to those used elsewhere when determining and allocating funding for projects and for them to foster and encourage the appropriate range of skills in communities through active educational, cadetship and other programs. Communities themselves can take the initiative in lieu of government initiatives and incentives and indeed to a certain degree the communities have been doing this collectively through the involvement of the Cape York Land Council and Balkanu in environmental impact and heritage assessments although these tend to be the larger strategic projects rather than the day to day development concerns of local community councils.

Plate 32: Development damage to Laradeenya
The situation regarding development impacts and planning issues around recreational and story places varying throughout the Cape. Around Weipa, for instance, because of the scale of the development and potential impacts, people are more concerned with the impact from Comalco operations, than those of their community council. On the other hand, as a large corporation, Comalco in the main has developed formal and informal processes with the community. With the very notable exception of the large Weipa shell mounds, which themselves have stories associated with them that extend back into the Bipotaim (pers. Comm. Arthur Androm 1990), the places of concern are story places (for example Wundrapine see Chapter 1, Peppen, Anung) rather than archaeological sites (pers.com. Mrs Joyce and Ina Hall and Mrs Motton:1990).

*Stori ples* and named features are an important cultural links for people. They are evidence of continuing traditions and an abiding connection with the landscape. It is therefore important to acknowledge local authority over such places including the naming of them. Too often when maps are prepared and documentation of places either for heritage listing, tourism purpose or land claim and native title purpose the emphasis is placed on finding Aboriginal place names (the inference being that these are more authentic). However, this denies people’s historical connections to the land which are often more important to them and more accurate. This tendency tends to disenfranchise Aboriginal people as it is often the white adviser or researcher who has uncovered the "real" place name and Aboriginal people may feel "corrected".

Places that evidence the *Bipotaim* also include archaeological sites. Static heritage management practices, which conserve these places forever as they were when first found (by archaeologists) and recorded, may not be appropriate. Many places continue to be used for traditional purposes and so the process of change and
sedimentation that occurs throughout the formation of an archaeological site is still progressing.

Despite this, communities may choose in some cases to manage sites as ‘relics’ of the past. This is likely to occur where the places either are no longer in current use and therefore people assume (such as in the case of an archaeological site brought to their attention by a researcher of which the appropriate custodian(s) had no prior knowledge) or know (such as sites known to the appropriate custodian) them to belong to the Bipotaim and recognise that the spirits of the ‘old people’ are active at the site. Putta Putta on the east coast near Somerset is managed in this way. The site is fenced from the public to protect it from four-wheel drive vehicles and an official generic government heritage sign is displayed indicating that the site is protected. The community also raised their own sign, which explained why the site was fenced off to try and get the understanding of tourists.

Archaeological sites and stories can be very important in cross-cultural interpretation and presentation as well as sustaining community identity. People identify more closely with places rather than with documents. Through identifying and interpreting such places it is possible to access the way that people perceived events in their history. Aboriginal histories are experiential. They are told from within a landscape perspective and therefore the ‘place’ has the potential to reveal and reproduce indigenous conceptions of history (Harrison 2000b).

The power of places to evoke emotional responses, understanding and empathy means that they are an important cross-cultural interpretative tool. Documents rely too heavily on the literacy of both the writer and the reader to achieve an effective cross-cultural engagement or understanding. Quite often documents are written from one perspective only and in the case of heritage places this is often the perspective of the heritage expert that is not even
representative of the broader European viewpoint. Places, however, require only imagination, feeling and a relatively small amount of information to be able to involve people in history in the broader sense.

11.4 Conclusion
This chapter has provided an overview of the nature and condition of physical remains and places attesting to the history of northern Cape York as outlined in Part II of this thesis. It is clear from the description of these places that they have suffered from a lack of a conservation strategy for heritage places in Cape York and a lack of recognition on the part of heritage agencies of their heritage values. Because in most cases the physical remains are limited to ruins, there is potentially an important role for archaeology to add information that can assist in the interpretation of these places.

While these places are of obvious importance to communities in northern Cape York and are important places in the maintenance of community identity it is clear that the communities themselves do not have the financial resources nor the technical expertise required to conserve and interpret them. It is therefore a matter of urgency that heritage agencies respond to this crisis. However, this response needs to be tailored to the communities and will require agencies to think beyond the models of heritage inventories and funding based on State and National levels of significance for individual sites, to adopt instead a landscape approach that assesses significance of a landscape of shared attachment and memory spanning over 200 years. In northern Cape York we have a region as large as some of the smaller states in Australia and yet because most of the individual sites are assessed as being of local significance they are not conserved nor resourced in any way. Without a change to this situation, before the end of the next decade we are likely to see the total destruction of all physical remains of over 200 years of shared indigenous /non-indigenous history in the entire region.
Tourism has been heralded as the world’s largest and fastest growing industry. Worldwide we are told that one in every 15 workers is employed in some part of the tourist industry (World Tourism Council 1992 in Nethery 1993:1). During 1999, the number of tourists who spent at least one night in Tropical North Queensland (i.e. in the region from Cairns to the tip of the Peninsula) was 1,236,000 (Queensland Tourism 1999). Such numbers can be very enticing in terms of the potential dollars to be earned. These numbers can also be terrifying to Indigenous communities in remote parts of Australia in terms of the numbers of tourists that they signify. In communities where most communities subsist on CDEP (Community Development and Employment Programs a form of work for the dole scheme) the thought that so many people have so much money to spend on the luxury of travel is hard to believe and sometimes very confronting. This chapter touches on some of the cultural tourism issues relevant to northern Cape York and also looks at the role of the community rangers in this industry.

12.1 The Role of Cultural Tourism

For the past 5-10 years communities in Cape York (and elsewhere in Australia and other areas of the world) have been told that first ‘eco’ and now ‘cultural’ tourism are essential industries for them to engage in (Hill 1992; White 1993; Office of National Tourism 1996; Department of Tourism 1994). Yet it is difficult to identify a single cultural (or eco) tourism enterprise that has generated significant wealth for a community in northern Cape York. Lack of expertise, lack of partnership equity and many other business management
issues contribute to the lack of viability or economic success of these arrangements and it is clear that the government could play a more significant part in ensuring that thresholds of equity and viability are employed. New South Wales Tourism has an Indigenous Tourism Policy, which it requires all operators to comply with but Queensland Tourism currently does not.

ATSIC and the Office of National Tourism have jointly published a National Indigenous Tourism Strategy (ATSIC & Office of National Tourism 1997). In the foreword to this document, Federal Ministers Senator the Hon. John Herron (Minister for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Affairs) and the Hon. John Moore (Minister for Industry, Science and Tourism) state that:

Indigenous tourism can contribute significantly to the Australian tourism industry while at the same time fostering economic independence and cultural preservation for many participating indigenous communities.

With growing international demand for indigenous tourism experiences, and as custodians of some of the world’s oldest living cultures, many opportunities are emerging for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be involved in tourism.

(ATSIC & Office of National Tourism 1997:iii)

As an introduction to the need for the strategy the authors quote an un-named Aboriginal person as saying

Tourism is this industry we have been hearing about for a long time now, we are not getting any closer to an understanding of it, of whether we should get into it, of how we get into it, of where we go for information about it (ATSIC & Office of National Tourism 1997:1).

These two perspectives summarize the dilemma for Aboriginal communities. There is obviously a demand for indigenous cultural tourism from both the domestic and international markets and yet with a few exceptions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have been unable to significantly make headway in developing viable, sustainable tourism enterprises.

12.1.1 The good, the bad and the ugly of cultural tourism
Clearly there is a potential economic benefit to developing cultural tourism enterprises. Governments love it because it means dollars to the state and federal economies. It woos local communities, and struggling pastoralists with the promise of easy money as an adjunct to their otherwise limited funding sources. However, it is important to ensure that the tourism enterprise is sustainable and that it protects and enhances the cultural heritage asset otherwise the very basis of the enterprise is gradually diminished and the enterprise will fail (Harris & Leiper 1990; Martin & Uysal 1990). A significant portion of the monies generated by the enterprise must be channelled into heritage protection or the claim that one is ‘selling out’ or exploiting one’s heritage is justified (Moulin 1990:8; Hall & Zeppel 1990:94). The nature of the tourism operation must not impact unduly on the heritage place and this requires community councils to carefully assess the potential heritage impact of proposals put before them or those that they develop themselves. Tourism needs to be managed. At the present time in Northern Cape York there is almost no management of tourists. This is despite the fact that around 15,000 four-wheel drive vehicles travel up the Peninsula each year (estimates from Injinoo Council based on Jardine River Ferry returns). Tourists are required to buy camping permits but there are no limitations imposed, based on the carrying capacity of the land or sites of numbers of tourists or tourist vehicles34. Without effective management, mass tourism pressure in northern Cape York is currently exploiting the natural and cultural values and contributing to the rapid degradation of cultural sites.

One of the greatest potential benefits of cultural tourism is the potential to achieve a level of cross-cultural understanding through interpretation of history and culture, and the places relating to that history. Cultural tourism opportunities give communities the chance to access the minds and to some extent modify the behaviour of visitors through education (Manfredo 1992) and increased

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34 Kowanyama in the Gulf of Carpentaria has an advance purchase permit system that allows them to set a limit on the number of vehicles accessing their land at any one time.
understanding of the significance of particular places to both indigenous and non-indigenous communities. The power of physical remains is such that they can, if presented correctly, bring history alive. The power of material objects and places to reveal history has long been acknowledged.

The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm beyond the reach of the intellect, in some material object (the sensation that the material object will give us) which we do not suspect (Proust 1966:57-8 in Gosden 1994:6).

Visitors to cultural sites are eager to see tangible evidence of the past. If such remains are not obvious they may search for them, driving into fragile areas or even digging in search of relics. In addition to these forms of intentional intervention, if remains are not obvious people may assume that nothing exists at all and think nothing of digging rubbish pits, latrines and burning loose timbers. Effective interpretation can protect sites by providing the visual evidence required and at the same time imposing restrictions on behaviour.

An important consideration in providing for tourists is the impact that proposed activities will have not only on the places themselves but on the communities that own them or have cultural affiliations to them. Prior to the Injinoo community taking over the Cape York Wilderness Lodge (now called Pajinka), it was owned and operated by Australian Airlines. The resident managers of this resort had a history of intimidating local people to discourage them from using the area and interacting with the lodge’s guests. To provide privacy for guests they illegally closed off a public road to try and stop Aboriginal people accessing Pudegah or Evans Bay, which was a favourite place for the collection of oysters and wongai (an edible fruit). Cultural tourism enterprises should not result in local communities feeling like trespassers in their own land (see Plate 33).
12.1.2 Understanding customers and the resource

In Aboriginal communities in northern Cape York there is sometimes the belief that non-indigenous Australia is an homogenous community group. Of course this is not true. It is important for Aboriginal communities to try understanding non-indigenous visitor perspectives if one is to be able to communicate effectively in a cross-cultural context.

The assessment of visitor needs and aspirations is an important first step in planning cultural tourism projects. While it may be an implicit agenda of communities to ‘educate’ visitors, it is a waste of effort if a medium or place that no-one is interested in is chosen because ultimately no-one will visit the place and hence there will be no-one to educate. One of the fortuitous characteristics of Cape York is that because it is so remote and there is little economic activity to distract tourists communities have an advantage in that any information they provide is eagerly absorbed by an information starved, captive market. But to take the relationship further and create a viable cultural tourism enterprise requires communities to understand the needs, interests and culture of their market. Another advantage for some Cape York communities such as Injinoo and Lockhart is the vast areas of land that they control (note this is not the case for New Mapoon, Bamaga, Umagico and Seisia who are located in much smaller non-traditional lands). This means that assuming that they can develop the infrastructure required to support their project, they can if the community so desires operate a cultural tourism enterprise with minimum impact on their villages. For the communities that have resulted from relocations such as Umagico, Bamaga, New Mapoon and Seisia this is not an option and they have had to think of other strategies if they want to take advantage of cultural tourism opportunities. Seisia for example is developing a position as a gateway to the Torres Strait utilizing that community's cultural connections with the Torres Strait Islands.
Having said all this about ‘understanding’ visitor aspirations, once communities understand the people who are currently visiting northern Cape York, if they do not like what they learn about them (or some of them) they need to have both the confidence and skills to try to discourage negative elements and target other tourists. Nethery has commented that ‘the most positive aspect of the projected growth in tourist numbers is the opportunity to pick and choose the kinds of tourists we wish to attract and to adjust promotion and pricing strategies accordingly’ (Nethery 1993:9). Ideally from the view of conserving heritage places it would be useful to determine what messages or stori one might want to present and to identify the places that best illustrate that stori. It is important for communities to target markets who will appreciate what they have to offer and who will respect the local culture. While this might seem an obvious strategy, community members often feel powerless in the face of the waves of tourists, which began as soon as the reserves and missions began to be dismantled. When Injinoo first built a campsite for tourists they did so in their village at one of their favourite gathering places. The rationale behind this was that since Injinoo people enjoyed being there others would too. In addition it had beautiful views and running water and facilities which community people valued. I asked a council employee at the time whether she thought it might be intrusive to have strangers camped in the village, and since Injinoo people liked the place so much why have the tourists there? The response was ‘but we can’t stop them, they are coming anyway, so we might as well let them come and make some money out of them’ (pers.comm. name withheld on request). This reflects the way in which many people see tourism as a tide, which they must yield too and in doing so maybe they can get a financial recompense. They do not consider that they can control tourism. Of course this particular enterprise failed as community members still wanted to use the area and resented being made to feel that they should hand it over during tourist season and so continued to use the area and the tourist facilities. Council, too, began to ‘improve’ the area in ways which
they assumed would enhance it for tourists but which did not. For instance they gravelled large sections of the area, which of course provided better access for tourists, who no longer bogged their vehicles, but the red bauxite rich gravel and clay was not as attractive to tourists as the white sands and much harder to camp on.

This leads to the other fundamental, which is of course to understand the place or places that are being presented in the cultural tourism enterprise. There is the opportunity for one place such as an historic homestead or a landscape, to be introduced and better understood through several key places and the journey from these places to the main site itself. Communities should avoid endorsing projects (or commencing them) which do not adequately describe an understanding of the resource and its main values and which also cannot convincingly estimate the impact of the type of use or visitation proposed.

To ensure that appropriate funds are made available to assist communities in planning viable and culturally sustainable cultural tourism projects it is important for the government to assist in the development of an indigenous cultural tourism strategy for Cape York. This work could be managed, for instance, by the Cape York Land Council in partnership with the communities they represent and with funding from State and Federal government. Such a strategy could identify opportunities for different communities which complement each other and it could also identify the capacity and skill levels required of communities to realise these opportunities. Future funding assistance whether from government or private sources could then be aligned with the identified priorities

12.2 The Role of Rangers in Cultural Tourism

Chapter 10 discussed the basis for the current model of land management in Cape York, which incorporates indigenous rangers employed by community councils. This model is based on Western models of nature conservation and protected area management.
Communities have moved quickly to adapt this model to reflect their aspirations and needs. One such innovation we have seen is the introduction of Elders groups to advise and instruct rangers on their activities in certain areas.

In the protected area management system in Australia, rangers have a diverse role backed up (in most states) with university level training in a relevant natural or cultural heritage discipline. Traditionally, most have a background in natural heritage and a view of their role as guarding or protecting the environment from the impact of humans rather than guarding it for humans. However, due to the nature of the agencies for which they work, which depend almost solely on the tax dollar of all Australians (and therefore on the goodwill of the public to some extent) they have an uneasy role as cultural and natural tourism operators. This has tended to take an educative slant that legitimises it as an activity to those involved in the conservation and management of protected areas.

One of the assumptions that seem widely accepted is that ‘managing’ and ‘regulating’ tourists is equivalent to cultural tourism (see for example Strang 1998:26-27). For the most part in northern Cape York this is as far as communities have ventured into cultural tourism. There are exceptions such as Pajinka, Australia’s most northerly tourist resort, which is now owned, and run by Injinoo Aboriginal community. In discussing her observations at Kowanyama, Strang places a lot of emphasis on the role of rangers in managing cultural tourism (Strang 1998:26) and educating visitors (Strang 1998: 27) and to an extent as being knowledge brokers for the community (Strang 1998:27). She draws attention to the positive strengths of the Cairns TAFE course that trains the rangers for the work in their communities.

I was the northern co-ordinator for the Cairns TAFE course from 1989 until early 1991. The course has evolved somewhat since that
time, as one would expect, and hopefully in that process has become more closely attuned to community aspirations. However it is not now nor was it ever intended to be a course that would prepare communities to embark on successful cultural tourism operations. The issues affecting the success of rangers and the Cairns TAFE course have been touched on previously in Chapter 10. In relation to cultural tourism and a communities ability to embark on successful cultural tourism projects, on their own or in partnership with private operators, it is clear that other skills and training are needed to support communities and that this will involve other community members in addition to rangers. For example there are a range of courses currently available in eco-tourism or natural and cultural tourism from TAFE. These include small business management components as well as components that deal with the assessment and mitigation of impacts of the proposed enterprise on the natural and cultural values.

Of course Indigenous rangers do have an important role to play and there are elements of it that are educative. To a large extent though their role centres on management, regulation and monitoring of impacts on the environment. So for instance it is rangers who implement community by-laws in relation to both tourists and community members as they relate to damage to the environment and infringements. In effectively doing this they will educate people where possible about the significance of particular places. They are also responsible for liaising with community members especially Council and elders about how to manage places and this may involve patrolling or erecting signs and so forth. The monitoring of developments and tourism enterprise and the documenting and reporting of impacts is also important. In particular communities where there is a cultural tourism enterprise in operation rangers may be called on to provide their expertise, for instance by conducting a bushwalk or talking to tourists but the emphasis here is on contribution rather than sole management responsibility.
12.3 Conclusion

Cultural tourism is an opportunity available to Cape York communities because of the nature of their heritage resource with its richly interrelated natural and cultural values and because of their location at the northernmost part of Australia. Cultural tourism can be used to generate significant funds for the community, which if partly channelled back into heritage conservation will ensure a viable heritage resource into the future. While Cultural tourism should not be seen as heritage management *per se* it has an important role to play as long as commodification of heritage does not proceed at the expense of the conservation of its significant values. On the other hand poorly instituted attempts at cultural tourism such as the vandalism at Lockerbie (see Chapter 11) threaten to destroy the values of significant heritage places and in doing so diminish community heritage.

Both to take advantage of the opportunities presented by this industry and to protect against its worst impacts an indigenous Heritage strategy is required for northern Cape York. While community rangers will continue to play an important role in tourism management, they have broader responsibilities to the environment and heritage. The development and management of viable cultural tourism enterprises and programs will require additional skills and training for other community members and probably at least for the initial period imported specialist assistance if communities are to really benefit from cultural tourism opportunities in Cape York.
Plate 33: An example of tourism negatively impacting on the community
CONCLUSIONS

Since European invasion of the region, northern Cape York has had a rich and varied history. One of the definitions of history is ‘a narrative of events; a story; a chronicle’ and this is in fact how Aboriginal people describe their history as the stor. Places at which important events occurred or which are imbued with special significance are referred to as stor plesis. Some of these are evidence of the shared indigenous and non-indigenous history of the area. Indeed some of these places evidence the dissonance of the heritage of atrocity (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996: 94). Others evidence shared experiences which were much more positive. The most significant of these places have been woven into the rich tapestry of Aboriginal cosmology and are governed by specific rules of conduct and respect.

This history is a shared history of significance to both indigenous and non-indigenous Australians but more importantly it is an Aboriginal history, which documents the relationship of the Aboriginal people in northern Cape York to the land and everything in it. This includes their relationship with those who have moved into it (bidden or unbidden) and their responses to the changes that have been brought about by these newcomers. This process of history including the forming and reforming of relationships to new people and cultures is continuing today. Social and environmental change is happening at a greater rate than ever before. In the last decade communities have seen the introduction of new technology such as television (1989) and cars and other vehicles (in 1987 there were only 2 cars in Injinoo and now almost every second household has a car and the council has a fleet of vehicles). They have undergone social and political changes as they moved from
the ‘reserve’ system to self management and they have had to try to understand the potential environmental impacts from increasing pressures of tourism, mining, commercial fishing and other industries vying for a stake in the region.

The heritage places in Cape York include *stori plesis* without physical remains, archaeological sites and sites with the remains of structures, graves, wrecks and other built structures. It also includes places being generated as part of the evolving history of the area.

Historically missionaries and government officials have worked to control and disempower Aboriginal communities in Cape York through the disrupting the transmission of language and through the destruction of *stori ples*’ and other significant heritage sites. This disempowerment through control and erasure of heritage continues today although in the main the government agencies responsible appear largely unaware of the effects of their actions, policies and neglect. There are a number of key issues upon which the successful management of heritage in the area depends.

Firstly, a holistic approach to the consideration of heritage in northern Cape York is required. The division of heritage management practice into discrete strands of historic, indigenous and natural heritage works to obscure Aboriginal interests in the management of their heritage as a cultural landscape which nurtures and sustains community identity. The continuation of this practice in northern Cape York is inconsistent with the desire to conserve heritage. A contraposition has been suggested in this thesis, which centres on the recognition of social or community value to overcome this division and attendant problems.

Secondly, arising from the need for a holistic approach, rather than focussing on national or state levels of significance a focus on value to the local community will ensure that the heritage of the
region is protected. This is not to suggest a naive approach of simply ‘doing whatever the community wants or anything goes’. It is recognized that from time to time individual actions and proposals may be inconsistent with the conservation of significant values. Rather, the suggestion is that heritage places contribute to both individual and community identity. Technical specialists should focus on trying to understand that identity and assist in identifying and conserving places, which contribute to that identity in partnership with the communities and those authorised custodians of places. The emphasis on community value means a shedding of power on the part of the expert or specialist and an increased faith that communities have values and that these should be recognised.

Thirdly, a landscape approach to the understanding, documentation and interpretation or presentation of heritage is required. Inventories and registers serve a useful but limited purpose in flagging important places when considering development planning and impact assessment but are not an end in themselves. The heritage of Cape York should not be broken up into a list of isolated World War II sites, for instance, nor a scattering of known pre-contact Aboriginal sites. The heritage of Cape York is the story of people, time and landscape. Therefore it is the stori of how things were in the wartaim or Bipotaim. Physical sites help to illustrate this stori. The stori of diskaintaim or now interweaves all these places in the landscape with events unfolding now in peoples’ own lifetimes. Therefore the landscape of diskaintaim includes places from Bipotaim and wartaim and pastaim that are known and important to the community and equally it includes places that are now the focus of important activities and events in their lives. So for instance it will include favourite swimming holes and the villages themselves.

Fourthly, to achieve a landscape approach and heritage conservation regime based on community value requires
acknowledging that **heritage sustains identity**. While perhaps it is difficult for community councils to find time to turn their attention to heritage conservation issues given the urgent day-to-day matters facing their communities, the conservation of heritage is strategically one of the most important challenges facing communities today. The heritage of Aboriginal communities in northern Cape York is what defines the people as unique amongst other Australians, it underpins their claim and ownership of land, and it empowers them in negotiations over the use of resources and the development of industries relating to that heritage. Communities can choose that the heritage that they bequeath to their children reflects what they considered important in their lifetimes or they can let external influences dictate what is passed on through a process of elimination by environmental and external political factors. For example they could choose that it is important for their children and grandchildren to see and understand the living conditions they endured and the struggle that they have undertaken as a community to improve conditions or they can let a distant government erase these places as embarrassing evidence of recent inequities. This would eradicate any material evidence of the claim that it was “much harder when we were young”.

Of all cultural elements, ‘sites’ are often the most contested in terms of control and ownership and the right to interpret. Archaeological research can contribute to reducing the credibility of Aboriginal informants within their own communities, as many sites are not recognised by Aboriginal people as *Bipotaim* sites until they are pointed out to be so by archaeologists. Often there is a lack of real interest in these sites on the part of community members because, even if the archaeologist's claims are accepted, they are considered to have belonged to someone else because they are not part of the collective memory of the community.
Named places in the landscape invariably are as important, if not more so, to Aboriginal people than are places where there is physical evidence of prior occupation. This is not so hard to understand when one considers that some archaeological sites were created so far in the past that no one has living memory of them. Aboriginal people have only the word of the 'specialist' that these bits and pieces are in fact evidence of past occupation and this may challenge their worldview. After all traditions have been handed down from generation to generation, and if it was important they feel that they should know about it. In many cases archaeology is evidence of a competing and perhaps destructive reality.

Protection of the diverse heritage of northern Cape York requires a concentrated injection of funds and expertise directed to the identification of heritage, emphasis community values and shared although sometimes dissonant history. Capital investment is required with a focus on cross cultural interpretation and adaptive re-use and sustainable community driven cultural tourism. Training and assistance with the development of appropriate cultural and natural heritage planning protocols for community council employees needs to be undertaken as a matter of priority. Community councils should be encouraged to articulate their heritage goals and protocols for assessing heritage impact should be documented. These goals and protocols need to reflect specific concerns of the indigenous community members rather than be cloned from southern Local governments.

Heritage Management Priorities for Government Agencies and Community Councils.

- A heritage strategy for Cape York Peninsula needs to be developed in partnership between relevant heritage agencies and the communities themselves.
The emphasis of such a strategy should be on identifying heritage places of high community value and prioritising their conservation and management within a landscape context.

Communities need to consider the sustainable use of cultural tourism to communicate cross culturally to other Australians and Inbound tourists.

Cultural tourism needs to be tailored to community’s needs and aspirations and be designed so as to sustain the *stori* through practice. Therefore it must be recognised that the role of Elders/Custodians is integral to the development and implementation of cultural tourism projects.

To equitably participate in the cultural tourism industry, communities need to ensure that community members are appropriately trained and skilled.

Heritage is evolving and people in the communities in northern Cape York are engaged as apart of their everyday life in generating the future history of their communities. This idea that the legacy of *diskaintaim* is also important to protect needs to be discussed and worked upon by communities in order for them to determine what are the important stories of their lifetimes (and the places associated with them) that should be passed on to future generations.

In recognising that heritage can effect very recent events there are some issues that have obvious and immediate urgency that require funding from state and federal heritage agencies:

- Funding is required by communities to map, record and maintain cemeteries for community records. The older cemeteries or parts of cemeteries are losing physical markers and information rapidly.
- It is essential that archival research in general be supplemented by oral histories. As there are dwindling
numbers of people alive today who can provide this sort of testimony an oral history program should be funded as a high priority.

- Mapping the places in the Mission landscape to provide an insight into changes in land use associated with mission life and the areas of continuity in practices.

- Government heritage agencies need to provide specific funding for the identification and recording of heritage buildings in the villages.

- Government heritage agencies need to provide conservation advice and expertise to councils. An example of how this might work is the program operating in NSW where the Heritage Office contributes to the retainer or part salary of a conservation architect who normally works on a shared basis with other councils to provide conservation advice. This assistance needs to be tailored to community needs.

- Works and financial assistance should focus on viable adaptive re-uses for such structures.

In this thesis I have attempted to outline the history of northern Cape York since European invasion. In doing so I have rejected a position on either side of the heroes and villains divide, which characterises other histories of this period (for example Sharp 1992; Mullins 1982) into promoting either a view that reflects a long held national romantic view of pioneers and explorers or a more recent championing of indigenous interests by focussing on atrocities and denying non-indigenous attachment to people and land. I have instead attempted to recount that history as it is understood by local indigenous communities who have a much more complex view of their past. I have used archival sources to augment oral accounts. I have looked at places which illustrate this story as told by Aboriginal
people and tried to develop an understanding of how people view these places and their relationship to Aboriginal cosmology and identity in this area. Finally I have looked at the management issues and implications for these places and the legacy that they represent for Aboriginal people as part of their heritage and for other Australians as part of our shared heritage of the area.