

# **Researching Indigenous Australians in Tourism**

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## **Declaration of Originality**

Victoria University attests that this thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma. Also, to the best of the University's knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

## Acknowledgements

On behalf of Mogens Raymond Simonsen, his family would like to sincerely thank the respondents who were interviewed in the course of data collection for this study, and to those who supplied information and assistance.

In particular, the Simonsen family would like to express their gratitude to the various Indigenous peoples involved in the tourism enterprises that formed the focus of this investigation; for allowing this study to take place, and for permitting Ray to talk with them and share in their knowledge, experiences and concerns.

In the course of this research, Ray was taken 'on country' to conduct in-depth and personal interviews and expressed his delight to his family at being welcomed and accepted by traditional owners. He spoke often of the privilege of visiting some of the most beautiful parts of Australia and the valuable opportunities to live and participate in daily community activities that are significantly different to those in Australia's large cities.

In his own words, as a person born overseas, he was motivated to give something back to the wider community, and country, he called home for many years. He also wished to be an inspiring example to his children and to demonstrate that a boy who left school aged sixteen could one day complete a doctorate thesis.

He dedicated this work to his beloved children, Kim and Pia Simonsen.

This work demonstrated Ray's immense capacity for social inquiry, overarching concern for others and his ability to draw from a diverse professional career to contribute in a practical and meaningful way to the discourse on indigenous policy and practice. It draws together his years of experiences in hospitality and tourism industries, his passion for anthropology and the issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

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# Table of Contents

## Declaration

## Acknowledgements

## List of Figures

## List of Graphs

## List of Tables

<b>Chapter One</b>	Researching Indigenous Australians in Tourism	1
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	The research topic	3
1.3	The context	3
1.4	Aims	6
1.5	Research design	9
1.6	Definitions	11
1.7	Significance	13
1.8	Summary and outline of chapters	14
<b>Chapter Two</b>	Indigenous Tourism in Australia	16
2.1	Introduction	16
2.2	The social context	16
2.3	Indigenous tourism policy	19
2.4	Demand for Indigenous Tourism	22
2.5	Motivation for Indigenous involvement	25
2.6	Forms of Indigenous involvement in tourism	29
2.7	Indigenous tourism enterprises: performance and effectiveness	34
2.8	Community involvement in tourism enterprises	44
2.9	Conclusions	54
<b>Chapter Three</b>	The Cultural Organisational Context of Indigenous Tourist Enterprise Management	56
3.1	Introduction	56
3.2	Concepts of ethnicity, Aboriginality, and perceptions of Aboriginal cultural practices	57
3.3	Indigenous people and work: attitudes to work and value transformation	69
3.4	Cultural constraints in management theory	73
3.5	Culture, management and work-related values	78
3.6	Critiques of Hofstede's contribution to the study of culture, management and work-related values	84
3.7	Hospitality applications of Hofstede's construct	88
3.8	Conclusion	91
<b>Chapter Four</b>	Profile of the Study Regions	
4.1	Introduction	94

4.2	Regional overview – Gadudju national Park	95
4.3	Aborigines and tourism development in Gagudju	96
4.4	Gagudju Crocodile Hotel and Cooina Lodge: An overview	101
4.5	The Emergence of Alternative Tourism Strategies for Gagudju National Park	104
4.6	Regional overview – The Torres Strait	106
4.7	Development strategies and cultural differences in the Torres Strait region	112
4.8	Cape York Peninsula	113
4.9	An overview of the Northern Peninsula area	117
4.10	A brief history of Injinoo Aboriginal community	122
4.11	Pajinka Wilderness Lodge	128
4.12	Conclusion	132
<b>Chapter Five</b> Research Methodology and the Treatment of Data		135
5.1	Introduction	135
5.2	The multi-method approach	135
5.3	The research design	136
5.4	Sampling and sources of data	139
5.5	Samples, instruments and data analysis	140
5.5	The value survey component	140
5.6	The qualitative surveys	145
5.7	The qualitative work questionnaire	146
5.8	The longitudinal survey	148
5.9	The marketing analysis	149
5.10	The hospitality operation audit and historical research	151
5.11	Ethics and confidentiality	152
<b>Chapter Six</b> Presentation and Discussion of Data on Tourism in Gagudju National Park		155
6.1	Introduction	155
6.2	Recent tourism developments in Gagudju	155
6.3	The Gagudju tourism joint ventures	158
6.4	Indigenous attitudes to tourism and tourists	161
6.5	Indigenous perceptions of joint ventures	167
<b>Chapter Seven</b> Presentation and discussion of the data		172
7.1	Introduction	172
7.2	Tourism and the Injinoo community	173
7.3	The social and organizational context of Injinoo Aboriginal Corporation	174
7.4	Management and the organizational context of <i>Pajinka Wilderness Lodge</i>	178
7.5	Analysis of <i>Pajinka's</i> markets and evaluation of the total service product	184

7.6	Reasons for staying at <i>Pajinka</i>	188
7.7	Length of stay at <i>Pajinka</i>	189
7.8	Guests' sources of information about <i>Pajinka</i>	189
7.9	Methods of guest reservation	190
7.10	Access and visitation details	190
7.11	Summary of demographic details	191
7.12	Relationships between <i>Pajinka Wilderness Lodge</i> and the IAC1	191
7.13	Concluding remark	194
<b>Chapter Eight</b> Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Research		195
8.1	Introduction	195
<b>Bibliography</b>		198

## List of Figures

Figure 3.1	Cultural differences: National, occupational and organisational levels	91
Figure 4.1	The Torres Strait Region	106
Figure 4.2	The NPA	119
Figure 5.1	Main research focus	137
Figure 5.2	The research design	138

## List of Graphs

Graph 5.1	Annual demand by occupancy 1996	102
Graph 7.1	<i>Pajinka</i> Annual Room Occupancy (%) 1997	185

## List of Tables

Table 3.1	Rank Order of Cultural Goals	69
Table 4.1	Major Tourism Features in Gagudju, 1996	98
Table 4.2	Property Details	101
Table 4.3	Sources of Guest Origins	103
Table 4.4	Main Islands' tourism facilities	111
Table 4.5	Main types of tourism facilities, Cape York	117
Table 4.6	Tourism facilities in the NPA	121
Table 6.2	Visitor Numbers to Major Northern Territory Parks	156
Table 7.3	<i>Pajinka's</i> market mix, 1997	186
Table 7.4	<i>Pajinka's</i> major customer segments	187
Table 7.5	Key guest characteristics	191

# Chapter One

## Researching Indigenous Australians in Tourism

### 1.1 Introduction

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, tourism has become the world's largest industry and constitutes a major element in the process of globalisation. From the colonial tradition of the European 'Grand Tour', to the present post-colonial phenomenon of mass tourism, developments in travel infrastructure and communications have made it possible for the urbanised populations of the affluent nations to penetrate all corners of the globe in their search for leisure, different environments, and ethnically exotic people with quaint customs (Hitchcock 1999, p.17).

Given its importance to the post-industrial world economy, tourism is increasingly promoted as a socio-economic activity with the capacity to facilitate the sustainable development of host communities. In their foreword to the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy*, senior Australian cabinet ministers stated 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 people to be involved in tourism. Within this context, much work needs to be done to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait people to understand the demands of the tourism industry, to remove obstacles to their participation ... and ... to participate profitably in tourism, and to present their culture on their own terms. (ATSIC 1997, p. iii)

Similarly, many industry leaders and Aboriginal interest groups increasingly regard Indigenous tourism as 'the next big thing' in Australian tourism and emphasise the symbiotic nature of the involvement. The Indigenous Tourism Leadership Group recently claimed that Aboriginal tourism had the potential to generate new products to meet the increased overseas demand and would simultaneously act as a vehicle for sustainable cultural and economic development of Indigenous tourism enterprises (2002).

These statements reflect a genuine, albeit functionalist, belief that with assistance and active engagement, Indigenous people can benefit significantly from tourism. However, a growing body of literature examining the impacts of tourism on host communities suggests substantial divergence from the objectives of official policies. As noted by Harrison and Price, views range from the 'fatal impact' thesis that alleges the destructive effects of tourism on local Indigenous cultures and economies, to a view of communities and cultures as 'adaptational systems' with the capacity to adapt to the external pressures of tourism, and to achieve economic and cultural sustainability (1996, pp. 6-7).

Encouraged by policy makers and by the attractiveness of tourism, many Indigenous minorities around the world have made the conscious decision to participate in tourism as a means of integrating their often marginalised communities into mainstream culture and economy. Such moves have enhanced the recognition of their cultures, leading to cultural revival and the achievement of some measure of financial improvement for their members. Despite the acknowledgment by researchers and policy makers of the problems facing new Indigenous entrants to tourism, a number of critical issues have scarcely been considered, including cross-cultural management, and the development of appropriate operational and organisational practices.

It is widely recognised that Indigenous involvement in the Australian tourism industry is fraught with difficulty and that many Indigenous enterprises are ultimately unsuccessful. Government agencies and Aboriginal organisations frequently make requests for research into Indigenously owned and operated tourism ventures that can identify and explain the critical factors affecting business success and viability. The present study includes an extensive review of the relevant literature and the conduct of a comprehensive case study of a complex Indigenously owned accommodation enterprise. The research aims to contribute to the body of knowledge relating to the operational, organisational, and cultural factors that impact on such businesses.

This introductory chapter places the research objective in a broad context and outlines the design and the limitations of the research program. The chapter also includes definitions of key terms, and explains the significance of the study.

## 1.2 The research topic

The central focus of this work is 'Participation by Indigenous Australians in Tourism Ventures', a theme that has much relevance to the contemporary Tourism Industry and the Indigenous people of Australia. It is being pursued with appropriate respect for Indigenous values and customs, and is offered as a tangible attempt to provide direction for a venture that will benefit both the Indigenous and wider communities.

## 1.3 The context

(i) Impetus for Indigenous participation in the tourism industry. Tourism has expanded significantly during the past 20 years and Australia has typified the rapid globalisation of the industry. In 1997, the direct and indirect contribution of tourism accounted for 9.3% of Australia's GDP. Domestic tourism was worth \$45.2 billion in 1998, and the 4.45 million international tourists that visited Australia in 1999 generated export earnings of \$17 billion, which represents 14.9% of total export earnings. Total domestic and international visitor nights during 1998-99 were in excess of 400 million nights in commercial accommodation establishments. Tourism is a major source of employment and the industry and was directly and indirectly responsible for the employment of 960,000 persons, representing 11.5% of the workforce, during 1996-97. The forecast annual growth for the period 2000-08 in international tourist numbers is 7.3%, whilst a more modest increase of 1.6% is predicted for the domestic tourism sector (Department of Industry, Science, and Resources [DISR] 2000, pp.1-2).

The tourism industry has sought to enhance the involvement by Indigenous people in tourism with a view to satisfying visitor expectations. Surveys conducted by the Bureau of Tourism Research suggest that 49% of overseas respondents wished to see and learn about Aboriginal art and culture, and that Australians are also showing more interest in learning more about Aboriginal culture (Commonwealth Department of Tourism 1992, p. 81). The phenomenon of 'Aboriginality' has become an important component in marketing the authenticity and distinctiveness of the Australian tourism experience.

Indigenous participation in tourism, as an organised and structured activity, is a relatively recent phenomenon. The release in 1965 of the report *Australia's Travel and Tourism Industry* by the consulting firm Harris, Kerr, Forster was an important milestone, raising many important issues relating to Indigenous participation in tourism. The report

proposed greater Indigenous choice and control over the development of Aboriginal tourism that remain relevant today (National Centre for Studies in Travel and Tourism [NCSTT] 1994, p. 27; Kit 1993, p. 7).

Many policy makers and community leaders regard tourism generally, and ecotourism and cultural tourism in particular, as offering an opportunity for Indigenous participation and economic development. The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) provided a strong impetus for greater tourism involvement by Indigenous Australian by identifying a range of opportunities that could result in greater self-determination, including self-management and economic self-sufficiency for Indigenous Australians (ATSIC 1994a, pp.147-148). Commonwealth and state governments have subsequently developed a wide range of policy initiatives to enhance Indigenous involvement mainly in cultural and ecotourism and thereby stimulate cultural awareness and employment particularly in economically depressed remote communities.

Aboriginal responses to the development of tourism enterprises have been mixed. An increasing number of communities and individuals have entered the industry as owners and operators of commercial tourism businesses as a means of improving their economic and social conditions. It is claimed that there were approximately 492 Indigenous tourism enterprises in 1994, including 40 establishments offering basic accommodation (NCSTT 1994, p. 146). These enterprises employed some 2,500 Indigenous Australians (ATSIC 1995a, p.4). Reflecting the limited cultural and economic resources of most Indigenous communities, most enterprises were small, operated on a part-time or seasonal basis, and employed few staff. Larger enterprises, including cultural centres and theatres, and full-service accommodation businesses, often depend on non-Indigenous expertise and management. Perhaps over-ambitiously, the government's own targets for growth in Indigenous tourism aim to create employment for an additional 8,500 Indigenous people by the year 2000, with 5,000 of them in the mainstream industry, 2,100 in new Indigenous enterprises, and 1,400 in existing tourism businesses (Pitcher, van Oosterzee and Palmer 1999, p. 11).

(ii) Critical success factors. Policies aimed at encouraging Indigenous participation in tourism are generally garnished with the popular terms of 'ecological and cultural sustainability' and 'cultural integrity and authenticity' (Commonwealth Department of

Tourism [CDT], 1994, pp.1, 16-21). Although policy makers acknowledge the impact of tourism on the character of local communities, their lifestyles, relationships, value systems and the environment, they maintain that it is possible to identify and apply appropriate management solutions that reduce the negative impacts on communities and maximise the benefits of tourism (CDT 1994, p. 21). However, as noted by Altman and Finlayson (1993, p. 48) there is some incompatibility with the demands of the tourism industry, government policies, and the supply of goods and services by Aboriginal people. These issues require further research to identify appropriate cultural and commercial solutions.

Apart from the claim that successful management must be sensitive to cross-cultural issues, little informed debate has occurred in Australia about the meaning of cross-cultural management in the hospitality and tourism industry. Writing in the international context, Pizam (1993) documents certain common cultural features and practices which are unique to the industry and which set it apart from other sections of the economy. He identifies the fundamental management dilemma facing the policy makers as follows: to what extent are the practices and the culture of the tourism industry independent of national cultures?; does effective management and operational successes of (Indigenous) tourism enterprises by necessity require the incorporation of a range of such common industry imperatives including the ethos of commitment to providing quality customer service and related organisational practices, or will industry culture and practices only be effectively implemented when subjugated to the culture of the host community (Pizam 1993, p. 217). The answers to these questions may assist the identification of the management strategies required to enhance the viability of Indigenous tourism enterprises.

According to Pitcher, van Oosterzee and Palmer 1999, p.16), policy rhetoric is difficult to reconcile with the realities of Indigenous tourism, and there is often an inconsistency between Indigenous values and the requirements of mainstream tourism. They also suggest that the notions of socio-cultural and economic sustainability of Indigenous tourism enterprises are problematic. In response to a concern that culture may become a commercial adjunct to an exploitative version of tourism, Indigenous supporters of Aboriginal participation in tourism often advocate participation 'on our own terms' (ATSIC 1997, p. 3). This approach expresses the demand by Indigenous people for

equitable and sustainable involvement via community consultation and participation, the protection of cultural heritage and the natural environment, and shared access to the benefits of commercial activity. Against this background of rights to self-determination, James (1996, p. 29) identifies tourism as one of the most dynamic sectors of the international market economy. In the context of global business competition, tourism ventures must continually mould themselves and adapt rapidly to changing market demands. These characteristics of tourism may be antithetical to the level and form of control desired by parochial host communities.

A number of barriers confront Indigenous people involved in the tourism industry, and as a result, Indigenous businesses often have low success rates. Such failure has been attributed to a variety of factors including a lack of training and education, the small-scale development of businesses which are operated on a part-time basis, lack of opportunities for full-time employment, the absence of role models for entrepreneurial activities and a general lack of operational knowledge, inadequate financial planning and support programs, the incompatibility of commercial realities with many management practices and employee attitudes. Indigenous enterprises are also confronted by the difficulty of conducting business in remote locations, including problems of logistics and high transportation costs, and weak links with the mainstream tourism industry (ATSIC 1995a). Recognition of these problems has prompted policy makers to request further research and the conduct of case studies to identify relevant operational management issues, and the types of industry practice that should apply to new and existing Indigenous commercial tourism ventures (NCSTT 1994, pp. 33, 41, 74-79). To date no study has focussed on Indigenously owned and operated resorts or to hotel properties offering a complete range of complex service products including accommodation, restaurant, and tour products.

#### **1.4 Aims**

As there is little data is available on Indigenous participation in tourism, there is a need for more up-to-date and relevant analysis of the aspirations and the challenges that confront the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders who have sought engagement in the industry (Kit 1993, p. 8). Much of the available data is very general, and focuses on the broad socio-economic issues that have been identified by government strategy. Such issues include control over land and other natural and cultural resources, training and

employment, microeconomic issues and infrastructure development, marketing and issues of authenticity. Whilst significant, such research has neglected the importance of the principles of operations management in hospitality and tourism, and has generally tended to place these in a broad social science context. Researchers rarely offer industry-specific information to Indigenous participants that encompass practical business realities as well as being culturally appropriate. In this context there is an urgent need to provide advice about suitable operational strategies, organisational format, and management practices if success rates for Indigenous tourism enterprises are to be improved.

(i) General aim. The general aim of the present research is to use a 'holistic' multi-method research strategy to gain a thorough understanding of a full-service accommodation enterprise owned and operated largely by Indigenous Australians. Given the paucity of existing operational data in Australia, and the strong support provided by the Injinoo Aboriginal Corporation for this project, it is expected that the research will contribute significant data and interpretation that will enhance our understanding of the socio-political processes and the operational management issues and specific industry practices which are critical to the success of commercial Indigenous tourism ventures.

*Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* has been selected as the main focus for the research. The Lodge is owned and operated by the Injinoo Aboriginal Community and is located at the Northern extremity of Cape York. Pajinka occupies a very unique place in the Australian tourism industry. It is probably the only accommodation venture that offers a full range of complex service products and which, at the commencement of this research, was fully owned and operated by Indigenous people. Since they acquired the property in 1992, the community has invested much effort, resources and aspirations in Pajinka. Despite adverse conditions and other logistic difficulties associated with operating in remote location, the Injinoo Aboriginal Corporation (IAC) did achieve some notable successes through the reduction of loan borrowing and other liabilities during the first few years. It is interesting to note that these early achievements, and the resultant sense of empowerment, self-esteem, and self-determination evident in the personnel involved, were noted with interest by those Indigenous communities across Australia who had similar entrepreneurial aspirations. The enterprise has experienced a number of managerial, financial and administrative problems in recent years that have resulted in the temporary closure of the business in 2002 due to insolvency. The causes of the closure,

and the resultant strategies for resurrecting the enterprise, are instructive for Indigenous tourism operators, policy makers, and others engaged in the Aboriginal 'culture business'.

The present research does not focus on issues such as environmental conservation, sacred sites, the production of artefacts and the protection of rock paintings. These concerns have been covered comprehensively in the Indigenous tourism literature and are referred to only in the context of providing a better understanding of the Pajinka operation.

(ii) Specific aims. There are six specific aims for this investigation:

1. To develop understanding of the organisational and political processes, and the expectations and nature of the cultural priorities that influence Indigenous community decisions relating to their participation in tourism. The investigative methods will include extensive literature analysis, as well as structured participant-observations, and the design and administration of open-ended qualitative questionnaires to be administered on locations in Cape York and the Gagudju National Park in the Northern Territory.
2. To develop a comprehensive operational profile of an Indigenous tourism facility, *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*, through the collection and analysis of primary and secondary operational data, and by participant-observations and interviews.
3. To administer Hofstede's Value Survey instrument (VSM94) to (i) the management and personnel at a select tourism operation owned and staffed by Indigenous people (*Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*), and (ii) to one or more comparable ventures (the *Crocodile Hotel* and *Cooinda Lodge*, Gagudju) operated and staffed by non-Indigenous personnel, in order to identify, measure, and explain cultural differences in management and work related values and organisational behaviour between the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous populations. As Hofstede's VSM94 was developed to measure the relative differences of culturally-determined values between members of different nationalities or cultures, the validity of the construct requires that cross-cultural comparisons should be based on samples of respondents that

have been matched on all criteria other than nationality or culture and be, as far as possible, functionally equivalent. This explains the inclusion a non-Indigenous sample for comparative purposes within the present study.

4. To undertake an enterprise audit with a view to evaluating the organisational structure of the prevailing management system, and the delegation of responsibilities in the context of the need for *Pajinka* to respond efficiently and effectively to demands and expectation place on the enterprise by customers, the community, and government agencies.
5. As is confirmed by various commentators (Chapman 1996, pp. 18-19), Hofstede has advised caution about the dangers of over-reliance on the VSM94 as a sole instrument for measuring cultural complexity (Hofstede 1980, pp. 17-34; 1994a, pp. xi-xiii; 1998, p. 20; Harzing and Hofstede 1996, pp. 307-309). To address this limitation, a qualitative questionnaire has also been administered as part of the present research process for the purpose of identifying a range of work-related values, preferences and concerns amongst the operational staff and management at *Pajinka*. The findings will used in a triangulation method and will provide additional qualitative background data to the results of the VSM94 empirical analysis.
6. To design and administer a market survey questionnaire to provide a profile of current customers, and to evaluate customer responses to the *Pajinka* product. In addition to contributing to the understanding of guest perceptions of Indigenous cultural tourism and the importance of 'authenticity', it is also envisaged that the findings will form the basis for undertaking future product development and marketing strategies.

## **1.5 Research design**

The instruments used in the present research have been chosen and designed to overcome many of the potential limitations inherent in cross-cultural research. One of the strengths of cross-cultural studies conducted at such cultural macro levels as nation or ethnic minority is the use of statistical survey instruments that yield generalised data that enables comparisons to be made across different cultures. Their weakness is the lack of

detail and insight into the unique characteristics that make cultures different to others. Such insights are best achieved through the ethnomethodological approach of participant-observation studies in which the researcher adopts an interpretative attitude to observed social phenomena. However, whilst ethnomethodology can provide profound insights into the unique characteristics of a culture such findings are usually subjective, non-positivist, and based on culture-specific Indigenous categories that are bound in time and space. Such research is therefore generally incapable of producing reliable conclusions that are suitable for systematic cross-cultural comparison (Xenikou and Furnham 1996, p. 16)

These dilemmas have been resolved by adopting a mixed research design which includes both quantitative and qualitative methods. The proven construct validity and the reliability of the VSM94 make it the most appropriate instrument for cross-cultural value measurements. However, as Hofstede himself notes, the data produced by the VSM94 are by themselves likely to be incomplete and should be supplemented by other research, including participant-observation methods. Hofstede is also alert to the potential risk of culture bias in his own constructs and has warned that some aspects of the VSM94 may not be suitable for application among Indigenous Australians (Hofstede, personal communication). One possible solution lies in operationalising both the etic and the emic methods, and to use the process of triangulation of observed phenomena to establish levels of congruence, or convergence, of results with the potential for achieving greater validation and applicability of data (Hofstede 1984, p.18).

Thus, the research design incorporates a multi-method approach with a view to providing a comprehensive and holistic profile of a complex Indigenous tourism enterprise. The researcher undertook four extended field trips to *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* to observe the operation and collect primary data. This is supplemented by other Pajinka-specific secondary data obtained from existing company files and records and will be used to develop an operational profile. Other relevant secondary data have been identified through literature searches and reviews. Data relating to the Gagudju properties were collected during two field trips to the *Crocodile Hotel*, *Cooinda Lodge*, Jabiru as well as Darwin.

The study makes use of both qualitative and quantitative primary data. The participant-observation method is used to form a picture of the daily operations at *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*. Longitudinal data and information relating to the administrative processes and the interface with the *Pajinka* Board of Management were obtained through personal interviews and informal discussions with members of the Board and Injino Community Council, *Pajinka's* management and staff, and other community advisers. The inclusion of a qualitative work-related attitudes questionnaire contributes the broader context for information collected in the quantitative questionnaire. Hofstede's Values Survey Module - the VSM94 (Hofstede 1994b), is used as the primary research instrument to identify any differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous perceptions of management and work-related values as these relate to the tourism and hospitality industry. In recognition of the comparative nature of this research, the VSM94 questionnaire will be administered on a one-to-one basis by the researcher to the staff and management at *Pajinka*, and to a matched sample of non-Indigenous persons working in similar enterprises in the Northern Territory. Finally, a mail out questionnaire will be used to identify product preferences, demographic details and other marketing information of Australian guests at *Pajinka*.

The present research cannot provide an exhaustive analysis of all of the issues impacting upon Indigenous tourism enterprises. The Cape York-based Indigenous population is small. Significant historical and cultural differences are evident between Torres Strait Islanders and Aborigines communities across regional Australia (Altman and Finlayson 1993, p.42). Consequently, it is unlikely that the research findings will lead to general propositions about Aborigines, or to conclusions with pan-Australian applicability to tourism ventures owned and operated by Indigenous people. Any generalisations from the findings will need to be identified and validated through further research and replication.

## **1.6 Definitions**

To ensure that the present research is consistent with tourism research more generally the following definitions have been adopted: *Tourism Industry* refers to 'the aggregate of all businesses that directly provide goods and services to facilitate business, pleasure, and leisure activities away from the home environment' (Hall 1996, pp. 8-9). *Ecotourism* is defined as 'nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural

environment and is managed to be ecologically sustainable' (Commonwealth Department of Tourism 1994, p. 3). *Cultural tourism* includes 'the movement of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and other cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art or pilgrimages' (Hall 1996, p. 293). Other researchers prefer a more holistic approach and suggest that the ecological, economical and cultural components of sustainability are highly interdependent, and that it is impossible to treat these components independently, even for analytical purposes (Altman and Finlayson 1993, p. 42). For ATSIC *Indigenous Tourism* includes all forms of participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in tourism - as employers or employees, as investors or joint venture partners, as providers of either Indigenous cultural tourism products or mainstream tourism products (ATSIC 1997, p. 4). This definition is problematic because it includes Indigenous tourism participation that is very indirect. This may include images or products of Indigenous origin presented to tourists, which may be indistinguishable from other mainstream tourism ventures. Butler and Hinch define *Indigenous Tourism* as activities 'in which Indigenous people are directly involved either through control and/or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction' (cited in Pitcher, van Oosterzee and Palmer 1999, p. 3). As with the previous definition, the notion of ownership, or control, may permit some tourism ventures to be labelled *Indigenous Tourism* even though they may not have any features that distinguish them as such. For the purposes of this research, *Indigenous Tourism* is defined as 'any tourism activity in which Indigenous people are directly involved either through employment, ownership and management and by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction'.

The sociological concepts of *culture* and *values* occupy central positions in the present inquiry. Hofstede's definition of culture refers to 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another' and 'includes systems of values; and values are among the building blocks of culture'. Additionally, it consists of 'the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group's response to its environment'. Culture determines the identity of a '... society or ethnic or regional group ... in the same way as personality determines the identity of an individual' (Hofstede 1984, p. 21). Values form part of nearly all of the mental programs, such as attitudes and beliefs, which members of a group have inherited by virtue of a

common culture, and are defined as ‘a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others’ (Hofstede 1984, p. 18).

## **1.7 Significance**

Many Aboriginal and Islander communities and organisations have acquired tourism enterprises that offer a full range of accommodation and food and beverage services, or else have expressed a desire to do so. The multi-faceted nature of such business operations is considerably more complex than what occurs in other areas of Indigenous tourism, and participation in this sector of the industry is likely to give rise to significant operational and management challenges. The present research will address some key problems highlighted in recent government policy initiatives, and in the literature concerned with the development of Indigenous tourism enterprises (ATSIC 1993, 1994, 1995a, 1996, 1997; Commonwealth Department of Tourism 1992, 1994; Pitcher, van Oosterzee and Palmer 1999). The findings should contribute to an improved understanding of the organisational, operational and cultural issues affecting Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders wishing to participate in tourism, and thus enhance their prospects for self-determination and self-management.

Calls have been made for further research in two areas: investigations into regional and ethnic subcultures for the purpose of identifying and understanding the extent of internal cultural differentiation within the nations that were included in previous surveys; and, most importantly, research into multicultural organisations in order to discover and minimise the causes of cultural discord and instead develop sustainable and synergistic management strategies (Hofstede 2001, p. 461). Anecdotal evidence suggests that significant differences exist between the cultural practices and values of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in different regions (Altman and Findlayson 1993, p. 42). The findings of this research will provide a significant contribution to the understanding of work-related values and organisational practices in the Cape York region and, if replicated elsewhere, may assist in the formulation of a comprehensive understanding of the similarities and differences in work-related values and practices in Australia. An improved understanding is critical to the design of cross-culturally sensitive management practices. It is also central for assessing the applicability of public and private sector development strategies and operational solutions to Indigenous tourism enterprises in different parts of Australia.

The present research should stimulate further debate about the role and effectiveness of Hofstede's paradigm to cross-cultural management. Hofstede's own research and subsequent replication studies explored the different corporate management values prevalent across Western and East Asian cultures, As far as this author is aware, the present research is the first to apply Hofstede's methodology to the management and work-related values of Australia's Indigenous population. This research will assess the construct validity of Hofstede's five work-related value dimensions with a set of carefully matched populations displaying significantly different characteristics from those previously surveyed by Hofstede and others.

Another potential outcome of the research will be the refinement of Hofstede's Values Survey Module '94. The Hofstede questionnaire is concerned with the dominant management values that characterise the culture of large organisations. The present research proposes some minor modification to the research instruments, and includes complementary survey instruments, with a view to create an industry-specific model suitable for evaluating the cultural values of the Australian tourism industry.

## **1.8 Summary and outline of chapters**

An increasing number of Indigenous Australians are entering the tourism industry in order to promote their culture, to achieve greater economic self-sufficiency and to control their own futures. In the context of such aspirations and the current political debate on rights, responsibilities, and reconciliation of black and white Australians, research into the conditions for success and sustainability of their tourism ventures is of vital importance. This research program will focus on the cultural differences in work-related values, and will identify and discuss management practices and operational characteristics in an Indigenous tourism venture in order to provide a better understanding of the underlying problems, as well as the causes of success.

Chapter two will review the literature relating to Indigenous tourism policy, and will identify the main socio-economic and operational issues affecting the development of Indigenous tourism enterprises across Australia. Chapter three explores the theoretical issues relating to the cultural and organisational context of Indigenous tourism enterprises, including discussions of Aboriginal culture, value orientations and work-

related attitudes, and approaches to Indigenous management. In particular, Hofstede's paradigm of cross-cultural management and comparative work-related values research will be addressed and evaluated in the context of Indigenous tourism enterprises. Chapter four will develop a comparative profile of each of the two study regions with the aim of expounding the setting of the participating tourism enterprises. Drawing on primarily on secondary data, the history of tourism development in the Kakadu (Gagudju) National Park and Cape York Peninsula will be described. This will be followed by discussions of a range of broad environmental, historical, organisational and operational issues relating to each enterprise for the purpose of providing a holistic context to the specific and detailed research data that will be presented in the chapters six and seven. The research methodology and the strategies for data treatment will be discussed in chapter five. This will incorporate a rationale for the adoption of the multi-method approach, and explanations for the relationship between the research aims and the various quantitative and qualitative instruments chosen for this research. Chapters six and seven will present and analyse the cultural and organisational data relating to the two sample populations. These chapters will discuss the nature of their involvement in tourism, the relationships that exist between the community groups, individuals, and the commercial ventures, and local responses to the need for prudent enterprise management. Given the research priority of *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*, greater emphasis will be placed on the cultural, organisational, and operational data collected in this enterprise. Central to chapter seven will be the discussion of work-related values and management preferences of the Indigenous participants. Chapter eight will discuss the findings and make recommendations for further research in Indigenous participation in tourism.

# Chapter Two

## Indigenous Tourism in Australia

### 2.1 Introduction

Aware of the poverty and social deprivation of Australia's Indigenous people, governments and organisations have sought to facilitate a range of projects and economic development options to create greater wealth for the communities and empower Indigenous people to achieve greater measures of self-determination, self-management and financial independence. Tourism has been identified as offering one suitable route to improve the socio-economic circumstances of Indigenous people. Encouraged by government grants and other incentives, including a strong desire to enhance the lives of their members, many communities subsequently became actively involved in tourism. However, such participation has proved problematic and many Indigenous tourism enterprises have not been successful.

This chapter will identify the main socio-economic and operational issues affecting the development and the viability of a diverse range of Indigenous tourism businesses across Australia. Against a background of expressions of social concerns and official tourism policy initiatives, fundamental issues relating to demand and supply will be addressed, including assessment of levels of demand for Indigenous tourism products and a discussion of attempts to categorise the main types of enterprises and other forms of Indigenous involvement in tourism. The chapter will analyse current literature commenting on the performance and effectiveness of business operations and practices. The critical relationships between culture, location, scale of operation, management, community affiliation and motivational issues, and successful business practices will be articulated for the purpose of developing an evaluative paradigm that can elucidate comparable factors relating to *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*.

### 2.2 The social context

Internationally, there is a growing consciousness of the plight of Indigenous people. Governments and international organisations have proposed and adopted a range of development strategies aimed at alleviating the underlying poverty and inequalities that

characterise such communities. These initiatives have significant political implications, especially in countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where nation building and the search for a common social identity have required acknowledgment of past wrongs perpetrated against the 'first nation' people, and the formulation of policies to facilitate their harmonious integration into mainstream society.

The post-war process of decolonisation has raised international awareness of the legal, political and moral rights of Indigenous people. The catalysts for the emerging concerns and solutions are diverse. They range from the post-colonial philosophies of *Negritude*, (a celebration of being 'black', and affirming black people's values in the arts, music, social development, economics and in nation-building) (Bullock and Trobley 1999, p. 568), the influential work of Amnesty International, and the internationally binding treaties and legislation of global organisations, principally the United Nations and the International Court in the Hague. The latter has been instrumental in reducing some of the excesses of third world exploitation, as well as eradicating the iniquitous system of apartheid and the illegal domination of small nations such as East Timor by powerful neighbours. Whether or not these developments are essentially 'conscience' concessions made by the governments of dominant nations, or are integral to the *Realpolitik* of the new economic world order, they nonetheless seem to suggest the emergence of a strengthening maturity on the part of the international community. Such maturity includes empathy for the 'other', and recognition of the existence of shared humanity across different cultures and nationalities in a manner that transcends the narrow confines of corporate greed and national self-interest.

There has also been an increasing awareness of the negative social, cultural and environmental impacts of international tourism on host populations and their habitats. Freya Higgins-Desbiolles (1999, p. 25) discusses the alternatives to conventional mass-tourism and notes the role of the World Tourism Organization's Bill of Rights and Tourist Code. She also cites the rise of the International Institute for Peace Through Tourism, and a range of international tourism organisations advocating ecotourism and cultural tourism as facilitators of peace and understanding and universal respect for human rights, as well as of economic development. Consequently, many special niche operators in Australia have developed alternative tour formats that are based on local

community participation and other arrangements, including alliances with non-government aid organisations, which seek to maximise the benefits for the locals.

In Australia, there is a transformation of social attitudes towards Indigenous Australians as part of an emerging national identity. As noted by Broome (1994), Aboriginal Australians have been subjected to legal, military, economic, and religious domination by white society for over two hundred years. Prevailing policies have been based varyingly on paternalism and greed, including extermination, assimilation, and integration, as means of dealing with the 'black problem'. These often brutal measures have resulted in Aborigines becoming marginalised and impoverished fringe-dwellers in their own country.

The 'black problem' has persisted and refuses to go away. Aboriginal cultures, both traditional and contemporary, have proved highly resilient and the assertiveness of black communities and their leaders, the 'recurring forgotten' (Edgar 1980, p. 297), have achieved significant progress in political and legal arenas. This has raised white consciousness of the plight of their people. From the Wave Hill movement and the granting of the vote to Aboriginal people, and other events in the 1960s, there has been a change in mainstream 'white' attitudes towards to such issues as Indigenous rights and social equity which have reached positions of prominence in the national debate. Topics of national significance include the Mabo case, the 'stolen generation', the iniquitous mandatory sentencing policy, and the growing momentum towards a formal reconciliation between black and white Australians.

The public significance of these recent milestones is related to the current debate about the prospect of Australia becoming a republic. Pearson (1994, p. 1) regards the expression of such social and political sentiment as indicative of Australia's emerging social maturity. However, at the present time, it seems that the continual strong opposition of the current conservative governments to these issues lags the social consciousness expressed by public concerns and international criticisms of government policies (The Age 2000, p. A1).

### **2.3 Indigenous tourism policy**

The uniqueness of the culture and habitat of the Indigenous Australians has become an integral part of the promotion of national heritage. The depiction of the solitary Aborigine holding a spear and a boomerang on a craggy hill silhouetted against a vast open space, became a signature image in the literature promoting Australian tourism. Since the 1980s, Australian governments have recognised the development potential of ecotourism and cultural tourism. Many Aboriginal people were already participating in tourism through the production of arts and crafts, the conservation and interpretation of significant sites, and the education of tourists about Indigenous cultural practices. However, the potential was under-exploited, and a survey conducted in 1990 by the Australia Council and the Bureau of Tourism Research concluded that whilst most international visitors were interested in Aboriginal cultural products, few actually encountered Aboriginals or purchased Indigenous cultural items. The then Labor government focus was more social than pecuniary. It was believed that the development of Aboriginal tourism would lead to social and economic benefits, including mutual understanding and enhanced inter-racial relations, employment and training opportunities for the local Indigenous people, and economic independence (Commonwealth Department of Tourism [CDT] 1992, p. 81).

Many important Indigenous policy developments have occurred recently including the Mabo decision and its implementation through the Native Title Act 1993, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) 1991, and numerous subsequent tourism initiatives. The main recent impetus for social and economic development of Indigenous communities has come about through the RCIADIC Report. The Commission's Report argued for greater funding support for communities to improve health, legal rights, employment, education and housing, reaffirmed the principle of self-determination and proposed that maximum power to define and implement development programs should be devolved Indigenous communities and organisations. It also acknowledged the need for accountability by Indigenous organisations and made a number of recommendations on accounting procedures and performance evaluation (Martin and Finlayson 1996, p. 3).

The Commission regarded the rapidly expanding tourism industry as offering potential opportunities for greater self-determination, self-management and economic self-

sufficiency for Indigenous Australians (ATSIC 1994b, pp.147-148). In particular, the Royal Commission recommended a range of tourism activities best suited to Indigenous participation, including: employment in hospitality operations and in the national parks; investment in tourism enterprises; the production and sales of arts and crafts; provision of cultural tours to tourists; and joint venture developments involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (National Centre for Studies in Tourism and Travel [NCSTT] 1994, p. 70).

The recommendations gave rise to a range of reports and policy initiatives to encourage Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders to participate across the full spectrum of tourism, including planning and development, management and decision-making, and the delivery of culturally based tourist products. The initiatives are included in a range of policy documents including the National Tourism Strategy (Commonwealth Department of Tourism 1992), and the National Ecotourism Strategy (Commonwealth Department of Tourism 1994), the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Strategy - Main Consultancy Report (NCSTT 1994) and the subsequent Draft Report (NCSTT 1994), ATSIC's Cultural Policy Framework 1995, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Industry Strategy 1996, the Refined Draft Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Industry Strategy 1996, and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy 1997, and the Rural Industry Strategy 1997.

The formulation and delivery of the resultant programs and support schemes have involved numerous federal, state and regional departments and authorities including tourism, environment, finance, and education. Many of the initiatives have been subsumed under existing government policies and have been integrated into established delivery structures and programs - in particular the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy (AEDP) and the Community Development Employment Projects scheme (CDEP).

The 1992 National Tourism Strategy identified the AEDP as a key facilitator of Indigenous participation in tourism. The AEDP, which had been introduced by the Hawke government in 1987, aimed to assist Indigenous people to take control over their own lives and to achieve economic independence (Department of Employment, Education and Training [DEET] 1989, p. 6). As identified in the National Tourism Strategy, the AEDP was to provide financial assistance for Aboriginal communities to

establish new tourism enterprises to purchase existing ones. It was also to provide management, technical training, and administrative advisory services to ensure the viability and success of the ventures (CDT 1992, p. 81). The present research will evaluate the extent to which such programs have been effective and contribute to an enhanced understanding of the factors that influence the viability of Indigenous tourism ventures.

The CDEP has also enabled many communities to become involved in tourism. Introduced by the Fraser government in 1977, the scheme aims at providing community development employment as an alternative to the channelling of unemployment benefits to individual recipients in remote Aboriginal communities. Under this scheme, elected community councils, many of which are incorporated entities, receive a government block grant equivalent to the welfare entitlements of the community members plus a fee for administration. The unemployed are paid their welfare pro-rata entitlements in return for work on community projects. It is a form of work-for-the-dole scheme and has been described as an Aboriginal 'workfare' program. Underlying this label is a perception that its economic contribution to the wider community may have been diluted by welfare attitudes (Sanders 1988, p. 32; Rowse 1993, p. 268). Although the program has encountered a number of problems, including allegations that it is tokenistic, it has facilitated community participation in tourism ventures including *Pajinka* and *Manyallaluk* (located in the Northern Territory) (Pitcher, van Oosterzee and Palmer 1999, p. 18). The present research provides an opportunity to evaluate the CDEP in the context of a particular site, known as *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*.

The policies espouse a cautious optimism about the prospects for Aboriginal involvement, though they recognise that tourism is not a panacea for the problems of economic development and self-sufficiency. A range of opportunities were identified for participation in tourism by Indigenous communities and individuals, aimed at addressing issues such as training and employment, finance, marketing, environmental and cultural impacts, management, community relations and legal structures, and appropriate tourism industry practices. These policy initiatives have underpinned the subsequent development of a range of state, regional and local initiatives and projects (Pitcher, van Oosterzee and Palmer 1999, pp. 12-14). ATSIC occupies a central role and has become the main agent for coordinating and facilitating Indigenous community tourism projects, including the

provision of funding and support services, as well as welfare programs. The policy documents provide a useful context for understanding the dynamics of Indigenous tourism as it applies to the sites that are the focus of the present study.

#### **2.4 Demand for Indigenous tourism**

Tourism is a major contributor to employment and to the economy in Australia. In 1999, Australia attracted 4.65 million international visitors from overseas, and 294 million domestic visitor nights were recorded in the commercial accommodation sector. During 1997-98 the industry contributed approximately \$58.2 billion to the national economy and directly employed 513,000 people (Industry Science Resources, November 2000). The very scale of tourism and the fact that it already impacts upon the communities where Indigenous Australians live is a reminder that the relationship between the two, is significant.

The promotion of tourism as an element of economic development and the extent to which Indigenous Australians participate is dependent on the demand for Indigenous tourism products. Despite the importance of accurate measurement, the data which record the receptiveness of international tourists to Indigenous products is however inconsistent and incomplete. Surveys conducted by the Bureau of Tourism Research in the early 1990s suggested that 49% of overseas visitors were interested in seeing and learning about Aboriginal art and culture, and that Australians are interested in learning more about Aboriginal culture (Commonwealth Department of Tourism 1992, p. 81). Similarly, a survey on the demand for Aboriginal cultural tourism found that while most international visitors were interested in Indigenous cultural experiences and wished to engage in cultural activities, such interests were not the primary drawcard for the majority of the visitors (Access Economics 2002, pp. 76 – 77). It is also noteworthy that 'interest' does not necessarily prompt behaviour, as is demonstrated by the Bureau of Tourism Research which has estimated that only 557,000 international visitors (constituting only 15% of total arrivals) actually visited Indigenous sites and attractions in 1996 (Pitcher et al. 1999, p. 27).

It is clear that Indigenous tourism is not a major drawcard for most international tourists despite the prominence of Aboriginal images in advertising and international promotions of Australia, and the optimism expressed by the Australian Tourist Commission.

According to Burchett, of the total international visitation to the Northern Territory in 1992 of 195,000, only 1.4% gave Aboriginality as the main reason for the visit (1993, p. 23). Indigenous culture is, at best, a secondary attraction for international tourists. It is widely known about prior to travel but is not a determinant in itinerary planning (Clark and Larrieu 1998, p. 10). Collins is cautious about the prospects for Indigenous involvement, stating that 'out of ten people who say they want to have an Aboriginal contact while they are in Australia ... six will in fact be satisfied by a visit to a shop selling Aboriginal arts and crafts, three will seek out a museum or a dance recital and one will pursue a close-contact activity' (Collins 1993, p. 37). One prominent tour operator expressed similar scepticism about the value of Aboriginal cultural tourism (Access Economics 2002, p. 80). European and North American tourists demonstrate greatest interest with less interest amongst Asians, and budget-conscious backpackers are often the ones most likely to seek out the close-contact type of activities referred to by Collins (Pitcher et al. 1999, p. 28; Access Economics 2002, p. 77).

There is little information about domestic demand for Indigenous tourism products. The available evidence suggests that domestic tourism, that provides the bulk of overall tourism activity, may not provide adequate numbers to sustain Indigenous tourism enterprises. There are no accurate and recent assessments of the value or volume of demand. Pitcher, van Oosterzee and Palmer reported that most of the respondents to an AGB McNair (1988) survey from three southern Australian states had had very little contact with Aboriginals. Of the respondents 44% were interested in learning more about Aboriginal culture. Of these, 36% expressed an interest in Aboriginal lifestyle and survival, 31% in heritage, culture and history, and 29% in the Dreamtime and mythology (Pitcher et al 1999, p 28). However, as noted by Ryan and Huyton (2001, p. 18), desire and stated intention are not the same as consumption and it would be unwise to develop products and enterprises based on the number of Australians proclaiming an interest in Aboriginal tourism products.

Demand for Indigenous tourism products by domestic tourists amongst appears to be very limited and attractions based on Aboriginal culture are a low priority with few having an interest in Indigenous cultural products. Ryan and Huyton (2001, pp. 12-13), and Market and Communications Research (2000, p. 75), have suggested that, among other factors, the intellectual and cognitive efforts involved in the appreciation of the

Indigenous tourism products may be at odds with the desire for relaxation on holiday. Aversion to learning and education is noteworthy because it appears inconsistent with the aspirations of Indigenous people for tourism ventures that provide opportunities to educate white Australians about Aboriginal culture. Other barriers include cost and the difficulty of accessing remote locations. Similar views have been expressed by many tour operators in the Northern Territory who believe that Australians prior perceptions of Aboriginals and the high costs involved mitigate against the development of cultural tourism (Access Economics 2002, p.79).

There has also been a negative reaction by white Australians to the contrived depictions of traditional Aboriginal culture. Whilst Parsons believes that authenticity holds the key to the financial success of cultural tourism (Parsons 1991, p. 317), Altman is sceptical about such assertions and points to Parsons lack of quantitative evidence (Altman 1991, p. 319). These staged images have resulted in reduced market appeal and led to scepticism towards Aboriginal holiday concepts which claim to offer of 'authentic' and 'cultural' experiences (Marketing and Communications Research, 2000, p. 13).

Domestic tourists interested in Aboriginal holidays have a preference for day or half-day tours, or for brief stays that do not exceed three days. These are usually as an adjunct to other attractions such as bush tucker tours, wilderness treks, and fishing (Marketing and Communications Research, 2000, p. 75). Given the relative low level of domestic interest in Indigenous tourism, Ryan and Huyton (2001, p. 20) question whether tourism is a realistic answer to the problems of unemployment and low income among Aboriginal communities. Such views are at odds with the dominant policy directions outlined in the previous section, suggesting the need for extreme caution by Indigenous communities and their advisors when assessing the prospects for success of potential tourism enterprises. Using *Pajinka's* guest register and other available secondary sources of operational data in conjunction with a survey involving domestic tourists staying at the Lodge, the current research will develop a visitor profile and address such topics as motivation and preferences for Indigenous tourism products, attitudes towards 'authenticity', sources of demand, and average length of stay. The importance of the local demand, including that of Indigenous customers, for hospitality products to the viability of the business - a topic seldom addressed in the literature - will also be discussed.

## 2.5 Motivations for Indigenous involvement

The development of Indigenous tourism has often been difficult for the local participants. Internationally there are numerous examples of the negative effects of the commoditisation of fragile ethnic cultures, the environmental impacts of tourism and the degradation of ecologically based economies, as well as the social marginalisation of minority communities. Not surprisingly, many Indigenous communities have failed to embrace in tourism. Other communities have however made a conscious decision to become involved and have invested in tourism ventures. Their reasons extend beyond those commonly cited by entrepreneurs as motivating factors and are based on a complex mixture of economic aims and social objectives. Some may not be conducive to achieving economic sustainability but nonetheless reflect deeply felt concerns about land rights, trade-offs between culture and 'quality of life', and reconciliation.

Indigenous people's ideas of tourists are not uniform. Tourists are often regarded as 'a lot of people' who only come for a short time to look around. Writing about the Aboriginals of the Gagudju region, Altman observes that tourists are differentiated from visitors who do not reside in the area but who come with a definite purpose, and from white residents from Jabiru. Tourists were regarded with negative feelings that were not extended to residents or visitors (Altman 1988, p. 207). Barker observed similar attitudes among some the Yanyuwa people at Boroloola who were greatly concerned about the tourist's lack of connection with the land and with the environment. Yet other Yanyuwa individuals were proud of the interest shown by tourists in their land, and they were much more positive about tourism in the area, as long as the tourists eventually returned to their own place (Barker 1990, p. 6).

Concerns over the negative impacts of tourism have caused many Indigenous people to reject tourism or to avoid direct involvement in tourism. Such concerns include environmental degradation and the depletion of natural subsistence economic resources, trespassing on land and ignorance of sacred sites and the 'stories', the risks of indecorous behaviour due to the lack of kinship or other defined social relationships which structures action and rules of etiquette (Barker 1990, p. 70). Many Indigenous people are also anxious about the effects of tourism on traditional authority structures, gender and inter-generational relationships, whilst others believe that the regularity and security of their current subsidies and welfare supports are preferable to the potentially unsustainable or

low return investments in tourism (Altman 1989, p. 272; Altman 1993, p. 7).

Consequently, many Indigenous communities, groups, and individuals have decided against involvement in tourism (Altman 1988, p. 208; Altman 1993a, p. 8), whilst others have developed strategies that enable them to have an indirect involvement in tourism which avoids the need for face-to-face contacts with tourists. Such strategies include arts and crafts production, employment options, or management arrangements, that enables them to derive some measure of financial benefits from tourism without being involved directly in the delivery of service and products to tourists (Rowse, 1992a, pp. 248-249). In addition to commenting on local participation in Indigenous tourism in Gagudju, this research will also investigate the nature and the effectiveness of Injinoo Aboriginal Community's strategies to moderate the behaviour of tourists visiting *Pajinka* in an attempt to minimise adverse social and environmental impacts.

The diversity of Indigenous attitudes to commercial tourism may be attributable to an unfamiliarity with industry structures and with wider business principles. Data suggest that some Aboriginal people failed to have a strictly commercial regard for government funding and investments in the community's tourism business, viewing such support much in the same manner as welfare entitlements that are 'owed' to the community as compensations for past wrongs (Finlayson 1991, p. 55). Commenting on the Torres Strait, Arthur (1990, p. xv) believes that many Islanders simply do not have sufficient knowledge and exposure to tourism to decide whether or not they want tourism as a development option because of their remoteness from mainstream economic centres. Arthur (1991, p. 6) and Altman (1989, p. 456) have drawn attention to a conundrum facing Indigenous Australians, in that Aboriginal leaders often view tourism as a way of improving the economic and political status of their communities whilst, at the same time, minimising the accompanying social, environmental and cultural costs. Joseph Elu reflects this view in the foreword to an ATSIC publication seeking to promote Indigenous participation:

There is no doubting the huge potential of tourism to provide a basis for economic independence, and to help eliminate some of the disadvantages faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ... On another level, tourism provides the chance for us to preserve our cultures for future generations or simply to keep the community intact. ... If Indigenous people can learn from the experiences of the ventures highlighted in this package, we are in a much better position to get involved in tourism - on our own terms. (ATSIC 1996a, p. 3)

However, Finlayson has noted that often ‘such decisions are based on unrealistic expectations of making fabulous wealth from tourism’ and ‘Aboriginal people find it impossible to conceive of the impact tourism will have on their community or personal lifestyle, nor do they have any knowledge of how to monitor the changes tourism will impose on them’ (1991, p. 93). This view is supported by Altman’s research that suggests that Aboriginal community-based participation in the industry or ownership of major tourist destinations can be disruptive and offers no guarantee of economic opportunities for Aboriginal people (Altman and Finlayson 1993, p. 40).

Pearson’s recent statements points to the lure, and to the ambivalence, of Indigenous tourism. He suggested that, in theory, Indigenous ecotourism provides a logical opportunity and *should* [my italics] be the most appropriate industry for Aboriginal people because of its potential to provide an important economic and cultural boost for the participants. Nevertheless, he observes that ‘we are as unsuccessful in that venture as we are in relation to every other area of Aboriginal policy’ (Aboriginal Tourism Australia 2002, p. 1).

Where the communities have decided to engage with tourism, such judgments have frequently been made in the context of an idealistic Indigenous value system that encompasses a range of unique social and cultural motivations and collective aspirations. Common to a number of case studies conducted across Australia (Finlayson 1991, p. 91; James 1996; Louvel and Williams, 1997, p. 7) is the belief that tourism offers the prospect of presenting the Aboriginal dimension of history to non-Indigenous people whilst, at the same time, sharing the Dreamtime, the culture, and the land, and thus maintaining an ongoing cultural presence in the wider society. Many Indigenous people regard tourism as an opportunity to educate whites about their culture and lifestyle in order to facilitate better understanding and mutual respect, and thereby contribute to the process of reconciliation. Similarly, these case studies reveal a strong belief by elders that tourism will lead to cultural revival and create jobs and opportunities for learning especially for young Aborigines so that they will remain in the communities and not drift to the cities and regional towns. Additionally, as typified by the Anangu’s involvement with tourism at Uluru and Kata Tjuta (Rowse 1992, p. 248) and the Gagudju people’s ownership of the tourism enterprises in the Kakadu National Park (Altman 1989, p. 262)

where tourism takes place on Aboriginal land, the decision by the Indigenous communities to engage with tourism is invariably influenced by the all-important issues of land title and desire to gain control over traditional territory.

Aware of the potential for adverse impacts, Australian policy makers have long sought to minimise the negative impacts of ecotourism and cultural tourism in Australia. It is recognised that whilst Indigenous Australians are encouraged to dream of better times, many of the participants in Aboriginal tourism often find that they have to tread a fine line between theme park curiosity and cultural preservation agent (The Sunday Age 2000, p. 6). Consequently, policy makers have provided Indigenous people with incentives and mechanisms to safeguard their interests and minimise the excesses of tourism. For example, whilst stressing the perceived need to expose tourists to aspects of Aboriginal culture and environment, the Committee of Review of Aboriginal Employment and Training Program expressed the view that, unless regulated and controlled, tourism could degrade or adversely alter Aboriginal lifestyles and their environment (East Kimberley Project 1985, p. 33). Two significant cases exist that illustrate the special attempts made by Indigenous people and their industry partners to achieve sensitive and compatible tourism development on their traditional lands. The relationship between the lessee of the Gagudju National Park, the Australian National and Wildlife Service (ANPWS), and the traditional owners, the Gagudju Association, has been structured to facilitate impact-reduced centralized tourism development commensurate with the ecology and cultural ethos of the Gagudju people. Similarly, the relationship between the traditional owners at Uluru and the ANPWS requires the latter, as the lessee of the area, to incorporate 'Tjukurpa' (the traditional law pertaining to the land and its custodianship) as the guiding principle for the management, the interpretation, and the sustainable use of the national park for tourist purposes (McKercher and du Cross 1998, p. 377).

Despite the sincerity of the participants in trying to achieve developments that are sensitive to the environmental and cultural issues, practice frequently falls short of the ideal. With nearly a quarter of a million tourists visiting the Park annually, the *Cooinda Lodge* and the *Crocodile Hotel*, and other accommodation ventures, and the associated tourism infrastructure, tourism developments now constitute large-scale developments and which have impacted on both the ecological and cultural milieu of the Gagudju people. Similarly, according to McKercher and du Cros (1998, p. 377) the incorporation

of 'Tjukurpa' at Uluru has not been successful in moderating the behaviour of the rock-climbing tourists in accordance with traditional concepts of respect for the land.

Aboriginal people might be expected to be sceptical about the promise of progress that result from active participation in tourism. It has been alleged that many are anti-development. Altman takes issue with this, suggesting that Aboriginal people, especially those who own and/or are residents on Aboriginal land, are best described as being anti-developmentalism. He suggests that 'they challenge implicit mainstream assumptions that quality of life issues will be given due consideration in calculations of progress. Aboriginal interests often consider development options in a context that includes social and cultural as well as economic components' (Altman 1989, p. 260). He concludes that the although the ideals of development certainly includes such materialist concerns as increase in revenues, improved opportunities for employment and education, it 'also involves other social and cultural issues, the potential for increased political power, and the possibility of widened future options' (Altman 1989, p. 260). In this context it is interesting to note that an analysis of the case studies of Indigenous tourism operations across Australia conducted by James reveals that most participants had a positive attitude to tourism that was largely attributable to cultural revival and other social benefits, even though most of the tourism ventures have not been financially successful (James 2000).

This research will explore Injinoo community's motivation for purchasing *Pajinka*, their attitudes toward tourists, and identify and discuss Injinoo's economic, cultural and economic priorities and the extend to which they have sought to maintain a sustainable balance of competing goals. The findings from the *Pajinka* study will be compared and contrasted to similar observations from Gagudju, and will be compared to the issues raised in this section and will thus contribute further to the understanding of the ability of Indigenous people to realise their hopes and motivations through active participation in tourism.

## **2.6 Forms of Indigenous involvement in tourism**

Assessments of the size and value of the supply side of the Indigenous tourism sector appear to be as imprecise as the estimations of the demand for Indigenous tourism products discussed above. Whilst ATSIC estimates that approximately 6,000 Indigenous people were employed in the production of arts and crafts in Australia in 1987-88

(ATSIC 1996b, p. 13), Brokensha and Guldborg believe that there were about 25,000 Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory engaged during the same period in the production of Aboriginal art and craft for sale which, they assert, was over 50% of the total Aboriginal artists and crafts people in Australia (Brokensha and Guldborg 1992, p. 110). National data relating to industry employment and growth show similar discrepancies. The Draft National Tourism Strategy stated that 2,500 Indigenous people were employed in tourism in Australia and that in 1991 there were some 500 Indigenous tourism enterprises including arts and crafts production and retailing, theme attractions and cultural centres, performing arts troupes and theatres, tours and other community-based enterprises. As identified by Pitcher et al. (1999, p. 11) the Draft Strategy also set ambitious targets for the growth of Indigenous tourism in Australia claiming that, as a result of policy implementation, an additional 8,500 Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders would be employed in tourism by the year 2000, comprising 1,400 new jobs in existing Indigenous enterprises and 7,100 jobs from new Indigenous enterprises and non-Indigenous tourism organisations (ATSIC 1994b, p. 5). Following criticism by industry practitioners, the final National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy downgraded the data, estimating that in 1997 only 1,500 Indigenous people were employed in mainstream tourism and that there were approximately only 200 Indigenously owned tourism businesses in Australia. The Northern Territory Tourism Commission, which believes that there are only approximately 200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism operators with an estimated annual value of \$5 million, echoes this. The tourism market also accounts for approximately \$100 million per annum of the sale of arts and craft (Access Economics 2002, p. 76). Recognising the fragility of Indigenous tourism enterprises, the final strategy was silent on projected growth targets though it did offer the inconclusive remark that whilst there appeared to be considerable scope to increase Indigenous employment, there was some uncertainty about how such increased employment could be facilitated (ATSIC 1997b, pp. 6 -7). The vague and incorrect nature of the data relating to both the demand and the supply of Indigenous tourism is highly problematic and may result in formulation of inappropriate government policies and strategy advice, and funding support for Indigenous tourism.

Attempts to establish inventories of the Aboriginal component of tourism in Australia have been frustrated by difficulties relating to information and operational characteristics. Lack of reliable data, and the fragmentation and small-scale nature of the many dispersed

business, have prevented the formulation of a coherent schema of classification to enable the quantification and more precise understanding of the types and nature of existing Indigenous tourism businesses across Australia. Altman (1993a, pp. 4-5) has proposed a simple classification composed of five broad categories of Aboriginal involvement in tourism, some of which overlap:

- (i) *The manufacture and sale of Aboriginal arts and crafts.* Altman regards this category as the most significant. It includes such high profile enterprises as Daluk Daluk (now defunct, previously owned by the Gagudju Association), Jumbana Designs (Yanyuwa, NT), Maruka Arts and Crafts (Mutitjulu community, Uluru National Park), as well as many smaller business activities that are often conducted on a part-time basis. Brokensha and Guldberg (1992, p. 112) believe involvement in these enterprises result in the best returns for the participants, whilst others maintain that the production of arts and crafts offers the most appropriate forms of involvement by the many Indigenous people who prefer to avoid direct contacts with tourists and for whom earnings from tourism is at best supplementary to other incomes (Rowse 1992, p. 248; Altman 1993a, p. 4).
- (ii) *Small-scale Indigenous enterprises.* This very heterogenous category includes such diverse businesses and activities as arts and craft wholesale and retail outlets many of which are community owned such as the Manyallaluk Arts and Cultural Centre in the Northern Territory, to Aboriginal owned and operated stores, road-houses, caravan parks and camp grounds - many of which serve as either/or both mainstream and Indigenous tourism markets - and small-scale dance troupes such as the Saibai dancers in Seisia who perform occasionally during the tourist season.
- (iii) *Aboriginal businesses based on providing cultural tours with special emphasis on portraying aspects of Indigenous life.* These include bush tucker tours, hunting and gathering, rock art, environmental interpretation, and wildlife observations. The duration of these tours range from short, half-day trips to several days. As in the case of Dessert Tracks, the tours usually involve direct contact with Indigenous people and takes place on land with which the hosts have traditional cultural affiliation. These tours are usually small-scale and are subject to

seasonality and the availability of Indigenous staff and often rely on non-Indigenous managers for the continued conduct of the business.

- (iv) *Indigenous cultural centres and theme attractions.* Due to the paucity of established business in 1993, Altman only provides brief comments on this category. Since then a number of internationally acclaimed enterprises have been established offering a variety of cultural performances and presentations. These include the *Dreamtime Cultural Centre* in Rockhampton, the *Tjapukai Dance Theatre* near Cairns, the *Bangarra Dance Theatre* in Sydney, and the *Brambuk Living Cultural Centre* located in the Grampians National Park in Victoria. Common to many, though not to all, these businesses have involved the support of non-Indigenous management personnel, continuous operations and performances conducted in very significant physical facilities and premises, requiring large initial capital inputs much of which was obtained by means of grants and other forms of financial support from governments.
- (v) *Indigenous participation in tourism as investors in tourism infrastructure.* Examples include Aboriginal investments such large-scale projects as the hotels and other tourism facilities in the Gagudju National Park, and the Kings Canyon complex in Northern Territory. Altman (1993a, p. 5) suggests that these investments can be indirect - requiring no Aboriginal involvement with tourists - or be direct and provide close, usually face-to-face, contact with tourists via concessionary tour enterprises or the employment of service staff.

Altman's descriptive classifications help to identify the broad aspects and types of Indigenous participation in tourism. It recognises the unique characteristics of Indigenous enterprises and allows the inclusion of such multi-faceted enterprises as *Manyallaluk* whose range of products can be grouped across the first four categories. Altman's schema is however incomplete and its generality diminishes its analytical and explanatory precision. *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* for example has distinct characteristics relating to investment and ownership, staffing, hospitality and tourism products, and methods of product delivery (<http://queensland-holidays.com.au>) that go beyond the broad descriptions of Altman's fifth category. Altman's classification does not cover the full extent of the tourism industries that embrace or relies on some component of Aboriginal

or Torres Strait Islander culture. For example, he omits reference to those tourism activities identified by Clark and Larrieu (1998, p. 3) which (1) may be owned by Indigenous interests but do not feature Indigenous themes, and (2) tourism activities controlled by non-Indigenous interests which feature Indigenous themes but which are not necessarily conducted by or involving Indigenous people. The present research will outline the total range of *Pajinka's* service products and investigate other issues relating to ownership and organisational format which will contribute to the further development of Altman's Indigenous tourism enterprise categories.

Altman identifies different levels of involvement in tourism by various Indigenous groups. He distinguishes between situations where tourism has been imposed, and those where it has been invited. He refers to the instances where tourism was developed on Aboriginal land without their consent as imposed tourism. In instances where Indigenous people have successfully regained ownership of their land, the title transfer may have been conditional on certain provisions, including leaseback arrangements, to ensure continued visitation and thus safeguard the vested interest of the tourism industry. Examples of imposed tourism include such prominent destinations as Uluru and Gagudju National Parks. Invited tourism refers to developments that have occurred after the Indigenous owners have assumed effective control over their land. In these instances the landowners have much greater leverage over the development and supply of tourism products, including the right to veto tourist access or to limit visitation with a view to minimising negative impacts on the community and environment. Altman suggests that invited tourism is more likely to result in greater economic benefits for the Indigenous participants (Altman 1989, p. 270; Altman 1993, p. 41). He cites the developments on Melville and Bathurst Islands and in Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory as examples of invited tourism (Altman 1993a, p. 42).

Discussions about Indigenous participation in tourism frequently refer to the role of land councils. The regional land councils are statutory bodies that were created under the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976. Lacking affiliation with a natural political party, Aboriginal landowners and community residents have little prospect for political expression in the wider polity and have increasingly turned to the land councils which have become para-governmental organisations addressing Aboriginal political and economic aspirations (Altman 1989, p. 260). Under section 23 of the Act, land councils

are required to represent and advocate on behalf of their constituency in relation to tourism development on Aboriginal land for the protection of the interests of the owners (Tilmouth 1993, p. 26). Occasionally the role of the land councils goes beyond the provision of consultative political support and assumes the function of commercial partners. Together with Indigenous Business Australia (IBA, also formerly known as the Commercial Development Corporation), the Ngurratjuta/Pamara Association, and other organisations, the Central Land Council, for example, is an equity partner in the Kings Canyon Resort in the Northern Territory (IBA 2001, Personal communication). Thus, the development and operation of tourism enterprises that involves the use of or access to Aboriginal land, and the direct or indirect participation by the traditional owners, takes place in a complex political framework that is significantly different to mainstream tourism developments. The present research will discuss the relevance of land claims to the Injinoo community's decision to purchase *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* and evaluate the applicability of Altman's typology of invited and imposed tourism.

## **2.7 Indigenous tourism enterprises: performance and effectiveness**

Whilst there are some success stories in the Indigenous tourism industry, research suggests that participation by Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in tourism enterprises is highly problematic and is generally unable to provide the local communities with the expected benefits of economic growth and equity, employment opportunities, self-determination and cultural autonomy as outlined in the policies enunciated by federal, state, and territorial governments in Australia.

A recent benchmarking study identified 'good practices' in tourism enterprises in Australia. Reflecting the general composition of the hospitality and tourism industry this study focussed on small and medium enterprises. Small enterprises consisted of those employing 20 staff or less and the medium category was defined as those employing between 20 and 100 staff. The sample comprised enterprises that had been nominated as finalists for the 2001 Australian Tourism Awards competition and included such tourism sectors as environmental tourism, tourist and caravan parks, tourism wineries, meetings and conventions, tour and transport operators, tourism restaurants, and a variety of accommodation enterprises in the three and four-star categories. Samples of Indigenous tourism enterprises were also included but was not analysed as a separate category. The study identified several key factors that characterised good managerial practices and

which were considered essential for success in the tourism industry. These include excellence and innovation in strategic planning, financial management, market knowledge and marketing activities, human resource management, a commitment to quality and service, and appropriate and timely use of external assistance (Bergin-Seers, Breen, Jago, and Carlsen 2003). These authors provide a number of detailed examples of specific practices called 'Managerial Factors for SMTEs' in Appendix A.

Acknowledging the fallacy and the subjectivity of the so-called 'best practice' paradigm, the authors prefer the term 'good practice' in recognition of the diversity of practices and the variability of these based on the operational and environmental context of each business (Begin-Seers et al. 2003, p. 3). Whilst being useful in identifying generic management factors in the analysis of tourism enterprises, the narrow focus on common mainstream topics resulted in the omission of constructive debate on a number of pertinent management concerns including cross-cultural management and other issues and practices which are specific to Indigenous tourism. This research will evaluate the key management practices at *Pajinka* against the standards of good practice identified by Begin-Seers and her colleagues.

Altman's analysis of Indigenous enterprises has highlighted the presence of several factors of success relating to these businesses. These include the identification and maximization of cultural and economic advantage, access to markets, culturally appropriate organizational design, strong political and commercial leadership, robust governance, political stability, consensus in development aspirations, commercial leverage of locally available resources, and strong financial linkages (Altman 2002a, p. 8). For many communities these conditions are not readily obtainable and the literature has identified a number of barriers facing Indigenous people involved in the tourism industry, and it generally acknowledged that Indigenous businesses have a less than desirable success rate.

The main barriers to success have been primarily attributed to a lack of training and education, limited business development and lack of opportunities for employment, the absence of role models for entrepreneurial activities, inadequate financial resources and support programs, the incompatibility of commercial realities with many social and cultural values, inappropriate management practices and employee attitudes, weak links with the mainstream tourism industry, economic marginalisation resulting from the

locational disadvantages associated with doing business in remote locations and the diseconomies of scale inherent in small communities, and lack of operational knowledge (Finlayson 1991; Altman 1988, 1989, 1993, 2001; Altman and Finlayson 1993; Commonwealth of Australia 1993, ATSIC 1994a, 1994b, 1996, 1997, NCSTT 1994, Pitcher et al. 1999; James 2000). Other inhibitors include lack of financial infrastructure, fragmentation and disunity of civic governance and polity, uncertainty of property control and contested land rights, and the effects of bias and prejudice of mainstream Australian society (Altman 2002a, pp. 7-8). It has also been suggested that the financial returns from tourism have frequently been so small, or have been so inequitably distributed, that it has resulted in a negative economic benefit for many Indigenous communities (Altman 2001; Brokensha and Guldberg 1992, p. 112).

These suggest the existence of inconsistencies between government policy objectives, community desires, and economic realities. As noted by Finlayson (1991, p. 13), many government funded Aboriginal enterprises in cultural tourism were originally intended to be self-managed and generate sustainable employment. A large number have been unprofitable, and have become dependent on continual government funding for capital investment and job creation. Private sector investment remains limited, especially in those remote locations which lack adequate infrastructure and suffer diseconomies of scale, leading to a need for further injections of public funds for the continuation of the many programs commenced under the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy and other government initiatives (Altman 1990, p. 49). Given this economic dependency and recognising the historical, locational, and cultural forces effecting Indigenous people, Altman is doubtful of their prospects for achieving economic independence and economic equality with white Australians (Altman 2002b). Another observer has suggested that government policies relating to community development are fundamentally flawed and that the principle of self-determination may simply encourage Indigenous people to live in places that, in many instances, offer little prospect of economic development (Arthur 1994, p. 34).

The problem of financial dependency seems to be exacerbated by inadequate access to finance to help sustain Indigenous tourism ventures. The poverty of many communities limits access to investment finance from the private sector, and many are totally dependent on government support for welfare programs and enterprise funding. Land

often constitutes a community's major, or only, tangible resource. Although land titles can under certain circumstances be alienated, its use as collateral for commercial loans or joint venture partners from the private sector is often severely limited by other factors including community pressures as well as other aspects of local customary land rights and uses (Altman 1996, p. 68; James 1996, p. 31). However, it is clearly in the community's interest to use any available asset or resource as leverage in accessing finance intended for community economic development and many communities have developed innovative options for generating finance. These include using property and Native Title rights to achieve incomes from rents, royalties, and gate fees, whilst other strategies for raising development finance involve the use of future CDEP funding to guarantee short-term bank overdrafts, or leveraging such income generating community enterprises as service stations, construction businesses, or shops (Altman 2002a, pp. 5-7). Conversely, cases also exist in which community resources are surrendered for the benefits of individuals. Participating Cape York communities relinquish approximately 160 CDEP funded positions annually to the Indigenously owned Balkanu Corporation which assigns the positions to regional development projects. Of these, 51 positions are allocated to provide support to individual Indigenous entrepreneurs engaged in specifically targeted business activities (Personal communication 2003). Nevertheless, the ability of communities to lever resources is highly variable and is conditional upon local resource availability, managerial creativity and comparative advantage, and the development options of some communities will remain heavily circumscribed.

Following the decline of social responsibility in corporate values of mainstream banks, many have subsequently withdrawn services from low yield locations including outback communities. This has weakened local financial institutional structures and has left many communities in a conundrum because ATSIC, as the main facilitator of Indigenous involvement in tourism, does not have a good track record of publicly funded Indigenous commercial projects (Finlayson 1993, pp. 13-14; 1995, p. 3; ATSIC 1996, p. 88). Subject to the limitations arising from commercial confidentiality and ethics, this research will investigate Injinoo Aboriginal Community's acquisition and operation of *Pajinka*, including sources of funds and loans, as well as the IAC's ability to access finance. *Pajinka's* financial performance will be discussed and the cost of conducting complex tourism operations in remote Cape York location will be evaluated.

Aboriginal tourism is believed to provide employment for individuals and communities and offers an escape from ongoing welfare and poverty dependence (ATSIC 1994, p. 23). It is generally acknowledged that Indigenous people have difficulty accessing and retaining jobs in the industry due to lack of formal education and low numeracy and literacy skills (Pitcher et al. 1999, p. 19). Although many initiatives seek to address these issues, cultural factors may limit the efficacy of such programs. For example, when the Jawoyn people redeveloped their hospitality facilities to cater for the tourists visiting Nitmiluk (Katherine Gorge) in the Northern Territory, a culturally appropriate training program was introduced which appealed to many young, primarily female, Aborigines who were keen to learn new skills and exploit the career opportunities in the service sector. However, concerns by some male relatives and boyfriends about the behaviour involved in the service delivery led to social pressures resulting in high attrition rates of trainees (Nitmiluk 2001, Personal communication). This experience is not an isolated case. Acknowledging the existence of some extroverted, gregarious individuals who actively sought work in tourism (Altman and Finlayson 1992), Altman nevertheless believes that many Indigenous people do not wish to work in hospitality or tourism enterprises due to the intensity of the social interaction and the rigorous demands for punctuality, regularity and personal presentation (Altman 1988, p. 208). Trudgen's discussion of communications with the Yolgnu in Arnhem Land points to differences in a number of key practices including eye contact, speaking and listening styles and body language, which impacts on cross-cultural communications and interaction between Yolgnu and dominant white society (Trudgen 2000, pp. 77– 80). This is supported by Hughes (1991) who refers to the widespread Aboriginal aversion to make eye contact, a practice that may lead to misinterpretation by others of the commitment and dedication of the Indigenous people. Finlayson also notes that the behavioural requirements of the service encounter between the Indigenous hosts and the tourists often is conducted in a cultural paradigm which is alien to many traditional Aborigines and which is regarded by some, especially older people, as 'acting flash' (Finlayson 1991, p. 119). Some Indigenous people are sceptical of such views, regarding them as elitist and belittling of Aboriginal capacity for cultural adaptation. They maintain that Indigenous participation in industry training and education programs is to a large extent dependant upon access to and availability of culturally appropriate programs (Cooperative Research Centre, 2001). The present research will examine the extent to which such views are applicable to Gagudju and *Pajinka*.

and reduces their ability to learn about the industry, and the techniques and roles of management (NCSTT 1994, pp. 284-285). Given these obstacles it is understandable that many Indigenous businesses struggle to survive. As *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* has had two Indigenous and two non-Indigenous managers in recent years this research is well placed to investigate the Indigenous owner's management strategy and, in particular, evaluate the fit between the commercial and cultural needs of the business and key operational management capabilities.

The inadequacy of market research and business planning also contributes to the failure of many enterprises. Some attempts have been made to identify and quantify particular markets and formulate appropriate tourism products (NCSTT 1994), but many observers have questioned the quality of the information. Referring to findings from the Northern Territory, Altman suggests that it is the special interest groups and not the mass-tourism sector that are interested in Aboriginal cultures (Altman 1993a, p. 4). Much commissioned market research appears to have over estimated the potential of tourism projects by being over-optimistic about tourism visitation and expenditure. These deficiencies are often overlooked by the communities, their advisors or the funding authorities, due to the ambiguity between the various parties about the reasons for establishing the business. Is the business intended to provide an economic opportunity for the community, or is its main function to serve other, and perhaps incompatible, social and cultural priorities (Altman and Finlayson 1993, p. 43)? Business plans often underestimate the lead times needed by such ventures to achieve financial viability (Altman 1993a, p. 8). It also creates unrealistic expectations by many Indigenous communities of the economic benefits of tourism and a lack of awareness of the extent of the environmental and socio-economic costs involved in achieving commercially successful outcomes (Altman and Finlayson 1993, p. 43). Instead of being a means for achieving greater self-determination and economic autonomy, the engagement with poorly planned tourism ventures often results in ongoing welfare and funding dependency.

Responding to the need for case studies on tourism ventures (Altman 1993a, p. 11; Altman and Finlayson 1993, p. 48; ATSIC 1994b), James investigated seven Indigenous tourism enterprises from across Australia. She set out to identify the economic, environmental and cultural impacts of tourism on the participating Indigenous

organisations and communities. Her micro-level investigation identified a range of cultural issues and operational practices which impact upon the capacity of enterprises to respond to tourism opportunities. Her findings provide insights into the key issues affecting the sustainability of Indigenous operations including location, community resources and cultural values, and tourism products. Whilst significant, her findings relating to environmental impacts are not germane to the concerns of this thesis and therefore will not be addressed here.

James examined a broad variety of businesses from across Australia, encompassing urban, rural, coastal and remote inland, traditional and contemporary, small to medium sized, and community owned and joint Indigenous tourism enterprises. The enterprises and their relevant main attributes are presented in Table 2.1 in Appendix 2. Further, James does not specifically adopt Altman's typology of 'invited' and 'imposed' tourism. Her accounts of the businesses start-up phase is too vague in some of the cases to provide a full understanding of the type of tourism involved, though of the operations seem to be based on what appeared to be 'invited' tourism. These included such successful businesses as *Tjapukai* and *Munbah*. However, invited tourism was also experienced by less successful operations such as *Desert Tracks*. The importance of land use and ownership issues in the case of these three businesses reduces the applicability of Altman's typology. Whilst *Desert Tracks* was established as a community owned enterprise following the transfer of land title, this business has been unsuccessful from a financial perspective. Similarly, the land related to the two successful ventures does not really fit into Altman's description. *Tjapukai* is conducted on a commercial suburban property, and *Munbah* is operated by an Indigenous couple who have individual rights to the use of the land, even though the community holds the land. James' review points to the presence of a number of operational characteristics and conditions which may be more critical to the success of Aboriginal tourism ventures than Altman's categories of 'invited' and 'imposed' tourism.

The major contribution by James is the presentation of data that enables a nexus to be established between location, community traditions, organizational flexibility and enterprise success. Using *Desert Tracks* as an example, her data suggests that the more remote Aboriginal enterprises will increasingly be associated with communities that still retained traditional values and ceremonial observance. In protecting their environment,

culture and lifestyle, such communities have tended to engage with tourism 'on their own terms', and refrain from adapting their lifestyles and values to meet tourist demands. She also observed that the more remote communities tended to be smaller, were difficult to access, and had weaker links with mainstream tourism. They were also less able to deliver and maintain a reliable tourism product. This often resulted in diseconomies of scale, volatility of demand, and a product supply that was strongly influenced by divergent priorities and conflicting practices, leading to reduced profitability of the enterprises. This causes further dependence on funding supports from government agencies to defray overheads and labour costs.

A number of characteristics contribute to the success of *Tjapukai* and *Manyallaluk*. *Tjapukai* is the only enterprise that is fully profitable whilst *Manyallaluk* is still dependant on CDEP to offset its comparatively high labour costs. Both enterprises contribute significantly to the economies of the participating Aboriginal groups. The ventures are relatively large and complex operations and offer a range of tourism services. Both are flexible and have strong market orientations and linkages. The formulation and professional delivery of their cultural products is highly successful and reflects the expectations of their markets and the schedules of associated tour operators. *Tjapukai* in particular is very successful and although its products may be regarded as being very 'touristy', the business format and its entrepreneurial management, the cultural performances and other tourism services are highly modern and have great market appeal. Its close proximity to Cairns combined with high profile marketing, large visitor capacity, and continuous supply and demand has enabled *Tjapukai* to achieve economies of scale and the 'critical mass' required for sustainability. It should be noted that whilst ATSIC's Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) is a minority partner, *Tjapukai's* success predates the formation of the joint venture and, unlike cases which will be discussed later, is not attributable to IBA's involvement (2003, Personal communication).

James's review also points to the relationship that exists between land ownership, community participation, and business success. Whilst *Munbah's* success is modest, it was only intended as a part-time business. The Indigenous husband-wife owners provided most of the start up funds themselves (James 1996, p. 13). It is a private enterprise conducted on community-held land which 'the community recognises individual ownership of in terms of use', and *Munbah* was not required to pay royalties to

the community (James 1996, p. 27). Similarly, the pattern of usage of the land upon which *Tjapukai* is located cannot be considered traditional by the participating Aboriginal groups, and although Aboriginal elders are to some extent involved in the decision-making processes, the links between the communities, customs, and the enterprises are somewhat tenuous. James attributes a large measure of the success of Indigenous tourism enterprises, not to the community but to the work of a few dedicated and competent individuals who usually carry out the important functions of management and business development. She suggests that demands by the communities for access to profits and other resources reduces the viability of the tourism businesses and is a disincentive to these individuals whose efforts may be usurped by the community (James 1996, pp. 23-31).

According to James, lack of experience and skills among the Aboriginal participants has led to the dependence on non-Indigenous people to manage their businesses. Except for the small part-time operation of *Munbah*, which was owned and managed by a husband and wife team, all the other Aboriginal tourism businesses reviewed by James involved collaborative arrangements including a joint venture with IBA. These businesses were managed by outsiders, usually whites, who had industry experience and were accountable to the Aboriginal owners. Considerable costs were also incurred by these businesses in training and employing guides and other staff. Whilst such costs may be common to all businesses, certain factors exist which serve to differentiate Aboriginal tourism from mainstream enterprises. These include the irregularity of tours and visitations, and extreme annual business fluctuations caused by the seasonal variations in demand. This resulted in high turnover of staff and/or difficulties relating to the retention of acquired skills. Coupled with the small-scale visitation numbers and uneconomical high staff/tourist ratios, the resultant excessive labour costs often placed unrealistic financial burdens on many Aboriginal tourism enterprises who therefore had to rely on CDEP or DEET funds to remain viable. The present research will assess the applicability of these constraints to *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* and evaluate the role of CDEP in offsetting labour costs.

James' data reveals the incongruous nature of Aboriginal tourism enterprises. One aspect relates to lack of market realism inherent in official policies and promotional efforts. Policy makers regard tourism as a panacea for many of the problems affecting Australia's

Indigenous people, especially for those 40% of the total who live in remote locations where there are no alternative forms of economic development available. Their promotional efforts emphasise presenting traditional aspects of Aboriginal culture and the preservation of what are portrayed as traditional communities and their environments. Analysis of James' data indicates that these are the Aboriginal tourism enterprises least likely to succeed financially. The seasonal weather restrictions to accessibility and the remoteness of these businesses from tourism markets, the strong community affiliations and the parochial commitments of the Aboriginal owners to traditional values and activities, suggest the existence of a trading environment that is almost antithetical to the dynamic and highly demanding nature of the global tourism industry. Instead of achieving economic self-sufficiency and self-management, most of the tourism enterprises reviewed by James that were remote and maintained strong traditional cultures tended to develop greater dependency on others for financial and management supports. Paradoxically, despite the lack of success by most of the enterprises in achieving the expected financial and economic benefits for their communities, all the participants expressed positive support for their involvement in tourism. The James' survey did not include a tourism enterprise comparable to *Pajinka*, consequently the results from the present research should contribute to understanding the factors and circumstances which affect the success of Aboriginal tourism enterprises.

Analysis of the literature on the role of Indigenous tourism enterprises in facilitating community development, economic self-sufficiency and self-determination points to the existence of a range of diverse, and often conflicting, opinions on the suitability of direct involvement by the community in commercial activities. Government policies and initiatives promoting Indigenous participation in Aboriginal tourism are often inconsistent, and have frequently been contradicted by researchers and industry participants. The following section seeks to summarise the debate and identifies the key issues of community development, cultural practices, and Indigenous tourism policy.

## **2.8 Community involvement in tourism enterprises**

Indigenous community councils play a central role in the cultural, political and civic spheres of their communities. Following the introduction of the Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976, most Indigenous Associations incorporated for the purpose of administering public funds and assume responsibility for the administration of

infrastructure and services. Enacted by the federal government as a means of circumventing opposition by state governments to goals of self-determination, it gave legal status to Indigenous groups to receive and spend funds for a variety of purposes in accordance with the priorities and needs as determined by the elected community councils (Martin and Finlayson 1996, p. 3). Similarly, the councils also play important roles the formulation and pursuit of land claims.

The strong policy emphasis on community councils and the role of ATSIC has raised a number of contentious issues in the debate on tourism and the potentially flawed notion of the 'community'. Rowse suggests that mainstream social perceptions of 'community' reflect a dubious monistic rhetoric that implies that the Aboriginal communities are politically cohesive with its residents forming a single and homogenous constituency. He claims that this view is based on the requirements of contemporary welfare colonialism for the presence of legitimate self-governing units of Aboriginal settlements for the distribution of welfare services and grants. It overlooks the fluid plurality of community alliances based on traditional authority structures and relationships based on kin, shared language, locale, and other dynamic group affiliations. It also denies the history of the communities which commonly consist of diverse groups of Indigenous people, of whom some may have been traditional enemies, that were driven together on mission settlements or grazing properties by the colonial processes that constitutes 'progress' (Rowse 1994b, pp. 18-25).

Martin and Finlayson concur with Rowse and suggest that whilst the governing bodies of Aboriginal organisations may be construed by outsiders as representing the interests of their community, the councils tend to be highly factionalised and represent the often-competing interests of dominant community groups. Councils have become the arena for the political competition between groups over the capture and control of resources, including grants from ATSIC and other agencies. Whilst such resources are generally put to their intended use, some are not and Martin and Finlayson points to certain values and practices that affect the distribution of resources and which help sustain the political hierarchies and internal differentiation. One important Aboriginal social value relates to caring and sharing - a pervasive characteristic which is regarded by some as a major point of differentiation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (Schwab 1995, p. 11). Wealth in the Aboriginal domain lies in social capital rather than other forms of

materialistic expressions. Acts of generosity and sharing are normative within Aboriginal groups and represent the recognition of social relationships and the acceptance of mutual obligations and reciprocity by the participants. Schwab (1995, p. 10) suggests that sharing is a social transaction as well as an economic transaction. To deny the demands of kin is not just a personal economic decision - it is a rejection of a relationship that may have profound social ramifications. Sharing is considered a moral act that symbolises 'proper' behaviour and thus form a most important element of social respect and community standing. However, Schwab's analysis of the cultural logic and the principles of Aboriginal sharing, including demand sharing, also suggests that acts of both giving and receiving are not always altruistic but, as in any society, are subject to a calculus which also includes self-interest and personal political eminence. Thus, often the real goal of control over community resources is not the resources themselves but the ability by influential individuals to use the resources to create and sustain wealth and power in the form of social relationships and future obligations (Martin and Finlayson 1996, pp. 4-7).

These unique circumstances were recognised by the NCSTT which concluded that competing intra-community differences and competing interests and priorities often had adverse effects on the operational efficiency and financial viability of many Aboriginal owned enterprises (NCSTT 1994, p. 255). This research will highlight the relationship between *Pajinka* and the IAC and comment on the efficacy of local arrangements intended to segregate potential community demands from the interests of the business. Another issue relates to the funding of tourism projects and its affects on the ownership and conduct of the business. Although cases such as Gagudju and Uluru provide some evidence which to suggest that development capital can be raised via lease arrangements (Altman 2002, p. 5), such examples have only limited application and Indigenous people generally experience great difficulties in accessing business loans from commercial lenders. Due to their general lack of collateral and to the constraints imposed on their land titles they consequently rely on ATSIC funds for commercial developments. Typically, only incorporated bodies of more than five people or recognised community enterprises were eligible for commercial ATSIC funds. Thus the policy has traditionally favoured community-based enterprises at the cost of individual or family based business operations (Pitcher et al. 1999, p. 17; Burchett 1993, p. 25). Altman and Finlayson suggest that community councils are inappropriate vehicles for the implementation and

management of commercial ventures. The functional expertise and organisational structure of community councils reflect their primary activities such as the provision of municipal services and infrastructure for community residents. Councils are therefore unlikely to be responsive to commercial opportunities with sufficient entrepreneurial vigour and competence (Altman and Finlayson 1993, p.44).

The financial viability of many community enterprises has been limited by the incompatible expectations of funding agencies and community groups. Funding for tourism projects has frequently been conducted against a background of policy ambiguity and competing priorities in which neither the agency nor the community had clear understanding whether tourism was intended to provide an economic opportunity for the community and thus reduce their dependence on welfare, or whether it was an enterprise serving other social, cultural and economic goals (Altman and Finlayson 1993, p. 43). Pearson is critical of government attempts to address problems affecting Aboriginal communities which, he claims, are not based on enabling strategies, but have been, and continue to be, constrained by bureaucratic preference for delivering social and economic programs as forms of welfare to the recipients (Pearson 2000, p. 45). Although his comments refer specifically to Indigenous communities on Cape York, they probably apply more or less equally to other communities across Australia. Reflecting the paradigmatic changes in current government policies, Pearson argues that the mode of delivery of resources for social development has resulted in the creation of an artificial economy that is ultimately antithetical to the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people. Welfare has corrupted Indigenous culture and created artificial economies in the communities which, combined with more than two centuries of racism, has led to severe social and cultural dysfunction in some Aboriginal communities (Pearson 2000, p. 14). Whilst previous traditional Aboriginal economy was sustainable and was based on principles of mutuality and reciprocity, the welfare economy that replaced it has promoted a form of structural apathy that in many instances encouraged passive dependency and antisocial behaviours:

the traditional subsistence economy was very much a real economy. If you didn't work, you starved. ... Then there is the gammon economy of welfare, which is artificially created by government on gammon principles. By gammon principles I mean that it is not based on any real transaction - personal sustenance is received as (a matter) of course, with the recipient not being required to work or provide anything in return. (Pearson 2000, p. 47)

He also suggests that the social and economic benefits of many of the development and welfare initiatives were often diminished by nepotism, internal competition and, in particular, socially disadvantageous patterns of demand sharing by individuals (Pearson 2000, p. 28). Furthermore, the effectiveness of many well-intended government supports programs was further reduced by modes of delivery by government agencies that were uncoordinated, and not based on a holistic perspective which resulted in overlaps and duplication (Pearson 2000, pp. 27, 42). Other observers have voiced similar concerns (Finlayson 1993, pp. 76-79; Commonwealth Government of Australia 1993, pp. 7-9).

Pearson acknowledges the problems associated with the development of community economies:

Developing economic independence is generally accepted as a desirable goal for our people, but there are some issues we need to deal with. It seems to me that there are substantial contradictions between the usual structure for Aboriginal decision-making (which includes everybody and is not based on expertise but representation) and successful business enterprise (which is leaner and based on expertise). Also, most Aboriginal enterprises are communally owned and the necessary reward and incentive for personal effort - are absent, and they invariably fail. (Pearson 2000, p. 61)

Amongst many other formal and informal institutional and social changes, Pearson proposes a new value paradigm that acknowledges the key role of individual independence and autonomy. He suggests that the communalist system of work tends to diminish personal responsibility and initiative (Pearson 2000, p. 25). He also points to the fallacy of the idea of the community as a homogenous undifferentiated local group of 'simple communitarians' and instead promotes the concept of 'village' as a place of equality, common identity and shared values, but capable of accommodating diversity and accepting of individuality and autonomy (Pearson 2000, p. 29). Pearson's views on cultural values, and individualism and the community reflect main concerns of the present research. The topics raised by Pearson will be appraised in the next chapter against the findings of ethnographic research, and will be commented on later in the context of the findings of this research.

Strong differences of opinions are evident concerning the suitability of the community model of enterprise development. Advocates of the approach suggest that the collective resources of the community enable it to respond to the requirements of tourism. They

maintain that the ceremonial obligations and social duties of individuals may conflict with the rigorous demands inherent in the delivery of service products. The pooling of the community's resources results in a greater degree of flexibility in terms of staffing, accounting and other administrative services. Similarly, it is implicitly argued that communities are better placed to take on larger projects and potentially generate greater income, wealth and employment opportunities for the residents (NCSTT 1994, p. 248). On the other hand, many industry researchers and practitioners increasingly recognise the difficulties associated with community ownership of Aboriginal tourism ventures and have called for the adoption of other forms of organisational and operational arrangements as pathways to achieve sustainable businesses enterprises. Given the problematic nature of community administration and local politics many believe that there exists a demonstrable need to segregate the affairs of business from the affairs of the community so that they exist as two separate legal and administrative entities (ATSIC 1995, p. 6; NCSTT 1994, p. 248; Burchett 1993, p. 25).

International experiences point to similar conclusions. Analysing more than 100 tribally owned and operated businesses in the USA, the Harvard Project on Indian Economic Development observed that businesses that were protected from the interference from local politics were four times more likely to succeed than those that were not (Cornell 2002). Similarly, Altman and Finlayson point to the potentially stifling organisational structure of the community and claim that '... commercial tourism enterprises which successfully generate income are often small-scale and family based' (1993, p. 45). Evidence also suggests that enterprise success is often attributable to the commitment, effort and competence of one or two hard-working individuals (Burchett 1993, p. 25; ATSIC 1993, p. 6; NCSTT 1994, p. 248).

According to such views, the close affiliation with communities presents dilemmas to the development of sustainable Aboriginal tourism ventures. The contradictions between social policy, patterns of funding, and the reality of Indigenous culture and business practices has been highlighted in the literature and many proposals have been presented to address the main problems. Two are of central importance to this research program. One relates to the emerging emphasis on individuals to the success of Indigenous businesses; the other relates to joint ventures as a model for successful partnership

between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, including individual entrepreneurs, commercial companies, and government organisations.

The value paradigm as it applies to the establishment of tourism ventures as a means of facilitating sustainable development for Indigenous people is changing. Opposition to the community model suggests that Aboriginal tourism enterprises may fail unless there is a greater acceptance by participants of more hard-nosed business attitudes and practices (Pitcher et al. 1999, pp. 17-18). These include such mainstream business concepts as entrepreneurialism, wealth creation, personal accountability, and the critical role of the individual to business success. The alignment with liberal economic ideology is evident in recent agenda discussions. Senator Herron pointed to establishment of the IBA as a solution to perceived problems with ATSIC's funding policy and suggested that in the future '... economic programmes must be operated on a purely commercial basis and distinct from social considerations' (Herron, 1998). The current Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Mr Ruddock, has sought to develop mechanisms in which new programs and initiatives could be directed more explicitly towards benefiting individual people and entrepreneurs (Access Economics 2002, p. 71).

Such sentiments echo the sentiments of many industry practitioners. For example, the manager of the successful *Tjapukai Dance Theatre*, points to wealth creation as the irreducible minimum requirement for the success of Aboriginal tourism businesses. He dismisses the community model as 'failed' and calls for the development of economic models and practices capable of rewarding individual effort through such incentives as extra pay or shares in the enterprises. Apart from mutual respect based on an awareness of cross-cultural factors, he argues that the conduct of Aboriginal businesses should be little different to mainstream practices (Freeman 1993, pp. 62-65). However, others are more circumspect and point to the social consequences of successful family or individually owned businesses - including the rise of significant intra-community income differentials and the formation of hierarchical social strata (Altman and Finlayson 1993, p. 45). Perhaps more important is the opposing view taken by Altman who suggests that not only is it impossible to separate the commercial from the cultural, or the economic from the social in Indigenous business support programs, but also that such attempts would result in the negation of the very comparative advantage held by Indigenous

participants involved in the 'culture business' including Indigenous tourism and the arts and craft sector (Altman 2001).

Recognising the problems affecting Aboriginal tourism enterprises various forms of collaborative arrangements between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are increasingly being promoted as a means of improving the prospects of success. The Northern Territory Tourist Commission argue that such ventures 'have the capacity to allow Aboriginal people to participate in the tourist industry at their own pace and reap the benefits of their assets' (Northern Territory Tourism Commission [NTTC] 1996, p. 11). These arrangements take many forms and usually include the appointment of individual salaried non-Indigenous managers, the establishment of management contracts with mainstream firms specialising in providing management services in return for commissions and performance bonuses, and joint ventures between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners. Joint ventures in particular have been identified as a potentially suitable strategy for developing Aboriginal enterprises (Commonwealth Government of Australia 1993, p. 12; ATSIC 1997, p. 11; Altman 1993b, p. 89; Altman and Finlayson 1993, p. 44; Access Economics 2002). However, whilst Altman and Finlayson agree that joint ventures may provide the best prospect for economic sustainability they point to the absence of government programs that may be required to facilitate or monitor such joint ventures (Altman and Finlayson 1992, p. 16.).

This need has recently been addressed with the formation of the Indigenous Business Australia. Reflecting the shift in government policy towards a stronger emphasis on commercialism in Indigenous enterprises, the IBA was established to assist and advance the commercial and economic interests of Indigenous people by providing access to finance or by acquiring equity in Indigenous enterprises (Indigenous Business Australia, 2003). Common to most joint ventures between Indigenous enterprises and IBA, is the strategic alliances with experienced tourism companies providing industry expertise and operational management. However, apart from the unique case of *Tjapukai* which is a joint venture incorporating Indigenous interests, IBA and non-Indigenous individuals, the efficacy of joint ventures and the use of non-Aboriginal management companies to operate complex Aboriginal tourism businesses for the benefit of traditional owners is still largely inconclusive.

Partnerships with large and experienced hospitality corporations appear at face value to make sound commercial sense as they enable community enterprises to access larger national and international markets, as well as other resources including reservation systems, staff and management expertise (Altman 1988, p. 211; Altman and Finlayson 1993, p. 44; Longford 1993, p. 17). This applies in the case of large and complex enterprises where capital and expertise requirements exceed community resources.

There are few documented examples of Indigenous investment in and ownership of large commercial tourism enterprises offering full service accommodation. One example is the *Kings Canyon Frontier Lodge* in Central Australia, a joint venture between Australian Frontier Holidays, ATSIC's former Commercial Development Corporation (now the IBA), and the Centrecorp Aboriginal Investment Corporation. The latter includes the Central Land Council and other Aboriginal interests. It has been hailed as a significant milestone in Aboriginal participation in Australian tourism but, apart from a brief reference to the employment of some young men as tour guides (McMahon 1993, p. 15), no other information is available regarding the operational performance of the venture, nor of the nature of Indigenous involvement.

Another venture is the *Glen Helen Homestead* on the Finke River in the Western McDonald Ranges. It is a twenty roomed, full service facility accommodation enterprise owned by the local Nurrajuta Aboriginal Corporation and managed by a non-Indigenous management company. However, a personal communication with ATSIC suggests that this enterprise has been declared insolvent (1999, Personal communication). The recent merger between the IBA and Gagudju Association and the management of their properties in Northern Territory by the Six Continents Group Hotels will be discussed in chapter six. Whilst welcomed, unconfirmed reports of profitability are emerging from the Gagudju businesses. However, current analysis of available case data suggests that little evidence exists to validate the assumption that generally such collaborative arrangements will readily translate into the expected improvements in the economic, educational and employment conditions for the local Aboriginal communities. Furthermore, the NTTC is cautious and argues that 'joint venture arrangements are sustainable only when clear contractual agreements specify the conditions of operation, conflict resolution mechanism and timeliness, where there is complete understanding on both sides of all

aspects of the proposed ventures and where there is mutual respect between the parties' (NTTC 1996, p. 11).

Alternative strategies to Indigenous enterprise developments exist. Of interest to this research is the trend toward non-commercial partnerships between Indigenous organisations and philanthropic foundations and non-government organisations. Schwab and Sutherland outline the rise of a new philanthropy in Australia in which Indigenous community and enterprise development are facilitated through collaborative linkages between socially conscious mainstream organisations and their Indigenous partners.

Against the background of the economic rationalism of current government policies which has resulted in reduced government support for social initiatives and increased levels of privatisation, many high profile foundations and corporations have become active partners in programs and strategies seeking to enhance Indigenous capacity for sustainable development by contributing expertise, sponsorship, technology, financial support and grants, infrastructure and connections (Schwab and Sutherland 2002). An example is the Indigenous Enterprise Programs (IEP) established by the Balkanu Cape York Corporation for the purpose of identifying and delivering 'skilled resources, skills transfer and financial capability to Indigenous communities ... to end the aimless sit down money culture' of the passive welfare which has impacted negatively on Indigenous people. The IEP includes Westpac, the Boston Consulting Group, the Body Shop, the Myer Foundation, Harvard Business School, RMIT, several other organisations and individuals, as well as numerous Cape York communities. Since its introduction in 1999 IEP assert that it has converted cash donations of \$250,000 into \$12 million worth of on-the-ground social and entrepreneurial projects and community programs ([www.balkanu.com.au](http://www.balkanu.com.au) 2003).

At the beginning of 2003 the IEP claimed to be in receipt of approximately 25 applications from Indigenous groups and individuals for support for new and existing tourism enterprises on Cape York. (IEP 2003, Personal communication). This is of interest to this research that will investigate and comment on the efficacy of the different types of commercial and non-commercial collaborative arrangements as solutions to management issues confronting the Gagudju properties, Cape York tourism businesses, and *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*.

## 2.9 Conclusions

Australian policy makers face the dilemma of promoting Aboriginal tourism as means of sustainable social and economic development whilst at the same accommodating Indigenous rights of equity, social justice, cultural autonomy and self-determination. Indigenous Australians are characterised by poor health and low life expectancy, poverty, limited educational opportunities, poor employment participation rates and low income levels (Martin 1995, p. 17). Although policy makers and government agencies agree that tourism should not be seen as a panacea for all the problems of economic development and self-sufficiency, they have optimistically identified a range of opportunities for participation in tourism by Indigenous communities and individuals. A series of broad recommendations were formulated and funding made available to address problems relating to such key areas as training and employment, finance, marketing, environmental and cultural impacts, management, community relations and legal structures, and industry practices.

Although a number of successful enterprises have been identified, the recent history of Aboriginal tourism has revealed the existence of barriers to success for many Indigenous businesses. The high cost of operating small business in the outback and the logistical problems confronting many remote communities, including low tourist numbers and limited access to training and education, may well prove intractable. It has also been demonstrated that inappropriate methods of providing financial support to communities have often reduced the efficacy of many development programs.

The economic viability of Indigenous tourism enterprises has been constrained by the distinct set of Aboriginal cultural values and practices which include strong emphasis on maintaining kinship and other forms of social relations, as well as a marked preference for accumulating social, as distinct from financial, capital. Such values and practices, and their expression in the structures of the community polity, contradict the requirements of commercial tourism enterprises and current government policy objectives of Indigenous economic development, self-determination and the acceptance of Indigenous culture and values.

It has been argued that policy makers and Indigenous and non-Indigenous industry participants need to be cognizant of both commercial as well as cultural imperatives

when planning and operating Aboriginal tourism businesses. It is commonly believed that many of these problems are best addressed through improved management practice which acknowledges the critical relationship that exist between cultural values, and enterprise development and operation. Significant management skills, especially those relating to leadership and financial management, are important for providing a proper balance between the needs and the cultural preferences of the Indigenous participants, and the needs of the tourism enterprise - including the needs of the guests and the staff, as well as the financial requirements of the business. Management needs to be 'Indigenised' by a greater recognition of dominant Aboriginal values and practices and their incorporation into the processes of maintaining and enhancing Indigenous enterprises. Additionally, greater representation of Aboriginals in senior management positions and the development of critical business management competencies and leadership skills are considered very important to achieve a suitable balance between the needs of the business and the cultural integrity of the participants. Furthermore, it is believed that in joint ventures involving non-Indigenous people in management, it is important to appoint managers with sensitive understanding and cross-cultural awareness.

The next chapter will address the theoretical issues relating to the cultural and organisational context of Indigenous tourism enterprises. This will include discussion of Aboriginal culture including Indigenous value orientations and work-related attitudes, and approaches to Indigenous management. In particular, Hofstede's paradigm of comparative management and work-related values will be explained and evaluated in the context of Aboriginal tourism enterprises.

# Chapter Three

## The Cultural and Organisational Context of Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Management

### 3.1 Introduction

The concept of culture occupies a position of prominence in the literature concerned with Indigenous involvements in tourism where, chameleon-like, the meaning of culture varies according to the perspective imposed by observers and situations. Its applications are often descriptive and range from accounts of those activities and artefacts, often labelled authentic or traditional, that are the objects of so-called cultural tourism, to the identification of existing Indigenous social practices, attitudes and values, including discussions of their effects on forms of management and participation by Indigenous people in tourism. The plurality of meaning is further exacerbated by the general abstinence of conventional mainstream anthropology to define culture. There is consequently a strong need to problematise the concept of culture and identify an analytical paradigm suitable for application to Indigenous tourism enterprises.

To this end, the current chapter will highlight the important theoretical issues relating to the cultural and social context of Indigenous tourism enterprises. It will define such key concepts as Aboriginality and ethnicity, and will examine a range of competing claims relating to the existence of cultural commonalities and differences among Australia's Indigenous population. Research on traditional and contemporary work cognitions and values among Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders will be presented, and the relationship between culture, management and work-related values will be discussed. Of special importance is the section introducing Hofstede's cultural values paradigm that forms the basis for the principal instrument used in the current research. This will include a discussion of his construct as well as a review of those critiques of his work that are relevant to this research. Recent case studies using Hofstede's construct to hospitality and tourism in Australia and overseas will also be appraised.

### **3.2 Concepts of ethnicity, Aboriginality, and perceptions of Aboriginal cultural practices**

Contemporary policy initiatives and promotions of Aboriginal tourism development programs are often presented within a paradigm that incorporates the imperative of 'cultural appropriateness'. However, historical and contemporary accounts of Aboriginal society and culture suggest considerable variations in perceptions of what constitutes the defining components of Aboriginal culture and social organisation. These range from one end of the spectrum at which communities are depicted as a form of primitive communism, to perceptions of a pan-Australian Aboriginal society, and to the other end where Aboriginal communities are seen to be highly factionalised and internally divided with a strong emphasis on individual autonomy. Against this background of diverse opinions there is a lack of clear perception in academic discourse and bureaucratic rhetoric of what is meant by 'culturally appropriate' development and management of Indigenous enterprises

Although Martin (2002, p. 2) and Martin and Finlayson (1996, p. 18) are weary of the manner in which the concept of 'cultural appropriateness' is used in key policy documents it nevertheless serve as a departure from mainstream management practices and models and promotes the formulation and integration of organisational processes and structures that incorporates Aboriginal custom. One definition of Aboriginal custom refers to 'the body of traditions, observances, customs and beliefs of Aboriginal people generally or of a particular group of Aboriginal people, and includes any such observances, customs and beliefs relating to particular persons, areas, objects of relationships' (Martin and Finlayson 1996, p. 19). A distinct feature of this definition is the recognition of the potential for a wide range of cultural diversity among Aboriginal people.

It should be noted that the present writer does not seek to problematise and analyse the concept of 'Aboriginality' because, as noted by Dodson, 'recognition of a people's fundamental right to self-determination must include the right to self-definition, and to be free from the control and manipulation of an alien people' (Dodson 1994, p. 5). Hence, the focus of this section is not a criticism of Indigenous self-definitions, or an attempt to impose meanings of ethnic identity on Aborigines. It should also be noted that this discussion does not concern itself with the denigrating representations of the 'natives' by

Australia's colonisers, nor the bigotry of the Hansonites, or the commodifying representations of exotic Aboriginal culture by tourism promotions. Rather, the objective of the current section is the analysis of the literature for the purpose of identifying such key elements of cultural diversity and commonality that may be beneficial to the formulation of culturally appropriate development and management strategies of Indigenous tourism enterprises.

Discussions of Aboriginal Australians suggest the presence of a number of social and cultural constants that enable them to be identified as an ethnic group. Smith has been influential in developing the concept of ethnicity. He defined the features of a distinct ethnic community, an *ethnie*, as 'a named human population possessing a myth of common descent *or sharing common elements of mythologies*, [my comment], common historical memories, elements of shared culture, an association with a particular territory, and a sense of solidarity' (Smith 1988, p. 9). This resonates with the comments of Langton who wrote of Australia's Indigenous people 'different Aboriginal communities have distinctive cultural histories... but a common Aboriginality' (Schwab 1995, p. 4), thus identifying Aboriginality in a manner that largely corresponds to Smith's *ethnie*. Langton acknowledges the effects of colonisations and other social influences that have affected Aboriginal communities but posits that their Aboriginal commonality is greater than their cultural differences.

Aboriginal society and culture has often been represented in a manner that presupposes the existence of a common Aboriginal culture and a pan-Australian identity that embraces and unifies the 200 or so main Aboriginal language groups across Australia. These include the commonly held misconception of Aboriginal communities representing a type of primitive communism that was characterised by pervasive sharing and notions of ownership that was either vague or non-existent (Schwab 1995, p. 2). Much of the mainstream perceptions were determined by the codifying practices of such orthodox anthropologists as Radcliffe-Brown. Based on his ethnographic work among three Western Australian tribes, he portrayed traditional Aboriginal society as being kin based with a strong emphasis on the maintenance of the group, and a complex web of collective rights and obligations, and of reciprocity. The ownership of land was vested, not in the individual, but in the agnatic group whose collective relationship with the land was structured on the corporate character of the Kariera system (Hiatt 1984, pp. 11-12).

Although Radcliffe-Brown and other early anthropologists have been proved incorrect in their accounts of the social organisation of Aboriginal groups, including land ownership and relationships with the land, their promotion of a general, pan-Australian model of Aboriginal society did much to obscure the significant regional variations and diversity that exists within Aboriginal culture, kinship, systems of landownership, and politics. Their work also influenced the governments of the 1970s and 1980s whose hopes for new political solutions to the problems afflicting Aboriginals was predicated on the existence of a collective of Indigenous residents sharing a communal system of values and social practices which would form the cultural underpinning for stable, formally constituted Aboriginal communities. Although some communities may exist which conform to this model, studies of Aboriginal communities and groups across Australia suggest the existence of significant social and cultural diversity.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the official practice by government agencies to favour the community as the preferred vehicle for funding development projects, including such tourism enterprises as *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*, is highly problematic and is partly attributable to the presence of counterproductive practices within the community. Rowse provides a useful critique of the concept of the community. He is highly critical of the concept with its implied communalism and its inability to clearly recognise and differentiate between the interests of individuals, the kin groups, and the community. The community model is often portrayed by government, by legal institutions, and by others as a natural political arrangement – a democratic and politically cohesive unit of self-government, reflecting a normative matrix of traditional Aboriginal values of shared duties and obligations, reciprocity, and collective goals, in which individualism was seen as counter-cultural. Such rhetoric, Rowse claims, often hides the vast differences in the role and function of the political structure of the community, and the dynamic systems of authority traditionally encountered in the settings of the residential group. As with any social group, the community is not a single constituency, but consists of a number of competing political factions and kinship groups seeking to maximise their own particular interests (Rowse 1993).

Louvel and Williams' (1998) study of Aboriginal cultural identity and development of Indigenous tourism enterprises in Australia also criticized the community framework imposed by governments under which business enterprises are developed as being

culturally inappropriate. Drawing on the work by other Australian researchers to support their own observations, Louvel and Williams maintain that Australian Aboriginals are collectivist in nature but they make the general claim that the structure of traditional Aboriginal social organisation was based on the extended family group. It was the extended family group, they claim, which provided the main cultural and social locus for individual family members - not the communities - because the various constitutive family groups would only congregate with the (territorially-based) kin group a few times each year during times of plenty. The authors suggest that the political divisiveness witnessed at the level of the community between the various dominant family groups was attributable to culturally inappropriate community structures that failed to recognise the strong internally collectivistic orientations of the respective extended family groups. Unfortunately, the authors did not define the extended family group or the underlying structuring principles. Nevertheless, acknowledging that culture is a significant moderator of the contingencies that impact on business development and operations, they suggest that the kin group, despite being subject to a number of disadvantageous practices, is a more desirable unit than the community for developing Aboriginal commercial enterprises (Louvel and Williams 1998, pp. 17-24). Thus, in common with many other researchers including Trudgen's (2000) whose detailed work among the Yolnu in Arnhem Land points to the presence of similar customs, Louvel and Williams identified the occurrence of strong Aboriginal collectivistic values and practices but repositioned these away from the domain of the community to the sphere of extended family group. The authors did not consider the role of the individual.

Paradigmatic changes in recent anthropology have produced greater insights into Aboriginal social and economic organization that have produced further evidence of cultural diversity among Australia's Indigenous people. The traditional genealogical method with its strong emphasis on social structure and form, social function and Aborigine-land relationships, and the perception of the inviolability of 'tradition' is increasingly being replaced by recent anthropological studies which concentrate more on the documentation and analysis of social processes. These studies have sought to develop an understanding of the adaptive and dynamic nature of both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal society that increasingly is being characterised by its fluidity, negotiability and indeterminacy (Martin 1995, p. 5; Sutton and Rigsby 1982).

In their departure from conventional group sociology and the traditional emphasis on patrilineality, such researchers as Myers, von Sturmer, Martin, Martin and Finlayson, and others have sought to highlight the significance of the individual in the economic, political and cultural spheres of Aboriginal social life. Commenting on Myer's work among the Pintjubi in Central Australia, Hiatt notes that land ownership was based on a variety of socially recognised principles including cognatic descent, residence, conception dreaming, and other mythological links. Consequently, the composition of land owning groups would vary from one place to the next, and individuals could belong to several different land owning groups. Similarly, residence was not patrilocal and membership of roving groups, or bands, were 'fluctuating aggregates of individuals and represents the outcome at any one time of individual decisions and affiliations' in which patrilineality played no role (Hiatt 1984, pp. 15-16).

Von Sturmer's research among the Kugu-Nganychara people near Aurukun on the west coast of Cape York is remarkable for its recognition of the significance of the individual. Whilst land was commonly passed to individuals in accordance with the rule of primogeniture, the boss of a site may lose it through attrition or seizure to other more astute 'big men'. These are the aspiring and powerful individuals capable of mustering the necessary moral and political support and thereby carve out territorial niches for themselves over which they would hold personal property rights. Furthermore, ownership of sites was often used by ambitious individuals as springboards to fame and personal importance in political and ritual activities. Von Sturmer suggests that the actions of these aspiring entrepreneurs, the tension between the minimalist orientation of family and the loyalties of the maximum descent group, sibling rivalry and inheritance, and other social and environmental instabilities, tended towards fission and dispersal of the corporate unilineal groups (Hiatt 1984, pp. 16-23). Sutton has made similar observations of the use of land as a form of political currency among coastal and peri-coastal groups on the west coast of Cape York (Sutton and Rigsby 1982).

Martin and Finlayson made similar conclusions in their discussion about the existence of Aboriginal commonalities. Recognising the considerable diversity of Aboriginal culture and social organisations in Australia, they identified the existence of a core of cultural constants across the country relating especially to political and social organisations. They claim that the political factions and crosscutting alliances based on families, clans and

land owning groups, and affiliations with other contemporary forms of organisations, tend to result in fission and disaggregation of Aboriginal society rather than the aggregation and corporateness suggested as normative by orthodox anthropology (Martin and Finlayson 1996, p. 5). They suggest that Aboriginal political systems place strong emphasis on individual and local-group autonomy, and are frequently characterised by intense localism, resulting in a pronounced tendency for negotiating internal relationships (Martin and Finlayson 1996, p. 7). Interestingly, whilst these writers are not disputing the widespread existence of common Aboriginal practices, the fractious characters of these commonalities repudiate much of the conventional model of the pan-Australian Aboriginal society.

Martin also emphasized the significance of the individual as a social actor in the Aboriginal domain. Based on the findings of his ethnographic research in a remote community on the west coast of Cape York, Martin concludes that the social practice among the Wik people is characterised by an intense egalitarianism and an omnipresent stress on personal distinctiveness. The powerful ethos of equivalence and of equality was embodied such colloquial expressions as '*sama-sama*' and other cultural practices with the objective of achieving balanced transactions of material and symbolic goods. An imbalance in a transaction was construed as representing social and personal inequality resulting social tension (Martin 1993, pp. 32-33). Similarly, high levels of individuation were expressed continuously through individual distinctiveness and personal style. Such declarations as 'Me, I'm different. I'm frightened from no bastard' and the traditional '*ngay-ngay*' (lit: I am myself) points to the assertive autonomy of individuals which was fiercely upheld and attempts by others to impose authority and control over others was usually meet with strong resistance (Martin 1993, p. 12).

However, Martin also recognised the central importance accorded to relatedness by Aborigines. As in any society, a dialectic relationship exists between the individual and the group in which individuals are structurally integrated into the social processes and the *habitus* - the durable dispositions and cognitive schemes of representations, which structure the collective social practices of individuals according to its own cultural logic (Bourdieu 1977, p. 72). In common with the nature of relationships encountered throughout Aboriginal Australia these include relationships based on shared connections to traditional land, ceremonial and language affiliations and, most significantly,

relationships based on kinship and marriage, which together provide the individual with recognised and culturally accepted loci in the dynamic processes that constitutes Aboriginal social life (Martin 1995, pp. 1-6). As discussed in previous chapter, the social relations and the processes that occur between the individual and others are embedded in the formal structures of kinship and other forms of shared identity. Many of these social relations are continually affirmed and revalidated through calculated acts of exchange and sharing of both material and symbolic goods between individuals who 'watchfully monitor them to ensure equality' (Martin 1995, p. 6). Thus, Martin (1995, p. 7) suggests that exchange and sharing not only serve to emphasise relatedness but also mark social differentiation and separateness of individuals.

Rose argues that contemporary mainstream conventions and practices are incommensurate with many Aboriginal social and cultural practices. This is nowhere more evident than in such concepts of individual rights and private property that reflects the reductionist tendency by the European thinking to collapse complex phenomena into fragmented and manageable singularities. Traditional Aboriginal notions of 'land ownership' are multi-faceted: 'Country' consists of not only the land and its physical resources but also includes 'dreamings', spirits and ancestral beings, plants, animals, etc. Ownership is not limited to the defined local group of individuals – the clan - who are the traditional custodians and who therefore have specific practical and ritual responsibilities to the land, and who have the rights to control it. However, others also have rights and responsibilities to 'country' and are based on such affiliations as totemic, cognatic, affinal, conceptive and other forms of relationships and connections to specific sites. These rights and responsibilities are not necessarily secondary to those of the clan and form an interconnected matrix of multiple dependencies, rights and responsibilities that enables individuals to locate themselves in as many contexts as possible and thereby maximise their own social, cultural, and political opportunities (Rose 1998, pp. 8-12). Reflecting the findings by Martin and others, Rose recognises that whilst the system is highly political, the acknowledgement by the participants of their own lack of self-sufficiency acts as constraint to excessive behaviour, suggesting that 'The members of these interdependent groups have an awareness of the mutual entwining of their long-term interests, and they play by the same rules' (Rose 1998, p. 14). Conversely, she points to the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 in which the narrow definition of traditional landownership has elevated *primary* responsibilities for 'country'

of the clans as the principal criteria of determining ownership. In so doing, the Act failed to distinguish between responsibility and custodianship, and rights. It also invested the land-owning Aboriginal clans with a corporate character of exclusiveness based on mainstream interpretations of rights that marginalise the traditional Aboriginal forms of mutual responsibility and social relatedness discussed above (Rose 1998, pp. 8-10). Rose coins the term 'cross-cultural *co-management*' [my italics] in recognition of the need to develop responsible management programs that are able to assimilate complex systems of interpenetrating rights and responsibilities through accommodating the interests and the representatives of a broader locally-based constituency (Rose 1998, p. 14). Although her work relates specifically to land management, this research will evaluate the applicability of her observations and the concept of cross-cultural co-management to the Indigenous tourism enterprises at *Pajinka* and Gagudju.

The mainstream descriptions of Aboriginal people as being collectivistic, anti materialistic and disinterested in ownership of material items are increasingly being disputed. Further to the finding of private land ownership by von Sturmer, Martin suggests that such contemporary items as cash, boats, vehicles and other consumer goods are in high demand as they 'offer unprecedented possibilities to extend personal autonomy through their accumulation, and considerable effort is expended by many people in developing strategies to maximise access to them' (1995, p. 6). These findings mirror the observations made elsewhere by Schwab (1995) that confirm that valuations of resources in the Aboriginal domain are not so much based on the formal and impersonal principles of the market place, but is subject to a calculus based on personal aspirations and social obligations.

Martin's discussion of cash in the Aboriginal domain highlights the tension that exists between the individual and the broader community groups. On one hand, cash has been instrumental in maintaining, or even enhancing, certain types of traditional as well as new forms of collective actions within Aboriginal groups. These include financing ceremonial activities, collective purchasing of consumer goods, and sustaining gambling and drinking circles. However, cash has also been a main force in accentuating individuation, removing individuals from the traditional network of mutual responsibilities and, as previously noted by Pearson, often leads to the denial by individuals of their shared obligations of reciprocity to the wider community (Martin 2001, p. 8). The current

research will assess the applicability of the observations made by Rowse, Williams and Louvel, von Sturmer, and Martin and Finlayson to *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*.

Various researchers have referred to the existence of individualism among hunters and gatherers. In his discussion of the antecedents of individualism and collectivism Triandis, a cultural psychologist, argues that high levels of individuation amongst hunters and gatherers reflect positive evolutionary adjustments to ecological conditions. The evolutionist paradigm is evident in his terminology that stresses the social and cultural development of primates, hunters and gatherers, agriculturalist, to the industrial phase, and to information cultures. The move from hunters and gatherers to agricultural to industrial and to information societies is reflected in a move from proto-individualism to collectivism to neo-individualism. Hunting is often an individual pursuit and hunters, to some extent, can do their own thing because their success is only marginally dependant on others. Other similarities between hunter and gatherer proto-individualism and modern industrial neo-individualism include: The emphasis on the nuclear family; preference for new over old; high availability of food; geographical mobility; high levels of cognitive differentiation; emphasis on self-reliance and independence in their children; high self/other differentiation; personal rights and acceptance of greater privacy for individuals; behaviour is based on short term motivation and considerations (Triandis 1989, pp. 68-70). Others have expressed similar opinions regarding individualism among hunter-gatherers (Ingold 1986; Kim 1994, p. 20).

These views are of interest to the current research but may be regarded as highly problematic: Apart from the conceptual difficulties associated with causality and teleology, and the inherent *petitio principii* of the evolutionist argument, Triandis' concepts are deeply grounded in such western cultural values and concepts as hedonism and self-actualisation which may compromise the elucidation of other cultures and result in the imposition of inappropriate meanings and interpretations.

Hofstede, an organisational anthropologist, has similar views on individualism among hunter-gatherers. Although he does not appear to subscribe to Triandis' evolutionary functionalism, Hofstede suggests that very traditional hunters and gatherers tend to live in nuclear families thus identifying some correlation between ecology, economy and social structure (Hofstede 1984, p. 149). He therefore assumes the existence of some measure of

individuality among hunters and gatherers though he has never seen supporting empirical evidence (Hofstede 1998, Personal communication). The current research is believed to be the first to apply Hofstede's empirically based paradigm to a cultural group that was until recently regarded as hunter gatherers.

It is worth noting that although von Sturmer, Sutton, and Martin conducted their research in Aboriginal communities in Cape York, the locations are quite some distance from the site of this research. Also, Chase's (1984) ethnographic research among Aboriginal groups around Lockhart River on the northeast coast of Cape York provided further evidence of significant traditional cultural diversity in the region which therefore preclude assumptions about the applicability of von Sturmer's and Martin's observations to other Aboriginal communities in Cape York. Consequently, this author has no preconceptions of the cultural characteristics and social values of the survey population. The quantitative and qualitative results obtained at *Pajinka* will be evaluated through a process of triangulation that will involve comparisons with other secondary data, including relevant ethnographic findings from this region.

Arguments have been presented to further narrow down the conceptual scope of 'Aboriginality' by differentiating between mainland Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. The literature argue against the common practice of grouping Islanders together with Aborigines and points to the presence of significant differences in the histories, cultural values, social organization and economy between Australia's two Indigenous populations. Islanders' expressions of condescension and even contempt toward Aborigines (Singe 1989, p. 204) certainly suggest strong attitudinal and ideological divergence.

Similarly, island leaders have called for recognition of the cultural uniqueness as part of their strategy for achieving greater political autonomy for the Torres Strait (Lui 1994, pp. 11-13). These differences become more accentuated in those outer islands that are geographically and culturally closer to Papua-New Guinea than the Australian mainland. Some of the key differences relate to economy, history, and culture. Contrary to the hunter-gatherer mode of production used by mainland Aborigines, the traditional island economies consisted of bartering, subsistence fishing and hunting, and gardening. Land was owned by individuals or by small groups of agnates (people related in the male line

such as two brothers or a sister), and passed on to their sons (Beckett 1987, p. 115). The core of the domestic mode of production was the conjugal pair and their dependant offspring who tended their small fenced plots of land on which the pressures associated with population numbers and limited availability of arable lands often led to intra family conflicts and protracted feuds. Although the introduction commercial pearling and fishing provided additional cash supplements, the control of these small tracts of land and their protection against intruders still occupy community affairs today. The traditional Meriam maxim '*Tag mauki mauki, teter mauki mauki*' (lit. *hand taboo, leg taboo*) is warning to trespassers not to cross the boundary of land belonging to others (Cowley 2001, Personal communication).

Colonialism in the Torres Strait was also different to that generally experienced by mainland Aborigines where the protector, prospector, priest and pastoralist led to large-scale dispossession of traditional lands and the resultant social dislocation of original inhabitants. The arrival of foreign rule in the Strait was personified by the pearler, pastor, and the protector, but not the pastoralist, and although the islands became crown land the traditional owners were generally not barred access and were able to maintain continual occupation and physical control of their plots (Beckett 1987, p. 55). Consequently, the Islanders experienced less social dislocation and have been able to maintain a greater degree of cultural continuity and stability not witnessed on the mainland.

Island culture display distinct elements of individuality and competitiveness. Contrary to most mainland Aboriginal groups but reflecting some of the orientations of the western Cape York Aborigines, entrepreneurial and political competitiveness are common in the Strait (Beckett 1987; Singe 1989, Arthur 1990, 1997). Beckett refers to the development of the pearling industry during the early 1900s and the rise of Indigenous individuals and families on Badu Island to the 'skipper class', and to their subsequent demise in the 1950s - the latter being attributed by Baduans to 'too many bosses' (Beckett 1987, p. 155). Lacking hereditary rulers, the political arena of many of Island communities was open to anyone with adequate resources and aspirations for political prominence. Beckett observed:

commenting on their own turbulent democracy, the Meriam themselves said that among them 'everybody mamoose', which is to say that everyone was a chief. What this meant was that becoming a leader was the birthright of every

man, with the rider that making followers out of men who believed themselves also to be born leaders was no easy task. (Beckett 1987, p.165)

The existence of this type of 'meritocracy', or the opportunity for promotion of individuals, is mirrored in other cultural institutions. For example, the exalted position of captain of one of the island dancing teams is open to anyone with enough expertise and familiarity with the spectacular dance repertoire. Different persons may assume the role of captains in different dances and, although the captains are usually senior persons, there are often younger dancers not far behind them who patiently await their opportunity to impress others with their footwork and convince them of their ability to lead their own team during the frequent island dance competitions (Bamaga 1998, Personal observation; Cowley 2001, Personal communication). Given this context, it is not a historical accident that it was Eddie Mabo, an Islander from Mer in the eastern group of islands who, in the High Court in 1992, was the first Indigenous Australian to successfully challenge the concept of *terra nullius* and regain title to his ancestral land.

Recent ethnographic research has thus challenged the orthodox structural-functionalist representation of Aboriginal culture and society. New social, political and economic data has been presented which provide strong evidence of significant cultural diversity among Aborigines that consequently has greatly diminished the applicability of the orthodox pan-Australian vision of a stable collectivistic Aboriginal society. However, research point to some commonality and discussions of Aboriginal people invariably identify sharing as a cultural constant, an omnipresent and defining characteristic of Aboriginal culture, which serves to differentiate Aborigines from white Australians.

Given the problematic nature of Aboriginal participation in tourism, it seems imperative that, to be culturally appropriate, enterprise development and management must be sensitive to the diversity of Aboriginal values and priorities, and recognize that some cultural obligations and social practices may be antithetical to the requirements of prudent business development and management. As *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* is situated in the intercultural region on the tip of Cape York the fringe of the Torres Strait that is expected to display a blend of both Aboriginal and Islander cultures, this research is well placed to identify and compare the unique cultural values and practices present at *Pajinka* with the main cultural attributes discussed above.

### **3.3 Indigenous people and work: Attitudes to work and value transformation**

Cross-cultural research suggests that people of different cultural backgrounds differ in the way they conceptualise and experience work. These culturally based differences may occur at the national level or across ethnic groups within a nation and will exert a unique influence on individual's work-related values and attitudes, and promote preferences for certain forms of management, working conditions and other work related issues. Any discussion of Australian Indigenous values and attitudes to work is complicated by lack of theoretical agreement and by attitudinal differences that may exist between mainland Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

Holt and Keats suggest that work, as an independent and meaningful activity, was not only alien to Aboriginal culture, but also that the distinctions that the dominant mainstream Australian culture make between life and work did not exist in traditional Aboriginal society. There was no equivalent word for work in traditional Aboriginal languages to describe discrete and separate economic activities (Holt and Keats 1992, p.439). Rather, subsistence economic activities involving production, distribution and consumption was inseparable from other cultural practices and included ritual and ceremonial work, person/land connections and mythology, whilst the division of labour reflected broader social divisions based on gender, age and other forms of relationships.

A comparative study by Holt and Keats of traditional cultural goals and work values among Aborigines revealed further evidence of the priority of non-work cognitions. Table 3.1 compares the rank order of cultural goals of the mainstream Anglo-Saxon Australians and Aboriginal sample populations. Whilst Anglo-Saxons predominantly ranked work-related cognitions at the upper levels of the ordering hierarchy and work-related cognitions in the least favoured positions, Aboriginal responses reversed that pattern and gave priority to such traditional values as nurture and mutual care, and they generally regarded helping the community and sharing as the most important

achievement goals, and personal high income levels among the lowest goals. Importantly, the authors observed no significant correlation in the rank order patterns for the independent variables of age, education, and occupation (Holt and Keats 1992, p.426)

**Table 3.1 Rank Order of Cultural Goals**

Cultural goals	Anglo-Saxon	Aboriginal
Financial independence	1	7
High income level	2	10
Maintaining family needs	3	1
Promotion and advancement	4	9
Self-fulfilment	5	5
Community respect	6	3
Family approval	7	4
Freedom to do what you like	8	8
Maintaining family status	9	6
Community helping and sharing	10	2
Loyalty and devotion to employer	11	11

**Source: Holt and Keats 1992, p. 426**

Other researchers have pointed to the persistence of this traditional tendency to aggregate work with other social concerns and have discussed its effects on work performance in the contemporary Aboriginal domain. Whilst traditional Aboriginal economy has undergone significant transformation and can no longer be considered neither traditional nor separate from the mainstream Australian economy, it has been suggested that engagements with the wider economy and participation in work has generally not resulted in the adoption by Aborigines of

mainstream values and concerns relating to business performance, profits, productivity and financial efficiency. Similar to Tayeb's comments on the activities of individuals in polychronic societies (Tayeb 2001, p. 95), work in the Aboriginal domain, including work for the CDEP and other forms of commercial labour involving payment for services is, like other types of Aboriginal 'bisness', highly personalised and is reflects Indigenous concerns with sociality, balancing the complex system of social debt and obligation, political opportunities and relations, and ritual preparation and performance (Martin 1995, p. 12).

However, such emphasis on the pervasiveness of cultural values and the effects on work attitudes and practices may ignore the effects of other factors. Arthur and David-Petero suggest that people's attitudes and commitments to work is not just influenced by their cultural milieu but is also determined by the surrounding economic environment, and by the individual's perception of their own competences which consciously or unconsciously influence career aspirations. Thus, many remote communities are only marginally incorporated into the mainstream economy and have only experienced low levels of commercial development. This, together with reduced educational and training opportunities, severely restricts available career options which, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, is in many case limited to part-time CDEP work for the community. Many Indigenous people regard work under the CDEP scheme as uninteresting and is not considered real work (Arthur and David-Petero 2000, pp. 15, 22).

Recent research into the career aspirations and work values among young Torres Strait Islanders concluded that whilst some attitudes and preferences were influenced by culture, other values and attitudes were encountered which were universal rather than culture specific. These included a strong preference for work that offered variety and was interesting, involved learning new skills and which assisted in the achievement of their career goals. Full-time work was better regarded than part-time work as the pay was better and it offered greater job security, and had better prospects for advancement and promotion. Other research have found that many of these job characteristics are also favoured by other Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians thus suggesting the existence of some general work cognitions which are not culturally specific to Indigenous Australians (Arthur and David-Petero 2000, p. 21).

However, the Torres Strait study also produced other evidence that suggests that culture was influential in determining certain attitudes and values. In particular, the respondents expressed a common desire to feel comfortable and at ease in the work environment and there was a strong preference for work mates or supervisors who shared the same culture or were very sympathetic to 'Islander ways'. These findings supports the belief that people who belong to cultures which place high value on social relationships and the maintenance of the family tend to avoid stressful work environments which might jeopardise these relationships (Arthur and David-Petero 2000, pp. 6, 21).

The investigation by Holt and Keats of the interactive effects of dominant Australian cultural work cognitions on the work cognition structure of Aboriginals revealed that the process of acculturation of individuals resulted in some form of adoption of dominant cultural values into their cognitive structures. Holt and Keats argue the process of acculturation of individuals from ethnic minority cultures into the dominant 'credentialed' culture reflects a move away from the group values internalised during formative years, to the later development of more complex value patterns arising from the interaction with the value structures belonging to the dominant cultural group. The authors found that the value patterns and personal goals of these transitional individuals differ markedly from Aboriginal group norms and their work cognitions were significantly associated with dominant mainstream Australian cultural values. Thus, although these transitional individuals were able to define the values traditionally held by their Aboriginal culture, their own current personal goals and career preferences were more aligned to mainstream Australian cultural values and work cognitions. Tertiary education was regarded as a significant socialization factor, and Holt and Keats observed a positive correlation between levels of formal education and transitional cognitions that suggest that education is a key factor in facilitating the adoption of mainstream work values among Aborigines (1992, pp. 440-441).

The preceding section has provided a brief outline of the main arguments on the relationship between Indigenous cultural values and work cognitions. Common to most of the approaches discussed here is the acknowledgment of the sociality as the central focus of Aboriginal culture and the inability to separate work from other social processes. Many authors generally recognise that the idea of work and the nature of work cognitions in the Indigenous domain have been transformed by the strength and the pervasiveness of cultural traditions and practices to such an extent that generally Indigenous work values diverge significantly from mainstream values. Other researchers have suggested that although traditional Aboriginal concepts of work and living are enduring and prevalent among contemporary Aborigines, participation in higher education and the improved access to career opportunities have facilitated a process of partial cultural convergence in which educated individual Aborigines adopted certain transitional values that were more aligned with mainstream work related values than with traditional values. Critical to the achievement of commercial sustainability and culturally appropriate business practices is the proper understanding by managers and owners of Indigenous tourism enterprises of

the relationship between Indigenous values and work cognitions. The current cross-cultural research is expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing conclusive empirical information on the way staff and management at *Pajinka* conceptualise and experience work in tourism.

### **3.4 Cultural constraints in management theory**

An analysis of the literature concerned with Indigenous participation in commercial tourism enterprises reveals a significant gap in the body of knowledge concerning the roles and functions of management in dealing with complex organisational issues. Despite references by many authors to the common technical and cultural difficulties encountered in these businesses and the frequent calls for enhanced leadership capabilities of Indigenous managers to resolve these problems, very few systematic attempts have been made to identify what is meant by Indigenous management.

It is commonly agreed that tourism is highly intrusive and often has significant transformational impact on participating organisations and communities. Standard industry protocol and the requirements inherent in product delivery to tourists are often incompatible with traditional lifestyles and values, and management and staff are involved in the continual juggling of competing, often contradictory, demands which, by necessity, result in a compromise of traditional cultural obligations (NCSTT 1994, pp. 457-458). Similarly, the operational efficiency and financial viability of many enterprises are often affected by competing intra-community differences and conflicting interests (NCSTT 1994, p. 277). The presence of such limiting factors serve to set Indigenous tourism businesses apart from mainstream operations, thus presenting management with a range of challenges for which mainstream management practices and strategies may not be relevant.

It is commonly believed that many of the problems affecting the viability of Indigenous enterprises are best addressed through improved management practice. Greater representation of Aboriginals in senior management positions and the development of critical business management competencies and leadership skills are considered very important to achieve a suitable balance between the needs of the business and the cultural integrity of the participants (Australian Outback Tourism Developments [AOTD] 1995, p. 27). Furthermore, it is believed that in joint ventures involving non-Indigenous

management, it is important to appoint managers with sensitive understanding and cross-cultural awareness (NCSTT 1994, pp. 284-285). However, many of these broad recommendations are based on limited observations and anecdotal evidence, and are seldom accompanied by substantial discussions of the nature and practices of Indigenous management.

Among the many available definitions of *culture* and *values* (Chapman 1992, 1997) the present study relies on those developed by Hofstede. His definition of culture and values refers to 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another' and 'includes systems of values; and values are among the building blocks of culture'. Additionally, culture is described as 'the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group's response to its environment'. Culture determines the identity of a '... society or ethnic or regional group ... in the same way as personality determines the identity of an individual' (Hofstede 1984, p. 21). Values form part of nearly all of the mental programs, such as attitudes and beliefs, which members of a group have inherited by virtue of a common culture, and are defined as 'a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others' (Hofstede 1984, p. 18). However, it is important to note that culture is not a characteristic of the individual; it encompasses a number of people who were conditioned by the same education and life experience. Furthermore, Hofstede refers to layers of culture that may include the culture of a group, a social class, an organisational employment group, a tribe, a geographical region, a national minority, or a nation. Thus, culture refers to the collective mental programming that is different from that of other groups, class and occupation, tribes, regions, minorities, or nations. The mental programs from these various levels are not necessarily in harmony and, as is often the case in modern individualist cultures, are often in conflict (Hofstede 1994c, p. 10).

Many international management theorists have addressed the cultural relativity of the concept of management, and stressed the need to recognise that management is not an objective phenomenon that can be isolated from other cultural and organisational factors. Much of the knowledge and practices of management originated in the economically dominant nations, notably America and other western countries, and consequently tend to reflect such market concepts and values as individualism, competition, economic rationalism and division of labour as are relevant to Euro-American economies (Hofstede

1993). Against the background of globalisation and expansion of economic activities across national borders and ethnic populations, an increasing number of single-culture studies and comparative organizational studies have rejected the view that management is based on a set of universal principles and analytical methodologies which can be systematically applied to organisation anywhere without regard for the local cultural environment (Adler, Doktor and Redding 1986; Blunt 1990; Hofstede 1980, 1983; Hofstede and Harzing 1996; Marsden 1991; Randall 1993).

Evidence from around the world suggest that the failure of many community development projects is not attributable to Indigenous incompetence but to inappropriate externally conceived 'top down' strategies which fail to acknowledge and incorporate local cultures and knowledge systems. Through their research on economic development on Indian reservations, Cornell and Kalt highlighted functional adequacy and cultural appropriateness of institutions as critical variables for organisational success. In particular, economic development tends to be successful where a high degree of fit exists between externally derived institutions of governance and Indigenous cultural repertoires and social structures. The Oglala Sioux Tribe in South Dakota offers a significant contrast: the highly centralised tribal government does not reflect traditional Oglala social organisation of highly autonomous bands and strong emphasis on local allegiances. Consequently, the fractious and unstable nature of reservation politics has discouraged investment in commercial enterprises on the reservation (Cornell and Kalt 1993). Jorgensen and Taylor similarly identified the importance of sovereignty in decision-making, strong culture and institutional consonance to enterprise development but suggested Indian businesses not insulated from reservation politics were incapable of generating adequate profits or sustained employment growth. Thus, they point to politics rather than economics as the cause of poverty (Jorgensen and Taylor 2000).

Mirroring issues faced by Aboriginal Australians, Redpath and Nielsen report that attempts to achieve sustainable economic self-sufficiency by Canada's first nation peoples increasingly have involved alliances and partnerships with non-Aboriginal businesses. Often, non-Aboriginal partners have perceived traditional Indigenous values as barriers to economic development and organisational development. Such values include aversion to competition, a different perception of time, a preference for consensus decision-making, and placing emphasis on family needs before business goals are often seen as antithetical to the needs of modern capitalism. Yet, Canada's

Aboriginals believe that the traditional culture need not be compromised and may actually be critical in assisting them in making a successful transition toward political and economic autonomy (Redpath and Nielsen 1997, p. 2).

Such beliefs are progressively being supported by organisational management theory. Where *management* means getting work done through other people (Hofstede 1994c), managers and others involved in the administration and development of community projects need to recognise that the culture that enters the organisation through the employees actively change and reduce the scope of the management-created organisational culture and structure (Adler et al. 1986). The lack of success of economic development at both the national and the community levels provide adequate evidence to doubt the validity of mainstream Anglo-Saxon management practices in Indigenous domains (Hofstede 1993). Writing in a global context, Marsden has thus advocated the 'Indigenisation' of management, referring to the inclusion of vernacular knowledge and local coping mechanisms into community development plans which can produce a better fit between those doing the managing and those being managed (Marsden 1991, pp. 30-36).

The dichotomy between global and local institutions is central to the work by Esteva and Prakash on grassroots responses to post-modernism global trends. Writing in a discursive manner, they claim that contemporary global institutions and commercial forces are inherently unstable and damaging, and the almost inhuman scale and size of these organizations contradict the scale of the parochial institutions and the conceptual and experiential capabilities of local populations. The empowerment condition essential to give efficacy to the expression 'think globally – act locally' is dismissed as illusory. Instead, the authors points to 'the age-old wisdom for thinking little or small', arguing that the goals of empowerment, self-sufficiency, and self-determination can only be attained where Indigenous minorities can exercise control and assume responsibility for the consequences of their own actions and decisions (Esteva and Prakash 1998, pp. 19-46).

Similar views have been expressed in discussions of Aboriginal organisational developments in Australia. Cook supports the view that management is a culture-specific construct that embodies the dominant cultural values of the wider society. Management,

with its practices, ideologies, and problems, cannot be isolated from other cultural determinants and processes taking place within a society. He argues that the integrative fourth world culture of the Aborigines is based on a complex set of social relations, spiritual beliefs, traditional values and rules of reciprocity and exchange which are contrary to the ideals of free enterprise and standard management rationales (Cook [undated], pp. 1-5).

Walsh points to the presence of significant socio-linguistic obstacles that frequently are encountered in cross-cultural negotiations and interaction between Aborigines and Anglo Australians. He characterises mainstream communications as dyadic and contained. The dyadic style is typified by direct communication between a speaker and listener/s in which talk is directed towards particular individuals, is face-to-face and accompanied by strong eye contact. Perhaps because of the mainstream preoccupation with efficiency, productivity and measurable outcomes, communication is contained to enable it to fit into the blocks of allocated time and schedules that structure consultations, negotiations and meetings. Silence is counterproductive and should be avoided as it may be seen as a sign of weakness or provide the opportunity for dissention by assertive participants. The speaker is primary and, by controlling topics and time, can dominate the agenda. By contrast, communication among Aboriginal Australia is communal and continuous: talk is 'broadcast' and is not necessarily directed to a particular individual; people do not need to face each other and eye contact is in many cases avoided, and silence is accepted. Communication is continuous and the communication channel is turned on and left on – even for so-called single-issue debates that may extend be conducted over several weeks. The listener has control and can tune in or out of the ongoing communication at will. Differences in body language and in rules of etiquette further compound the problems of cross-cultural communications. Whilst Walsh recognise that communication styles with individuals and with groups are influenced by such subjective variables as prior experiences, education and levels of immersion in English, he maintains that in order to be effective and culturally appropriate, methods of negotiation, consultations, and other forms of interaction must be cognizant of the Indigenous practices and incorporate these into the communication strategies (Walsh 1997).

Pearson has also stressed the need for a more culturally appropriate approach and has called for the abandonment of current mainstream leadership models and practices, and a

restructuring of the three-tiered organisational framework through which Aboriginal development projects are currently administered. Whilst he recognises the importance of building on traditional values in the management and administration of Aboriginal projects and enterprises, Pearson also accepts the need for Indigenous people and their partners to incorporate entrepreneurial values and practices including individual responsibility and accountability, incentives and differential reward systems based on personal effort (Pearson 2000). This view is reflected by Martin who claims that to be meaningful and effective, 'culturally appropriate' institutions not only must be cognizant of specific Indigenous practices and values but 'may also have to directly engage – and even on occasion challenge, them' (Martin 2002, p. 2).

Observations made at *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* during a familiarisation visit in 1996 revealed the existence of many complex management and organisational issues not commonly experienced in mainstream hospitality operations. In essence, it seemed that many of the normative roles and functions of management and staff were at odds with traditional values and behavioural norms. This created a sense of cultural dissonance in the minds of some the participants that resulted in avoidance behaviour and lack of confidence by the Indigenous management to deal with difficult organisational problems. Similarly, observation of organisational behaviours and work-related values of subsequent non-Indigenous managers were also culturally different and resulted in organisational tension. Given the potential significance of these issues it was decided that a multi-method approach encompassing the use of a rigorous empirical research instrument as well as participant-observations would most likely yield better results than more conventional ethnomethodological approaches.

### **3.5 Culture, management, and work-related values**

Hofstede explored the relationship between culture, management and leadership, and work-related values. Analysing data from the private sector, multinational IBM Corporation branches collected during two survey rounds between 1967 and 1973 spanning 50 different countries and three multi-country regions, Hofstede documented the presence of four common sets of work-related value dimensions. The survey covered 20 languages and involved more than 116,000 questionnaires and approximately 88,000 respondents who were closely matched in nearly all aspects except nationality, and who were subject to the same company policy and strong organisational culture. These were

predominantly male, middle class, and managers, professionals and technical or clerical employees. Hofstede found that four underlying value dimensions could explain half of the variations in a nation's mean scores. Following his collaboration with Bond, he later added a fifth value dimension to his Value Survey Module (VSM 94) (Hofstede 1994a), and included ten more countries (Hofstede 1991, p. 13; 1998, pp. 5-6). The value data from the new dimension emerged from surveys involving matched samples of university students from 22 different countries.

As a result of his research, Hofstede was able to identify and compare sets of dominant value patterns and measure them on five main bipolar dimensions: Power Distance, Individualism versus Collectivism, Masculinity versus Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Long-term versus Short-term Orientation (1993, pp. 83-94). These dimensions can be explained as follows:

- **Power Distance** (PDI) refers to the degree to which unequal distribution of power and wealth is accepted. It proceeds from the concept of equality and includes the way people deal with the distribution of prestige, wealth and power, their attitudes to hierarchical relationships, and their preferences for being able to exert influence in the decision-making processes. Included among societies with small power distance are, in descending order: New Zealand; the Scandinavian and some northern European countries and Australia; and USA and Canada. Small power distance is characterised by expectations of equality, a preference for the decentralization of power and authority. Staff value empowerment, autonomy, and involvement in decision-making. Superiors are seen as being accessible, and organisational relationships are based on interdependence. Privileges and ostentatious display of status symbols are frowned upon. Large power distance nations include the Latin countries in South America and Europe, the poorer non-industrialized Asian states, and many African nations. Large power distance is expressed in the acceptance by the less powerful members of organisations of unequal distribution of power, wealth and salaries, and the presence of hierarchical relationships characterised by high levels of dependency. Centralisation of power is popular, and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat. Managers and leaders are expected to enjoy special privileges and to display their

status through symbols of power and wealth. Family and friends are usually the bases of power for aspiring individuals (Hofstede 1994c, pp. 23-47).

- **Individualism-Collectivism (IDV)** refers to power of the group over the individual and the extent to which people live and work together and the nature of the relationship that exist between the individual and the larger group. Countries that rank high on individualism include most of the English speaking nations, USA, Australia, Canada, and the UK, and Holland. Japan, Spain, Israel, and Argentina lie approximately in the middle whilst most other Latin American nations, Pakistan, Indonesia, South Korea and Taiwan are highly collectivistic (Hofstede 1994, p. 53).

Individualist cultures emphasise the primacy of the individual and everyone is expected to look after him/herself or the immediate family only. Personal freedom is sacrosanct and relationships between members of the group are loose. Social identity and position is based on individual achievements. Commercial relationships, including employer-employee, tend to be contractual and based on mutual advantage. Task and the achievement of organisational objectives prevails over relationships. Hiring and promotion is supposed to be predicated on meritocracy based on ability and competence. Management is the management of individuals (Hofstede 1994, p. 67).

Highly collectivistic cultures are tightly structured and display strong in-group cohesiveness. 'Shame' is a strong moderator of behaviour and personal aspirations are subserved to group goals, and there is a high degree of conformance between the behaviour of individuals and their socially prescribed roles. Highly collectivistic cultures are characterised by strong group egotism in which the 'we group' is emphasised in contradistinction to other groups. The group protects its members but demand their loyalty in return. Social harmony, or the perception of it, is paramount and direct confrontation of other in-group members is considered rude and undesirable. Saying no to requests from group members frowned upon as it is regarded as a negation of social obligations. Relationships prevail over task and commercial considerations, and management is management of groups (Hofstede 1994, p. 67).

- Masculinity-Femininity (MAS)** refers to the degree to which people emphasise or value so-called masculine traits. These include toughness and assertiveness, independence and competition. On the other hand, feminine cultures display a preference for the concerns of the welfare and solidarity of the group, stressing the quality of life, modesty, and ‘humanising of work’. The highest ranked so-called masculine cultures include Japan, Austria, some of the South American countries, and Italy, whilst USA, Australia, the Arab nations, West Africa, and many Middle Eastern and Asian countries such as Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia are ranked in the mid-range of the index. Masculine cultures value material success and progress, and emphasises equity, competition and performance. Managers are expected to be assertive, tough and decisive, and differences of opinion are resolved by confrontation and argument, and conflict is met with show of strength. Economic performance and materialistic goals have priority over social considerations and environmental concerns. Gender roles are emphasised and men are supposed to be competitive, ambitious and non-emotional compared to woman who are supposed to be tender and be concerned feelings and maintaining relationships. Strong feminine nations include Holland and Yugoslavia, the Nordic countries and, to a lesser extend, such South American countries as Costa Rica, Chile, Guatemala and Uruguay, and Portugal, as well as South Korea and Thailand, and East Africa. The cultures of these countries are commonly characterised by values that emphasise modesty, permissiveness, equality, and solidarity and a concern with quality of life issues, including the quality of working life. Relationships are important and conflicts should be resolved by compromise and negotiation. Both men and women are expected to be concerned with relationships and be tender and caring toward others. Environment protection is a higher priority than economic success, and the welfare society is regarded as ideal (Hofstede 1994c, pp. 79-106).

Hofstede’s use of masculinity-femininity has been criticised for being sexist and other authors have preferred to label this dimension the ‘quality versus quantity-of-life dichotomy’ (Redpath and Nielsen 1997, p. 5). However, such semantic arguments may be regarded as being equally subjective and, apart from appearing politically more correct, offer little analytical advantage. Given the existence of

gender inequality and the extent to which some cultures overtly emphasise gender as the basis for the division of labour and social relations, this writer prefers to use Hofstede's original nomenclature.

- **Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)** reflects extent to which members of a culture feel uncomfortable in uncertain or unknown situations, and a strong preference for clear rules, predicability and stability. Countries with strong avoidance cultures include Greece, Portugal, Belgium, many South American and South European nations, and Japan. The Arab countries, Taiwan, Austria and Germany, Thailand and Africa rank broadly in the middle on the uncertainty avoidance index, and the USA, Canada and Australia are ranked medium-low. Cultures with strong uncertainty avoidance value consensus and conformity, and security and stability is paramount. What is different is dangerous and innovation is generally resisted. Ambiguity and uncertain situations often result in high levels of stress and anxiety. These cultures are generally very conservative and try to control their environment by creating laws and rules. They tend to rely on experts for guidance when confronting ambiguous situations or unfamiliar risks. Conversely, such countries as Singapore, Hong Kong, Denmark and Sweden, and Great Britain display low uncertainty avoidance values. Their cultures are characterised by high tolerance of innovative ideas and different behaviours. There is a lack of anxiety about the future and they are curious about the unknown. They display greater willingness to take risks and prefer common sense to rules. Change is regarded as healthy and normal, and conflict and competition can be used constructively. People in low uncertainty cultures tend not to show aggression, and are more relaxed and less structured in their approach to life. Tolerance is expressed through internationalism and open-mindedness towards minorities (Hofstede 1994c, pp. 109-139).
- **Long-term versus Short-term Orientation (LTO)**. Also known as Confucian Dynamism or Time Orientation, this index refers to the degree to which members of the group emphasise values associated with the past, present and future, including the respect for traditions and social obligations. Of the 22 countries measured on this dimension, the Far Eastern nations of China, Hong Kong,

Taiwan, Japan and South Korea displayed the highest values for long-term orientation. These cultures were strongly oriented toward the achievement of long-term goals, and valued thrift and perseverance, and the acceptance of slow results. Those displaying long-term orientation were willing to forego the gratification of immediate wants and instead focussed on the achievement of long-term benefits through hard work. Although virtue, traditions and the respect for others (face) are considered important, there are limits to the social imperatives of past practices, and traditions are often adapted to modern contexts. Social stability is valued and is predicated on the existence of accepted hierarchical and unequal relationships between people. Shame and sense of guilt underpin social conformity. At the other end of the continuum lie the cultures displaying short-term orientations. These include such nations as Pakistan, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Zimbabwe where there is a strong emphasis on the present. There is a very strong respect for traditions, social status, and for being right. Individuals are expected to fulfil social obligations regardless of costs and there is little incentive to save for the future. Individuals tend to protect their social position and 'face', and reciprocity and personal steadiness and stability is valued. Innovation is overshadowed by a strong emphasis on the past and there is a marked difficulty in perceiving the future (Hofstede 1994c, pp. 159-173).

A significant number of studies of organisational cultures from around the world have supported the general validity and the reliability of Hofstede's construct (Blunt 1988; Harrison 1993, 1994b; Hofstede and Bond 1988; Bond 1987; Hoppe 1990; O'Connor 1995; Steenkamp, Hofstede and Wede 1999, p 11, 27). Other theorists suggest that Hofstede's examination of cross-cultural difference is one of the most significant and illuminating contributions to the understanding of cultural influences in business and organisational management (d'Iribane 1997, p. 46; Blunt, p. 235; Adler et al. 1986, p. 302; Chapman 1997, p. 18; Randall 1993, p. 91; Pizam 1993, p. 205). Following his collaboration with Bond, and in response to observations made by Bosland and Hoppe, Hofstede made further refinements to the research instrument. This was released as the Values Survey Module in 1994 (VSM94) and is the instrument adopted for this research.

### **3.6 Critiques of Hofstede's contributions to the study of culture, management and work-related values**

A number of criticisms have been made of Hofstede's work. These include concerns about his methodology, and certain underlying theoretical issues and philosophical premises. It has been suggested that Hofstede's research suffer from the epistemological problems that commonly afflict comparative cultural studies of organisations and work-related values. As noted by Chapman (1997, p. 24), and Xenikou and Furnham (1996, p. 13), most cross-cultural research methodologies can be classified as belonging to either the 'etic' or the 'emic' categories of social inquiry. Hofstede's approach is by necessity strongly etic. It presupposes the existence of elements of commonality, or equivalence, across different cultures, and that no culture is so unique that any parallel with another culture is meaningless (Hofstede 1984, p. 32). The etic approach is strongly positivistic and relies on quantitative constructs to identify cultural constants and to measure the degree of congruence of cognitions and social practices across different cultural groups. The virtue of etic constructs lies in their ability to distil complex holistic data into readily comprehensible categories and dimensions of cultural phenomena, and the assurance that 'each respondent answered exactly the same questions, and that the results are strictly comparable from one group to another' (Chapman 1997, p. 11).

One criticism of the use of quantitative, statistically based surveys is the unreliability of data because of the use of conceptual categories reflective of the cultural subjectivity of the researcher and their implicit appearance in the survey instrument (Xenikou and Furnham 1996, p.2; Temple 1997). Similarly, it has been suggested that the search for equivalence has another unfortunate side effect – a minimalism that results in incomplete and myopic insights (Tayeb 2001) and which constrain the depth and detail of the socio-cultural phenomena - the very focus of anthropological research. Thus, the potential for cultural bias may limit the efficacy of etic constructs, and can give rise to unwarranted value generalisations and simplistic representations of complex human characteristics (Chapman 1997, p. 11; Aram and Walichik 1997).

Such criticisms seem unaware of Hofstede's own warnings about over-reliance on his constructs. He justifies his use of a comparative positivist methodology and maintains that cultural differences between nations (and between various cultural groups) can best be described using the five bipolar dimensions outlined above, and the position of a

country or cultural group on these five dimensions enables the researcher to make some useful predictions about the way the group operates, including the members' attitudes to management, organisational processes, relationships and behaviours (Hofstede 1990, pp. 287-289). However, acknowledging the rich diversity of human culture, Hofstede is circumspect when commenting on the efficacy of the VSM94. Although it can yield considerable insight, he does not claim that it can explain all the differences in management and cultural values. He therefore argues that the VSM 94 is best augmented by the inclusion of additional quantitative and qualitative data, as well as structured participant observation at the local level which can be correlated with data obtained from the VSM94 (Hofstede 1993, p. 89; 1998a, p. 4; Hofstede 1998b, p. 20; Hofstede 1998c, p. 18; Hofstede and Harzing 1996, pp. 306-307). The participation-observation method, often conducted in the ethnographic fashion, is an example of the emic type of research that is based on a small-scale case study where the researcher adopts an interpretive approach to qualitative data relating to observed social phenomena. However, whilst the emic approach can provide profound insights into the unique characteristics of a culture, it is ultimately subjective, non-positivist, and based on culture-specific Indigenous categories that are bound in time and space. As such, emic research is unable by itself to produce reliable conclusions that are suitable for systematic cross-cultural comparisons (Xenikou and Furnham 1996, p. 13). The main contribution of emic studies to cross-cultural research is the generation of in-country data that can be used to provide coherent explanations to the generalised results derived from etic inquiries (Hofstede 1996, p. 308; 1998b, p. 14).

However, whilst Hofstede's recommendations suggest an in-between solution to the interpretative emic position and the positivistic etic approach, Chapman has suggested that their investigative inter-relationship can result in methodological tension. Chapman reported on recent ethnographically based research by Aram and Walochik who used their respective findings to scrutinise Hofstede's results. He claimed that their results diverged significantly from Hofstede's conclusions and points to the existence of a methodological conundrum:

the disparity of data, as between their own study and the conclusion reached by Hofstede, is a serious problem: Somebody must be wrong. Aram and Walochik, however, are secure in the integrity of their own data; whatever the methodological complaints they might or might not make of themselves, they

know that they have recorded what was said. The data are, in their own terms, sovereign. Does this make Hofstede wrong? No, of course, since the responses to the ... IBM survey ... have their own social reality. (Chapman 1997, p. 21)

A reading of Aram and Walochik's paper suggests that the conundrum might be more of Chapman's own making rather than a problem in Hofstede's construct. Aram and Walochik is more cautious when assessing the validity of their own data:

This picture of Spanish management is incomplete and untested. An insufficient and possibly unrepresentative number of people were interviewed. Ideas have been developed inductively and lack rigorous evaluation. The comments made were solely impressionistic and contrasts with management styles in other cultures remain unverified. Spanish managers' actions may differ substantially from these comments. (Aram and Walochik 1997, pp. 87-88)

Among other methodological concerns with their findings, the level of analysis of Aram and Walochik's study is strictly speaking not comparable to Hofstede's level of analysis and it may be suggested that Chapman, perhaps more so than Aram and Walochik, have committed what Hofstede has referred to as the reverse ecological fallacy. Hofstede suggests that the identification of the appropriate level of analysis is critical to the formulation of valid social research paradigms. Level of analysis refers to the level in the population at which the researcher wishes to draw conclusions. One of two types of fallacies can arise when the level of data collection and the level of conclusions are not equal. The ecological fallacy occurs when higher order data, for example national data, is used to draw conclusions about subjects at a lower order – for example, individual level. The other is known as the reverse ecological fallacy. This refers to the opposite situation where data collected at the individual level is used to draw conclusions about a higher level, for example national level (Hofstede 1984, p. 24; 1994c, p. 112; O'Connor 1995, p. 34). Thus, it may be concluded that the findings of Aram and Walochik's emic study of ten Spanish respondents are methodologically incongruous with Hofstede's etic-based conclusions relating to national cultural values and management characteristics.

Hofstede's work has also been criticised for being dated. As much of his earlier work was collected over 30 years ago, subsequent economic development of many of the participating countries and the acceleration of globalisation has rendered his findings

obsolete (O'Connor 1995, p. 13; Hofstede 1998a, p. 4). However, Hofstede maintains that the underlying cultural patterns and structures function in homeostatic manner that maintains a group or nation's culture in a state of quasi-equilibrium in which change only occurs slowly. Cultural change is not commonly achieved through the adoption of outside values but is dialectically effected mainly by shifts in technological and economical conditions. Even so, the existing value system patiently smoothes new institutions and practices until their structures and forms are again aligned with pre-existing norms (Hofstede 1984, p. 23). Hofstede claims that the five value dimensions have century-old roots and recent replications show no loss of their validity (Hofstede 1998a, p. 4). Importantly, even though some countries have experienced culture change, the relative position of their value dimension compared to other countries remained significantly identical over time (Hoppe 1990, p. 72) In any case, criticism of obsolescence does not impact on the current research as it relates to Hofstede's data, not his paradigm including the VSM94, which remain unaffected by this argument.

A commonly expressed concern over Hofstede's findings relates to the lack of representativeness of his samples. It has been argued that a study of the subsidiaries of one multi-national company cannot provide information about entire national cultures (Hofstede 1998a, p. 4; Spillane, 1998, Personal communication). Tayeb has argued that culture, and perceptions of cultural practices, should not be regarded as a straightjacket which limits the behaviours of individuals. Culture and social reality forms a complex dynamic whole in which individuals may, subject to different social context, display characteristics that belong to opposite ends of any cultural dimension (Tayeb 2001, pp. 93 – 95). Schwartz further suggests that Hofstede's IBM respondents possessed a range of socio-economic characteristics that were not representative of the general population, a feature that were likely to be more pronounced in third world countries in which cultural divergences are greater than in industrialised nations (Schwartz 1994, p. 91). Hofstede justified his narrow sample strategy on the basis that as it is virtually impossible to obtain representative samples from most nations, multicultural corporations are appropriate settings for identifying national cultures:

The fact that these organisations have similar structured subsidiaries in many countries provided matched settings in which many factors are equal except the nationality of the actors ... the advantage of the functional equivalence is clear (because it)...reduces the variability in the data from one country to

another ... That these samples are atypical does not matter as long as they are atypical in the same way from one country to another. (Hofstede 1984, p. 31)

Although the findings of numerous cross-cultural studies have supported the validity and reliability of Hofstede's construct (O'Connor 1995, pp. 39-44; Hofstede and Bond 1987, p. 15), many researchers continue to raise concerns over the generalizability of the data obtained through their own replication studies using Hofstede's VSM modules. Thus, recognising limitations imposed by the narrowness of samples consisting of respondents from business organisations, such researchers as Hoppe and O'Connor have abstained from making unjustifiable conclusions at the level of national culture (Hoppe, 1990, p. 25; O'Connor 1995, p. 34). Acknowledging the possible limitations to the current research by factors relating to sample size and other case-specific characteristics, and recognising the scope for the cultural divergence across Australia's Indigenous populations, this researcher will avoid committing the reverse ecological fallacy by not extrapolating conclusions beyond the local level of this analysis. Any applicability of the findings at *Pajinka* to other Indigenous Australians should be determined through further research and replication based on the instruments used by the present research.

### **3.7 Hospitality applications of Hofstede's construct**

Searches on hospitality and tourism literature revealed only few cases of research using aspects Hofstede's value paradigm. Some have relied on Hofstede's national value summaries as comparisons for their own hospitality work-related data whilst others have sought to apply Hofstede's findings to issues relating to the supply and demand of tourism products. The latter includes the work by Mallinson, and by Jackson. Mallinson's highly qualitative work focus on matters of etiquette, and she tends to conflate Japanese hotel guests' attitudes towards food and drinks, toilet practices and table manners with Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance dimension. Her emphasis on cultural values as a means of achieving better guest service through cross-cultural awareness training and improved inter-cultural communication training for hotel employees (Mallinson 2000, pp. 126-134) is not relevant to the present research. Likewise, Jackson's unusual application of Hofstede's cultural model to predict Australia mass tourism flow (2000, pp. 47-56) does not relate to the subject matter of this research. Other research has been conducted internationally (i.e. Roper and Brooks 1997; Armstrong, Mok, Go and Chan 1997) but, due to lack of application of Hofstede's five value dimensions, this is also not relevant to the present research.

At the time of writing, only one other case study existed which involved the application of Hofstede's value module to an Indigenous tourism enterprise in Australia. Williams and Louvel used an older version of Hofstede's module to conduct a qualitative analysis of the Goolarabooloo Aboriginal Corporation that operate the small *Lurrajurri Heritage Trail* near Broome on a seasonal basis. The purpose of this research was to compare the cultural behaviour of mainstream Australia with Aborigines in general, and the Goolarabooloo Aboriginal Corporation specifically. Their research methodology involved a qualitative application of Hofstede's value dimensions in an emic setting, consisting largely of participant-observations, semi-structured interviews and discussions based on the key cultural factors identified in Hofstede's work, plus some minor use of other secondary information to validate their own observations (Williams and Louvel 1998, p. 14). The resultant anecdotal evidence was compared to the mainstream Australian values that were based on Hofstede's Australian IBM data from 1968-72. Their qualitative findings as they relate to Australian Aborigines may be summarised as follows:

PDI - zero power distance in decision-making but strong power distance in decision implementation.

IDV - Aborigines are highly collectivistic with the extended family, not the community, being the focus of social action.

MAS - Aboriginal society is highly feminine.

UAI - the authors' observations of this dimension are somewhat ambiguous but, as they believe that Aborigines are laid back and are comfortable with significant levels of uncertainty in their daily lives, they ascribe low uncertainty avoidance to Aborigines.

LTO - as Williams and Louvel used an older survey module they made no observations of values relating to the long-term orientation of Aborigines.

Williams and Louvel's study is interesting but inherently problematic and methodologically invalid. Hofstede's etic construct is both quantitative and comparative. It derives its validity from its rigorous statistical methodology and requires carefully matched samples of informants that enable researchers to rank cultures on comparable value dimensions and observe the magnitude of their differences and similarities that exist between the respective cultures. Such precision is absent from Williams and Louvel's study and comparisons between the unmatched Aboriginal sample and Hofstede's Australian IBM data is invalid and conjectural. Given the qualitative nature of their research the zero value given to the PDI dimension is a misnomer. Furthermore,

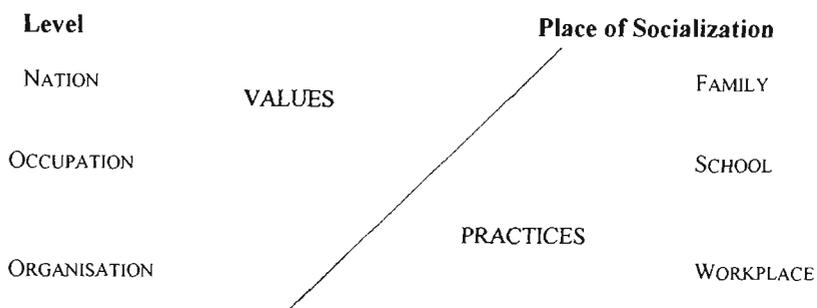
where Hofstede has urged methodological caution, Williams and Louvel proceeded to apply a superseded instrument to an Aboriginal population the size of which was not specified. Apart from a minor concern with the uncertainty avoidance dimension, the authors did not critically evaluate the applicability of the construct to the Aborigines nor did they recognise the limitations of the level of their inquiry. Despite the existence of significant socio-cultural differences between Aborigines, and between Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Williams and Louvel indiscriminately extrapolated the findings from their limited study to the rest of Indigenous Australia, thus forcing the data beyond validity. Their paper is interesting for its anecdotal discussion on Indigenous participation in tourism but can be dismissed largely as being methodologically invalid. It serves as an example of the juncture at which the current debate stands - sympathetic and well meaning but perhaps ultimately not beneficial to the Indigenous people seeking to establish viable and sustainable tourism ventures.

Pizam and others have explored the relationship between national culture, industry culture and organisational practices. Having identified the existence of a unique culture that characterised the hotel and restaurant industry, they sought to determine the extent to which hospitality culture is applicable worldwide or whether the culture and practices of hospitality organisations were subjugated to and congruent with national cultures (Pizam 1993, p. 217). Pizam compared a range of secondary industry data with Hofstede's four original value dimensions. He found evidence of structural convergence and concluded that corporate and organisational structure of hotels and restaurant enterprises showed little difference across cultures – the structure of organisation, division of labour, etc. in an 800 room hotel in Chicago is largely the same as in an 800 room hotel in Tokyo, Bangkok or Athens (Pizam 1993, p. 222). However, actual behaviour within hospitality organisations showed strong evidence of divergence across different nations and Pizam concluded that employee behaviour, communication, motivation and other leadership and management issues and work-related values were strongly effected by national culture. Similarly, a later study by Pizam, Pine, Mok, and Shin compared the responses from 192 hotel managers from three Asian countries with Hofstede's value scores for the same countries and found that nationality culture had greater effects on management behaviour than hospitality industry culture (1997, p. 143).

These results support Hofstede’s findings on the relationship between values identified at the national cultural level, and the values, attitudes and practices encountered at the organisational level. These are depicted in Figure 1. Whilst Hofstede acknowledges the existence of contingency factors including specific industry practices, attitudes (commitment to quality customer service), and the influence of such employee characteristics as age, education, gender, etc., he rejects the ‘culture-free hypothesis’ of the convergence

theorists that states that organisations belonging to the same industry are subject to the same sets of heterogenous techno-management-economic forces which will cause

Figure 3.1 Cultural differences: National, occupational and organisational levels



Source: Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohav and Sanders 1990, p. 312

them to converge towards optimal structures and operational practices – including forms of management (Houghton and Tremblay 1994, p. 327; Adler et al. 1986, p. 300, Blunt 1990, pp. 302-307). Hofstede maintains that cultural values are primary and ultimately exert a dominant influence on the range of available practices, rituals, attitudes, and symbols that constitute organisational culture (Hofstede 1998a; Harzing and Hofstede 1996, p. 301).

Contrary to Pizam’s findings, preliminary observations made during a site visit to *Pajinka* suggested that the organisational climate and organisational structure of this tourism business diverged significantly from so-called normative mainstream industry practices. Consequently, this research will identify and discuss the influence of cultural contingencies on the structure of organisation, and on the operational and management processes at *Pajinka* and thereby contribute to the understanding of the relationships that exist between the Indigenous culture and the management and organisational practices encountered in Hospitality and tourism enterprises owned and operated by Indigenous Australians.

### 3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has examined a number of theories and case studies relating to Aboriginal culture and Indigenous business operations with the objective of identifying the critical

social and cultural determinants which impact on the development and management of Indigenous enterprises. It has been argued that the success of Indigenous businesses, including tourism enterprises, is to a large extent dependant on the ability of policy makers and managers to identify the core values, attitudes, and practices of the Indigenous participants and incorporate these into appropriate forms of development and operational management which reflects the capabilities and the cultural milieu of the participants.

Attempts to formulate appropriate broad-based Indigenous tourism enterprise development and management strategies in Australia has been complicated by a lack of recognition of certain fundamentals relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. One important characteristic relates to the pervasive and widespread traditional cultural practice of sharing which has the potential to ruin Indigenous enterprises. Building on information presented in chapter two, this chapter have argued for the need management theory to recognise the presence of such cultural practices and develop appropriate strategies to minimise their negative impacts on Indigenous businesses.

Another fundamental issue relates to significant cultural diversity encountered Australia's Indigenous population. Information presented in this chapter has established the presence of cultural diversity among Aborigines across Australia and the Torres Strait Islands. These have been attributed to the effects of different socio-economic forces including original traditional practices, different regional histories, and varying levels of acculturation and integration into mainstream Australian society. Such differences are manifested in a range of social practices, behaviours, and values, including work-related values and attitudes, and preferences for distinct forms of management. It has been argued that cultural values are enduring preferences that precede and dominate organisational cultures. To be effective, the development and management of Indigenous tourism enterprises therefore need to identify the unique cultural imperatives of participating Indigenous groups and then assess the applicability of mainstream business practices and management culture to each of the enterprises.

Careful evaluation of Hofstede's paradigm has confirmed the validity of his construct in the study of cultural influences on organisational behaviour. Given the cultural diversity that exist in the Aboriginal and mainstream domains, the VSM94 is the most appropriate

instrument to identify, compare, and explain the cultural differences in management and work-related values and organisational behaviour between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants in tourism enterprises. However, the aims of this research transcend the topic of cultural values and organisational behaviour, and include a 'holistic' analysis of the operational and cultural factors that influence the organisational format and the viability of complex Indigenous tourism enterprises. Thus, although the VSM94 is the key instrument in the current research, a multi-method strategy has been adopted which includes such other quantitative instruments and qualitative techniques as market survey questionnaires, participant-observations, analysis of operational data, and the analysis of historical information. The research methodology and the research instruments will be discussed in next chapter five

The next chapter will develop a comparative profile of each of the study regions for the purpose of elaborating the cultural, social and commercial setting of the participating tourism enterprises. Relying mainly on secondary data and, to a lesser extent, on descriptive primary information, the chapter will describe the history of tourism development in Gagudju National Park and Cape York. This will be followed by discussions of a range of broad environmental, historical and operational issues relating to each enterprise for the purpose of providing a holistic context to the specific and detailed research data that will be presented in chapters six and seven.

# Chapter Four

## Profile of the Study Regions

### 4.1 Introduction

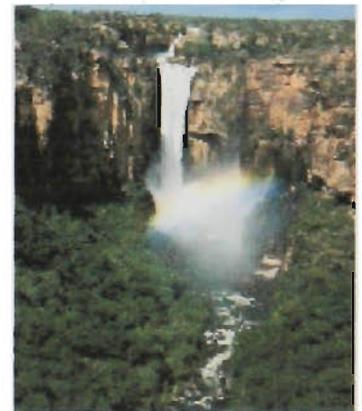
This chapter will present a profile of each of the two study regions for the purpose of developing the context and the setting of the three participating tourism enterprises. Faced with imposed tourism, the Gagudju people and the Injinoo community have developed different methods of participating in tourism that reflects the unique circumstances faced by each group. Drawing predominantly on a variety of secondary and, to a lesser extent, primary data, this chapter will outline the historical development of tourism in the Kakadu (Gagudju) National Park and at *Pajinka* in the far north of Cape York. A range of environmental, organisational and operational factors relating to the Gagudju Association's enterprises and The Injinoo Aboriginal Corporation's investment in *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* will also be highlighted.

Each region will be addressed in slightly different terms. Whilst the chapters will utilise a descriptive framework to highlight a number of features common to both regions, the extent of analysis differs and is influenced by aims of the research. Due to the much-publicised developments in Gagudju, including the contradictory blend of uranium mining, conservation, tourism and Aboriginal rights, this region has already been the focus of much academic inquiry (Altman 1989, p. 176) and considerable data exists which relates to its tourism developments. Since *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* on Cape York Peninsula is the primary focus of the present study, the Gagudju region will be referred to primarily for comparative purposes. Hence, this chapter is largely an account of the park and the local Aboriginal people, including an examination of the development of tourism with particular emphasis on the Gagudju Association that represents the interests of the leading traditional Aboriginal landowners in the area. Importantly, the discussion of the *Crocodile Hotel* and *Cooinda Lodge* also serve to conceptualise the working environment of the non-Indigenous respondents who participated in the VSM94 survey.

## 4.2 Regional overview -Gagudju National Park

The Gagudju National Park is located in the Northern Territory, and is approximately 250 km east of Darwin. Declared a national park in 1979, it was expanded in three stages over the next five years and now covers almost 20,000 km<sup>2</sup>. It is the largest national park in Australia (Altman 1989, p. 262). Formed more than 2 billion years ago, the region is one of the most ecologically complex areas in Australia with floodplains, billabongs and a network of major rivers and plummeting waterfalls, extensive woodlands, rock plateaus and escarpments with lush vegetation. The rich environment sustains more than 1600 different species of plants, 170 species of reptiles, aquatic and amphibian creatures including fresh and saltwater crocodiles, 60 species of mammals, innumerate species of insects, as well as being the home to more than one-third of Australia's bird species. The climate is tropical and the monsoon transforms Gagudju into annual seasons: The wet season lasts from November to March and averages 35°C and extreme levels of humidity and torrential rainfalls that changes floodplains and lowlands into vast freshwater wetlands. The dry season starts at the beginning of May and last until September and averages 30°C, cool nights and low humidity. During this period the cascading waterfalls become mere trickles and the water of the floodplains recede to the rivers and the major billabongs whilst the lush green vegetation fade to brown and olive green colours. This dramatic seasonal variation is reflected in tourism visitation as most tourists find the climatic conditions experienced during the wet too uncomfortable - preferring to visit the park during the dry season (Wilderness News 1998, p. 12).

Gagudju wet season



Gagudju dry season

The Gagudju region is of particular interest for the purposes of the present research since it one of Australia's significant areas of Aboriginal culture and history. The spiritual and physical relationship with the land for the local Aboriginal hunter and gatherer groups extends back more than 40,000 years BP (before present) and is one of the longest periods recorded of continuous human occupation in Australia (AITSIS 1994, p. 527). The area is particularly noted for its abundance of Aboriginal rock art on cliff faces, in

caves and natural shelters. These feature the so-called X-ray paintings of animals and maritime creatures, as well as the famous paintings of the first non-Indigenous peoples and their sailing ships (Wilderness News 1998, p. 14). The cultural, archaeological, and the environmental significance of the area was formally recognised in 1981 and 1987 when Gagudju gained World Heritage Listing from the World Heritage Committee (Altman 1989, p. 462).

### **4.3 Aborigines and tourism development in Gagudju**

The development of tourism including Aboriginal participation in the region is closely linked to uranium mining. The Rum Jungle site near the South Alligator River began in 1951 and ceased operations in 1963. In 1981, Energy Resources Australia (ERA) began operations at the larger and more controversial Ranger Uranium Mine. ERA's plan to proceed with a new uranium mine at the Jabiluka site as Ranger nears its end is currently being reassessed, but this may be quarantined for 10 years.

The Northern Lands Council successfully claimed title to large parts of the park on behalf of the traditional owners following the introduction of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act (ALRA), 1979. Subsequently many Aborigines began to return from Darwin, Katherine, and elsewhere to take up residency on in the park (Pitcher et al. 1999, p. 9). The granting of title was conditional upon a leaseback arrangement with the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service (ANPWS) in return for the annual peppercorn rent of \$7,502 (Altman 1989, p. 264). The ANWPS would manage Gagudju on behalf of the traditional owners. The interests of the latter were later to be safeguarded by their presence on the Joint Board of Management (Altman 1989, p. 462). In the same year the Gagudju Association was incorporated for the purpose of receiving, distributing and investing the very significant royalties accruing from the Ranger Mining operations, as well as coordinating Aboriginal residency and local governance and communal services for its people. Of the 400 residents living in 15 different communities, the Gagudju people constitute approximately 35% of the park's total Aboriginal population. The Gagudju Association has served as a model for other local Aboriginal groups including the Kunwinjku, the Djabulukgu, and the Gundjehmi Associations in terms of both organisational format and achievements ([www.nt.greens.org.au](http://www.nt.greens.org.au) 1999). Indigenous people account for approximately 12% of Gagudju's total population (ABS 1996, 1A).

Tourism grew slowly in the area during the 1950s and accelerated in the 1990s. During the early years, tourism activities were confined to incursions by hunting and fishing enthusiasts who tended to congregate around such locations as Nourlangie and Patonga which offered basic accommodations, including camping. Although no tourist data is available for these early years, it is believed that visitation increased after the completion of the Arnhem Highway in 1974 (Altman 1989, p. 179). Tourism took off during the early 1980s with an estimated 45,000 annual visitors to the park (Altman 1989, p. 463), and peaked in 1994 when a total of 239,824 visitors were recorded by the ANPWS. Although the figure for year 2000 was 200,752 - down approximately 16% from 1994 (ANPWS 2001), Gagudju remains one of Australia's key destinations. The growth in tourism demand resulted in the development of infrastructure and facilities and today Gagudju national park is easily accessible by air, road and water, and is fully integrated into national and international tourism circuits with operators offering a wide variety of tours, products and services (Brokensha and Guldberg 1992, p. 198). Altman has observed that on the basis of the scale and the nature of this destination, Gagudju is at the forefront of Aboriginal tourism in northern Australia (Altman 1989, p. 215). The diversity of the Gagudju investment portfolio includes a wide variety of tourism operations and products, thereby encompassing most of the common forms of Indigenous involvement in tourism in Australia (Altman and Finlayson 1993, p. 2).

The economic and cultural impacts evident within the park are complex. Though reluctant to offer definitive conclusions about the aspirations and concerns of all Aboriginal people in the Park, Altman noted that the Gagudju Association in 1989 would like reducing, or at best limiting, the scale of tourism (1989, p. 206). There was widespread concern amongst the Indigenous communities over access to significant traditional cultural and economic sites, land use and environmental degradation, the protection of flora and fauna, and the social conflict (eg alcohol) arising from the impacts of tourism (Altman 1989, p. 273). Other objectives include employment creation, cultural revival, and income generation through capital investments and the production of art and craft. The Gagudju Association has invested in a number of existing and new business enterprises within the Park with a view to control the decision-making processes and monitor the pace and nature of the developments, as well as achieving financial benefits (Altman and Finlayson 1993, p. 43). A summary of the main business enterprises in the Park is presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Major Tourism Enterprises in Gagudju, 1996**

Tourism Enterprises	Aboriginal Owned	Non-Aboriginal Owned
Crocodile Hotel	Gagudju Assoc.	Gagudju Holiday Village (1/3 <sup>rd</sup> owned by Djab Association)
Cooinda Lodge	Gagudju Assoc.	Gagudju Air Services
Yellow Waters Boat Cruise	Gagudju Assoc.	Hire Cars
Warrandan Cultural Centre	Gagudju Assoc.	Caravan Park
The Border Store	Gagudju Assoc.	Gagudju Resort
Daluk Daluk Screen Printing	Gagudju Assoc.	Gagudju Lodge
Mobil Service Station	Gagudju Assoc.	
Gagudju Assoc. Work Shop	Gagudju Assoc.	
Wild Goose Tours	Privately owned	
Murrawudi Shop	Djabulukgu Assoc.	
Magela Tours	Djabulukgu Assoc.	
Guluyambi Tours	Djabulukgu Assoc.	
<b>Non-Tourism Investments</b>		
Buffalo Farm	Gagudju Assoc.	
Gagudju Assoc. Construction Works	Gagudju Assoc.	

As noted by Altman and Finlayson, the Federal and Northern Territory Governments have provided minimal funding for the development of tourism enterprises in the Park. The required finance has come primarily from mining royalties (approximately \$20 million), as well as from ANPWS rental and assistance from cultural agencies such as the Australia Council (Altman and Finlayson 1993, p. 40).

The experience of Gagudju National Park is unique and provides insights into the nature and consequences of involvement by the Gagudju people in the tourism industry. Altman and Finlayson regard this type of tourism as being 'imposed' - that although the title to the land was vested in the local Aborigines, the transfer of ownership took place only after the establishment of sizable tourism visitations and was conditional on the continuation of unrestricted access to most areas within the park (Altman and Finlayson 1993, p. 42). It symbolises the dependency of tourism in Northern Territory on Aboriginal culture and access to Aboriginal lands and how, given the Territory's political environment of pro-development policies as well as the consequences of the enforced leaseback arrangements, the local Aboriginal landowners were initially unable to veto tourism (Altman 1989, p. 264). Consequently, the Gagudju Association sought to alleviate the negative impacts of tourism by exercising control through legislative protection, formal lease-back arrangements and management contracts which enabled them to have indirect involvement yet maintaining direct economic linkages with the tourism industry. They have also been more successful in recent years in imposing restrictions to tourism access to several locations in the Park (Fagan 2003, Personal communication).

Little direct Aboriginal employment in tourism has occurred. Of the total workforce of 234, only six Indigenous people were employed in the hospitality sector (ABS 1996 Census, 1A). This reflects a lack of desire by local Aboriginal people for direct involvement in hospitality. Altman has also commented that many Aborigines prefer not to work in the hotel and restaurant sector. The intensity of the social interaction entailed by the delivery of service products and the strict industry requirements of punctuality, appearance and technical competence seem to discourage participation (Altman 1988, p. 208).

Information provided to this researcher during a visit to Gagudju in 1996 confirms Altman's comments. Despite the fact that 'Aboriginality' features as an attraction of the destination and in the ownership of the facilities, the hotels employed only two local staff and management indicated disappointment at their inability to attract and retain local Aborigines. Management seemed to be sensitive to cross-cultural issues and had induction and training programs in place that recognised and attempted to accommodate the cultural issues involved in service delivery. The training and the induction programs also considered issues such as the absence of skills, personal presentation, shyness and reluctance to 'acting flash' in front of strangers, and alcohol management. Although it was claimed that many efforts had been made to employ locals, most have been unsuccessful in that nearly all of the Aborigines who were employed subsequently left the hotels. Due to concerns over the potential for social conflict, the Gagudju Association have been reluctant to allow non-local Aborigines to work in their hotels. Most attempts during the 1980s and 1990s to employ Indigenous people and develop their capacity for self-management therefore seem to have been very unsuccessful. Consequently, the hotel's management team and general workforce was comprised predominantly of white Australians, a large contingent of New Zealanders, and some Europeans. (Jabiru 1996, Personal communication).

The mining operations also provide full-time employment for only a few Aborigines. By contrast, the ANPWS employed 26 Aborigines in a variety of positions including senior rangers, rangers, trainee rangers, cultural advisors, labourers, and contractors (Altman 1989, p. 189). A small number of Aborigines have sought an active engagement with tourism and have, as in the case of the *Wild Goose Tours*, developed very successful

businesses which feature traditional culture, environment and wildlife (Altman 1988, p. 209).

The Gagudju Association has minimised its direct participation in the tourism enterprises that it owns. Management leaseback agreements, leasehold and other types of management contracts, and other forms of legislative interventions have enabled Association members to distance themselves from day-to-day activities generally and hospitality operations in particular. This is due in part to cultural factors, and partly to operational and economic considerations. Altman suggests that the appointment of large management companies with national and regional resources appears to make good financial sense especially as suitable Aboriginal management expertise has not been available when needed (Altman 1988, p. 211).



The Crocodile Hotel

The Gagudju Association has relied on several hotel management companies to operate its enterprises in the past. The *Four Seasons Group* were awarded the initial management contract but was subsequently replaced by the Vista group. After one year of unsuccessful self-management by the Gagudju Association, the contract was passed to the Southern Pacific Hotel Corporation (SPHC) which won out narrowly over the *Accor Group* (Hospitality Accommodation 1995, p. 3). Being subject to commercial confidentiality, little is known about the contract details and the only comprehensive information dates back to the period under the management of the *Four Seasons Group* of the \$5 million *Cooinda Lodge* and (to an even lesser extent) the \$13 million *Crocodile Hotel*. The Group was contracted for a period of five years to manage the operations and provide training and employment opportunities for local Aboriginal people. The management fee was based on five percent of all food, beverage, accommodation revenues, and two percent of all other income including boat cruises, retail store sales, and fuel sales. After the first year



Cooinda Lodge



Yellow Waters boat cruises

of the agreement the *Four Seasons Group* were to receive an incentive of an additional 15% of gross operating profit (Altman 1989, p. 211).

#### 4.4 Gagudju Crocodile Hotel and Cooinda Lodge: An overview

In terms of physical size and investment, these two properties are the largest hotel enterprises owned by Indigenous people in Australia. They constitute the major participation in tourism in the Park. Managed by large hotel companies they have had the advantage of being integrated into

the national and international marketing and reservations systems, and have had access to the staff resources and management personnel and systems of these large organisations. SPHC were the property managers when the researcher undertook the first field visit. The group operated 80 hotels across nine countries in South-east Asia and the Pacific Rim. Table 4.2 provides a comparative product overview of the two properties. As indicated above SPHC is now part of the *Six Continents Group* - previously the *Bass Hotels and Resorts*.

The properties have attempted to cater for a variety of markets. The *Crocodile Hotel* is positioned as a 4-star hotel within both the international and domestic markets, and offers the most comfortable accommodation in the centre of the Park close to the regional town of Jabiru. Tennis courts and a golf course and other recreational facilities are within short distance from the hotel. The unusual architecture of the hotel is a central theme in the national and international tourism promotion of the Northern Territory. *Cooinda Lodge* is located 56

**Table 4.2 Property Details**

Crocodile Hotel	Cooinda Lodge
110 Airconditioned rooms	48 Lodges - all rooms with en-suites and Mini Bars
Escarpment Restaurant and Cocktail Bar - 300 seats	34 Budget Rooms
Nourlangie Tavern - 30 seats	57 Powered Sites
Jim Jim Conference Room and Bar - 125 seats	300 Unpowered Sites
Art Gallery/ Lounge	Licensed Mimi Bar - 90 seats
Retail/Souvenir Shop	Garden Bar Bistro
24 Hr Room Service	Cocktail Bar
Outdoor swimming Pool and BBQ area	Gift and Souvenir Shop
Gymnasium	Outdoor Pool and BBQ
Guest Laundry	Guest Laundry
24 Hr Reception and Rent -a-Car in Foyer	Reception and Tour Desk
Mini Bars and continuous in-house Videos in Rooms	Petrol Station
Nightly Music/Entertainment in Restaurant	Airport
STD & IDD Telephone System	

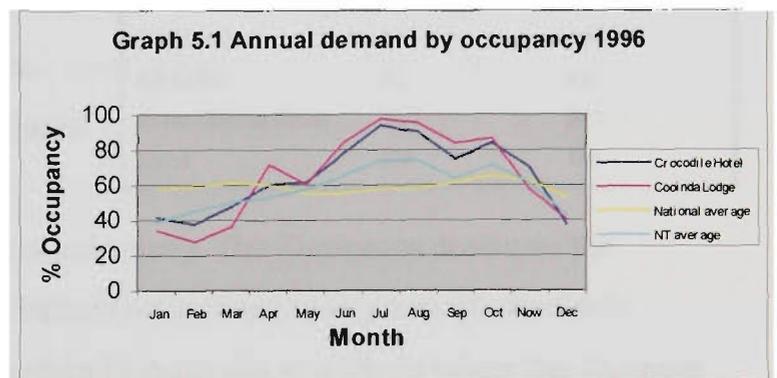
km south of Jabiru near the Yellow Water Billabong. Although it is promoted as a 3-star property, a 2 – 2½ star rating would probably be more appropriate given its current run down state. The property offers a variety of accommodation options for low to mid-market travellers. Both properties promote the unique destinational features - unspoilt environment, variety of wildlife and Aboriginal culture (Crocodile Hotel 1996, Personal communication).

Extensive and sophisticated promotional campaigns have highlighted the range of organised tours and excursions, and many other facilities such as wildlife viewing platforms, bird hides, walking tracks and scenic flights to tourists and houseguests. In 1996 the *Crocodile Hotel* rack rate was \$190.00, and the rack rate at *Cooinda* was \$120.00. The comparable national average room rates were \$183.00 for luxury hotels, and \$88.00 for economy accommodation respectively, net of discounts and rebates (Horwath 1996, p. 7).

Summaries of visitation patterns and sources of business for the two properties for 1996 are presented in the two exhibits below. The pronounced seasonality of the annual demand is depicted in graph 4.1. The monthly occupancy patterns for the two Gagudju properties show peak demands for accommodation during the height of the dry season in July and August. More than 60% of their annual revenue is generated during the five months from June to October.

Business demand drops during the wet season and for four months occupancies fall below 50%. In the

case of *Cooinda* Lodge the variation is even more extreme with occupancy being less than 40% for January, February and March. The annual occupancy rates for the Northern Territory and for Australia for hotels and motels have been included for comparisons. Relative to the national average, the Northern Territory annual demand pattern shows pronounced seasonal variation. Furthermore, the annual demand patterns for the Gagudju properties indicate significant divergence from both the national and the Northern



Source: Gagudju 1996, Pers. Communications.

ABS Cat. 8635.0, Table 5, 1996.

Territory's demand patterns, in that tourism in the Gagudju National Park is subject to greater fluctuations. This poses unique staffing and capacity problems for the management of such seasonally effected properties. The overall occupancy rates for 1996 were 65.7% for *Cooinda Lodge* and 64.8% for the *Crocodile Hotel*. This is lower than the national average occupancy of 74.8% recorded for comparable properties in 1996 (Horwath 1996, p. 2). Data relating to the origin of guests at the two properties are presented in Table 4.3. The market mix is comparable to the national average. The total market consists of approximately 66% domestic tourists and 33% international tourists. Importantly, more than 25% of the domestic business comes from the Northern Territory. Weekend breaks during the low season by Darwin residents provide an important source of business and helps to sustain the critical mass required to maintain sufficient staffing to ensure operational

**Table 4.3 Sources of Guest Origins**

<b>Origin</b>	<b><i>Crocodile Hotel</i> % Market Mix</b>	<b><i>Cooinda Lodge</i> % Market Mix</b>
New South Wales	19.7	15.4
Victoria	17.0	8.9
Queensland	3.5	4.8
ACT	0.9	0.8
South Australia	2.7	3.2
Western Australia	1.7	2.0
Northern Territory	21.5	29.3
Tasmania	0.3	0.9
<b>Total Australia</b>	<b>67.3</b>	<b>65.3</b>
New Zealand	0.7	0.7
United States/Canada	4.3	3.2
South America	0.5	0.0
<b>Total America</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>
United Kingdom	2.6	2.3
Germany	8.8	15.8
France	1.0	3.8
Italy	5.2	2.0
Other Europe	6.1	2.7
<b>Total Europe</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>26.6</b>
Japan	3.0	1.4
Other Asia	0.3	0.6
<b>Total Asia</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>All Other</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>
<b>Total International</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>34.7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

continuity (Gagudju 1996, Personal communication). The Europeans dominate the international market with Germans and Italians comprising nearly two thirds of this market segment. Unlike international tourism in Australia as a whole where the Japanese market segment was nearly 20% in 1996 (Travel and Tourism Investigator 1999, p. 17), this segment constituted only 6.5% of the international tourists staying at the two properties.

It is generally acknowledged that the hotel properties in the past have failed to generate adequate profits for the owners (Altman 1989, p. 199; Gagudju Hotel 1996, Personal communication). In particular, *Cooinda* has not provided the owners with any real returns and Altman attributes its lack of profitability to its small capacity, high costs of labour, seasonality and high turn over of management personnel (Altman 1989, p. 271). *Cooinda*

*Lodge* was very run down in 1996 and there was an urgent need of refurbishment and extensive equipment upgrade but no capital was available.

The Gagudju investments have had mixed results and the economic and social benefits are yet to be measured. Evaluated in purely commercial terms, the hotel properties do not seem to have been financially successful whilst the Border Store, a general retail business operated by the Association, has been marginally successful. ‘Daluk Daluk’, a small and apparently successful screen-printing enterprise operated by women, produced materials with traditional designs that were in high demand by tourists. Other investments such as a petrol station and a construction business have been financially problematic. The popular Yellow Water boat cruises provide tourist with opportunity to see the spectacular environment and wildlife, including crocodiles, and has been most successful in terms of profitability (Altman 1988).

In the regional and Aboriginal contexts, it has been argued that the Gagudju Association’s investments in tourism have been comparatively successful (Altman 1989, pp. 198 – 204; Langton 1994, p. 9). However, other evidence suggests that the Gagudju Association has been experiencing financial difficulties. Schulz reports that during the early 1990s Gagudju was more than \$5 million in debt and in partial receivership. In his report it was claimed that ‘... Gagadu [sic] needed a bit more bridging finance to hang on to the hotels’ that was borrowed from ERA (Schulz 1999, p. 32). This research will discuss the financial viability of the hotel properties in chapter six.

#### **4.5 The Emergence of Alternative Tourism Strategies for Gagudju National Park**

The Kakadu Region Economic Development Strategy recently identified tourism as the most prospective industry to improve the local economy. While remaining uncertain about the absolute capacity of tourism to generate sufficient revenue to replace income from mining royalties for all Gagudju residents, Access Economics made a series of recommendations to develop sustainable tourism, often as joint ventures with experienced non-Indigenous partners, as a means to achieving income and employment for the Indigenous residents and thereby reduce their dependency on the welfare system. It proposed a number of initiative including changes to current marketing strategies, and called for expansion of tourism infrastructure and investment opportunities, greater all-year accessibility to the park and a more prominent presence by Indigenous people in the

delivery of tourism products. A key component of the strategy was the establishment of small-scale cultural/safari tours by Indigenous individuals, families or clans, and it also referred to the *Wild Goose Tours* as an example of successful collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous interests. These recommendations to a large extent contradict the intentions of the original planning strategy of centralising tourism infrastructure and activities in Jabiru and at *Cooinda* in order to minimise adverse social and environmental impacts.

The rationale for promoting this type of enterprise was partly recognition of the need to match business requirements with Aboriginal operational capacity. However, it can also be seen as a mechanism for promoting entrepreneurialism and a possible strategy for circumventing some of the locational restrictions to tourism originally imposed by the traditional owners because it enables ‘... those families/clans wishing to develop cultural tourism on their land (to) be allowed to do so without having to be concerned about other families/clans not benefiting to the same extent’ (Access Economics 2002, p. 75).

The strategy recognises the potential conflict of environmental, social and economic interests but does not propose resolutions:

A subset of this argument is that the economic benefits from the development of a cultural industry might create an incentive for traditional owners to open up ‘too much’ of their land. Such an argument raises some complex issues beyond the scope of this report – especially the rights of traditional owners *vis a vis* the Park’s management objectives. Such issues should be capable of being addressed and resolved within established Park management processes. A concern about financial incentives to open up ‘too much’ land would not justify preventing the development of a cultural tourism industry. It points to the need to manage the trade-off between economic opportunities and environmental management...

(Access Economics 2002, p. 75)

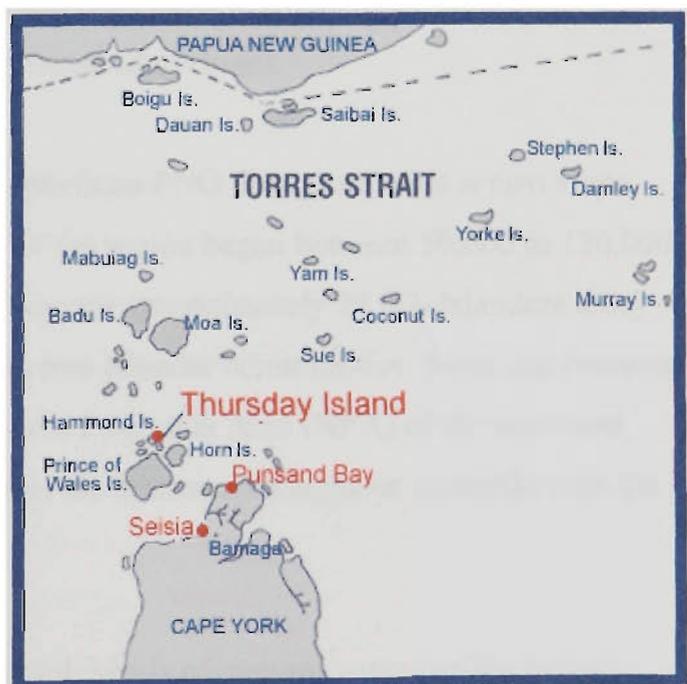
Whilst aware of the dilemmas posed by tourism this strategy advice nevertheless reflects mainstream values and priorities as well as a post-modernistic tendency towards the fragmentation and disaggregation of what were socially, culturally and environmentally coherent systems. Safari tourism operated by small entrepreneurial business entities have the potential to produce social and cultural cleavages and may lead to the development of intrusive forms of tourism that are not easily moderated or controlled by existing methods. This research will investigate Indigenous perceptions and responses to the type of tourism recommended by Access Economics.

The remainder of the chapter will focus on *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* and tourism in Cape York and the adjacent Torres Strait. Important historical, environmental and cultural factors will be identified and discussed with the view to develop a holistic understanding of *Pajinka* and its organisational culture and operational characteristics. Furthermore, the discussion of this enterprise and the Injinoos community is complicated by their inter-regional location between the Torres Strait and Cape York Peninsula. These regions display significant historical, environmental and cultural differences that have exerted strong influences on *Pajinka* and Injinoos. Last, this chapter will introduce a number of organisational and cultural issues that will serve as context information for issues that will be discussed in chapter six.

#### 4.6 Regional overview – The Torres Strait

The Torres Strait lies between the northern-most tip of Australia and coast of the western provinces of Papua New Guinea (PNG) and occupies an area that is 100 km on the north-south axis and running 260 km from the Arafura Sea and the Gulf of Carpentaria in the west to the Coral Sea and the tip of the Great Barrier Reef in the east. Formed more than two billion years ago, the continuous land bridge that originally connected Australia with its northern neighbour became submerged following the last ice age approximately 15,000 years ago. The Strait contains four major reef systems with some 150 islands of which only the 18 that have fresh

Figure 4.1 The Torres Strait Region



water springs are permanently inhabited. The islands are diverse with climatic conditions that correspond largely with those in Gagudju. In size, they vary from small sandy quays, mud flats, to large islands with towering cliffs and extinct volcanoes. Many of the islands have extensive vegetation ranging from mangroves, low shrubs, to palms and large forests. There are a vast number of unspoilt beaches with fine white sands and offshore reefs provide shelter from the open seas (Arthur 1990, p. 6). The two main annual

seasons are named after their respective northwest season; the hot and wet period, runs from mid-January to April, with average temperatures of 31°C and high humidity, whilst



Dauan Island



Waier Island

the



Hammond Island



Waraber Island

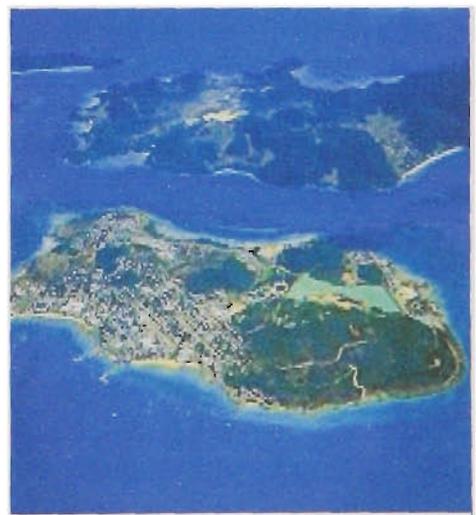
drier, much cooler southeast season, begins around May and last until October with temperatures around 26-28°C. November and December both see much tropical thunderstorm activity, with the occasional threat of cyclones.

Following the southward migration of people from PNG down into what is now Cape York and the rest of Australia, habitation of the region began between 50,000 to 120,000 years ago (Frith and Frith 1995, p. 13). There are approximately 24,000 Islanders today of which 6,300 reside on the islands and in two Islander communities, Seisa and Bamaga, which are on the western side of the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) of the mainland (Arthur 1990, p. 6). The remaining Islanders are scattered throughout Australia with the majority living in Queensland.

Due to previous lack of development and high levels of unemployment in the region many Islanders have in the past gone 'down south' in search of opportunities especially in Cairns, Innisfail, Townsville and surrounding areas which have become the home of some 17,000 Islanders. Arthur (1990, p. 16) notes that with recent social improvements on many of the islands, many Islanders, disillusioned with their experiences on the mainland, are returning to the region where they prefer the more relaxed lifestyle and traditional pursuits of fishing whilst engaging in part or full-time work.

Being at the crossroads of movements of people from Melanesia, Polynesia, Southeast Asia and Europe, and having witnessed much intermarriage and exchanges of women, the Indigenous population today is racially very heterogeneous. This is especially so on the south western islands, including Thursday Island, which is the home to approximately 2,300 people. Similarly, there is some measure of cultural heterogeneity present in the region, with residents from Europe, PNG and Asia, which includes Japanese, Malaysian, Philippine and Chinese and, to a much smaller extent, Aborigines. Underlying this diversity, is a unique island culture which serves to symbolise the concerns, the values and the traditions of the Torres Strait Islanders and through which they emphasise their unique heritage. Beckett suggests that, being self-conscious, Islanders have sought to develop a superior and distinct identity to avoid being subject to the negative stereotypes to which mainland Aborigines were subjected (Beckett 1987, p. 208). In the Strait, the Islanders are the majority and occupy their own land, and are in command of their own lives. They are physically and culturally different to mainland Aborigines and are often portrayed as confident, perhaps superior, and determined to take matters on their own terms - many of which are defined in the context of individual ambitions and personal interests (Beckett 1987, pp. 12, 213; Singe 1989, p. 230).

The Region's economy is somewhat lopsided and is to some extent under-developed. Commercial fishing constitutes almost the entire economic activity of the Strait, with no secondary or manufacturing industries. Additionally, there are significant public and private sector investments, especially in services and retail, tourism and artefact production, plus some diminishing commercial pearl farming. The Community Development Economic Program (CDEP), a 'work for the dole program', is widespread throughout the islands, and most unemployed Islanders are engaged on civic or community projects for two or three days per week in return for the payment of their unemployment entitlements (Arthur 1991, p. 5). Additionally, most Islanders derive significant domestic supplements through subsistence farming and/or fishing.



Thursday Island

Thursday Island is the administrative and economic centre of the Strait. It is a mere 3 km<sup>2</sup> and, being approximately 40 km northwest of the tip of Cape York, it is located on Australia's only border with a neighbouring country. The township of Thursday Island has a large government presence in administrative services such as fisheries and customs departments, schools and hospitals, and is a source of considerable public sector employment for locals. The Torres Shire, that is also located on the island, provides further economic and administrative functions. The government-owned Island Board of Industry and Services (IBIS) operates a number of shops, small supermarkets and other enterprises on the islands and the mainland, and dominates the retail sector. However, despite their near stranglehold on the local economy, there are many smaller enterprises especially in the retail and services sector (Arthur 1991, p. 5). Notwithstanding the abundance of fresh fish and seafood, the region is not self-sufficient in all foods and many commodities including frozen convenience foods, fruits and vegetables, meat and poultry are brought up from Cairns on the weekly barge.

Not all islands are the subjects of the Torres Shire administration. Most islands, especially those of the outer groups plus the two Islander communities on the Cape, are located on Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) lands. These are lands that have been set aside as trust areas by the Queensland Governor under the Deed of Grant in Trust and have been transferred to the local communities whose own incorporated councils administer the land in perpetuity for their constituencies (Arthur 1991, p. 3). Working within the framework of ATSIC, the Island Coordinating Council (ICC) usually manages inter-community issues and broader development initiatives that have region-wide implications ([greenleft@peg.apc.org](mailto:greenleft@peg.apc.org), 2001).

Although no hard data exist on the total economic value of tourism, it nevertheless has become a significant contributor to commerce and employment. The main destinations for the approximately 7,000 annual visitors include Thursday Island and the adjacent Horn Island, with some visiting other nearby islands. Most visits range from one to three days, and almost no tourists undertake the longer trip to the outer islands (Arthur 1990, p. 13).

There are extensive hospitality facilities and transport infrastructure on the two main islands, and it is relatively easy for tourists to access the region during the dry season. Most tourists arrive on the daily fast ferry services that connects the islands with Seisa township on the western side of Northern Peninsula Area (NPA), whilst others arrive by air at the large airport on Horn Island. This is serviced by daily RPT flights from Cairns, Injinoo airport, Weipa and other northern Queensland towns. Irregular charter flights arrive from PNG and other Australian states. Occasionally yachts and cruise liners drop anchor in the sheltered waters outside the ports on Thursday and Horn Islands. There is also an extensive network of smaller charter flight operators servicing most of the Torres Strait with light twin-engine aircraft. A weekly barge carrying passengers and general connects the main islands with mainland communities as far down as Cairns, 1000 km to the south (Arthur 1990, p. 92). No reliable data is available relating to visitations, but local operators confirm that peak demands coincides with the dry southeast season (Torres Strait 1996, 1998, 1999, personal communications). On a related note, personal observations suggest that the very mobile Islanders probably constitute a very large market of local tourism, making extensive use of pubs, food shops and other tourism-related service enterprises. Whilst this trade seems to exist year round thus providing business with steady cash flow, no quantitative data is available about the size or value of this segment.

The region is regarded as an attractive destination offering a limited but unique range of experiences. These include: the annual Torres Strait festivals with their spectacular island dancing; a peaceful and scenic island environment; and the relaxed rhythm of 'TI time'. In addition, there is a rich history that includes such interesting and significant events as the mutiny on the *Bounty* and Captain Cook's journey of discovery and the nearby Possession Island where, in 1770, he declared parts of Australia to be British possessions. There is also a visual and cultural emphasis on past maritime events, the rise of the pearling industry, a cemetery with great historical significance, and the presence of many well-preserved relics from the Second World War and the battle of the Coral Sea. Interesting shops abound on Thursday Island, including good art galleries selling local modern and traditional paintings. Fishing is a popular past time with tourists as are the occasional scenic flights and beach picnics to nearby islands. Table 4.4 summarises the main facilities available of Thursday and Horn Islands.

**Table 4.4 Main Islands' tourism facilities**

Accommodation and Hospitality Enterprises	Tourism Services
Three Motels - 2 – 3 ½ stars	Numerous Taxis and guided tours
Four hotels/pubs	Extensive ferry services and water taxis
Seven cafes/bistros and snack food eateries	Two art galleries
Four camping grounds	Many shops and small supermarkets
	Extensive regional, interstate airlines, charter operators, seaplanes and flights
	Tours to World War II fortification and cemetery
	Excursions to pearl farms
	Three museums

Source: [www2.eis.net.au](http://www2.eis.net.au); [www.visittoresstrait.com](http://www.visittoresstrait.com), 2001.

Whilst these data are presented here as part of the tourism industry infrastructure, most enterprises and services cater as much for locals as they do for tourists, and none of them are particularly 'touristy' nor are they promoted as Indigenous tourism.

Development of the region's tourism industry is problematic. Given the remoteness of the region and the lack of mainstream commercial enterprises, and considering the uniqueness of the area and the encouragement inherent in the current government policies, it is understandable that many prominent community leaders would look to tourism for the creation of wealth and employment opportunities (Elu, 2000, p. 5).

Arthur is cautious about the economic possibilities of the Torres Strait and whilst he recognises the tourist potential of local cultural and environmental attractions, he cites seasonality, the high costs of access from southern markets, and the reluctance of local Islanders to be involved in tourism as major obstacles. Most Islanders have little experience with tourism and, he concludes, have insufficient experience of the different kinds of tourism to decide whether they want it or not (Arthur 1990, p. 93; 1991, p. 5). Apart from the very few individual Islander entrepreneurs who drive their own taxis or operate the small and often part-time service business, or those that have employment in the industry, it seems that tourism in the region will continue to be conducted and controlled largely by non-Indigenous people and their managers.

#### **4.7 Development strategies and cultural differences in the Torres Strait region**

Arthur points to the existence of a range of socio-cultural differences between Aboriginal mainland communities and Islander groups that suggest that mainstream development strategies are unsuitable for the development of island tourism economy. Such a view is based on a questionable assumption regarding the efficacy of mainstream development strategies – one of which has been discussed previously in this thesis. Apart from the axiomatic logic that *ipso facto* makes ineffective strategies unsuited for application *anywhere*, nevertheless, Arthur's point is instructive - in order to be effective, tourism development strategies for the island must nevertheless be cognisant of certain locational and socio-cultural characteristics.

Arthur believes that there are many similarities in the conditions of the Torres Strait islands and the ones encountered among the smaller island states of the south Pacific. He points to the similarities of economic dependence on maritime activities, including the central importance of fishing. In addition, there is the annual rhythm and nature of the relationship between the traditional economy and the emergence of the modern tourism sector and the scope for part-time participation in both. He also cites similarities of small geographically bounded island communities and the inability of locals to avoid tourists - even if the development is on the other side of the island. Other similarities include access, infrastructure and tourism products, as well as the similar positions in the development cycles of small nation states, and the wish for most of these tiny islands to not necessarily be part of a larger regional strategy, but to develop individually (Arthur, 1990, p. 17).

Differences in social values and administrative orientation also serve to distinguish Islanders from mainland Aboriginal communities. The latter have generally been regarded as social collectives, and government bureaucracies and development agencies have considered the community as the most appropriate vehicle for the creation of cooperative Aboriginal business enterprises. As discussed in chapter three, Island culture is different to Aboriginal culture, and Arthur suggests that there is a strong distrust of regional administrators and the manipulative 'big men' in the councils. Also, a sense of individuality exists which is a characteristic of the region, and there is evidence of inter and intra-island competition in the Torres Strait (Arthur, 1997, p. 16; Altman 1996, p. 60;

Singe 1989, pp. 185-186). It is not the community but the smaller family group, and often individuals that are the traditional units of ownership and cooperation in the region. Arthur concludes that collective community-based enterprises are not likely to succeed in social groups where 'everyone wants to be the skipper' (Arthur 1990, p. 17).

#### 4.8 Cape York Peninsula

Occupying a total land area of 140,000 km<sup>2</sup>, the Peninsula is part of the Far North Queensland region, bounded in the west by the Gulf of Carpentaria and the South Pacific with the Coral Sea to the east. A line roughly following the 16° latitude and drawn from Ayton south of Cooktown on the east coast to the Rutland Plains near Kowanyama on the western side forms the southern boundary. It reaches up to the edge of the Torres Strait some 1000 km north of Cairns and is the northern-most tip of the Australian continent. As ancient as Gagudju and more remote, this often-inaccessible region has been heralded as Australia's greatest tropical wilderness, and one of the last unspoilt wildernesses of the world (Frith and Frith 1996, p. 5). It is a place of great biodiversity. It displays the grandeur and the romance of the Kimberley in Western Australia and Gagudju but with more ecological richness and significant environmental diversity that is of great conservation value. Its geography encompasses rugged mountains, massive bauxite cliffs and sandstone escarpments, and a varied coastline that are part of the Great Divide that forms the eastern spine of the Peninsula. The timbered lowlands on the western side are dissected by a myriad of serpentine rivers, billabongs and creeks. Average annual rainfall during the wet season range from 750 mm to 2500 mm swelling the river systems and wet areas thus making



Cape York landscape

this part of the Peninsula impassable land traffic for up to five months of the year. The landscape includes tropical rainforests, swamps and wetlands with stands of mangroves, lightly timbered savannah with eucalypts, shrubs, paperbark trees and giant termite mounds, hundreds of kilometres of white sand beaches and dune country, open plains, and mountains with spectacular waterfalls (Frith and Frith 1995, pp. 8 - 9). The seasons are the same as for the Torres Strait and the unbelievably rapid growth of the flora during the wet season has led it to be dubbed the 'green season'.

Cape York dazzles with its unique flora and fauna. It is the home to more than 235 species of butterflies, 321 bird species, 78 mammals, 133 species of reptiles including large salt-water crocodiles, 75 fresh-water fish species, 31 rare species of frogs, and more than 3000 species of flora. With the tip of Cape York less than 160 km from PNG, much of the flora and fauna show inter-regional characteristics and are species endemic to the region. Cape York is also a major staging point between Australia and PNG for annual migration of immeasurable numbers of birds and insects (Frith and Frith 1995, pp. 41 - 45).

The region is rich in Aboriginal history and culture. The Aborigines are believed to have occupied the Peninsula for at least the last 50,000 years (Strang 1996, p. 52). It is estimated that prior to 1870, the region was the home to approximately 30,000 Aborigines who belonged to several hundred small kin groups and speaking some 45 different languages. They were largely hunters and gatherers and were distributed across numerous communities primarily along the coast and, to a lesser extent, in the interior of the Peninsula. The colonial history began in earnest 150 years ago with the intrusion of explorers, miners and cattle graziers. Examples such as the Kennedy expedition in the 1840s and the attempt by the Jardines to establish the settlement at Somerset on the shores of the Albany Passage in the 1860s, epitomise the brutality and violence that usually characterised the contacts between whites and blacks and which ultimately led to the decimation of many Aboriginal communities. Many of the Aboriginal people, who survived the aggressive process of colonization, were pushed onto mission reserves or became sources of cheap labour on the vast cattle stations that were established on their traditional lands (Strang 1995, p. 53). Of today's total population of approximately 15,000, a little over half are Aborigines who live in numerous communities ranging from just a few to nearly 1000 members. Not surprisingly, issues relating to land tenure and

ownership are very complex with pastoral leases covering 54% of Cape York, with the rest being variously declared conservation zones, wilderness parks, owned by local Aborigines or being subject to native title claims. Compared to the national average of five percent, at least 30% of Cape York is claimable under the Native Titles Act and currently more than 40 claims are being assessed (National Geographic 1996, p. 25). In a region lacking much of the basic physical and social infrastructure needed to support the small and dispersed economy, and which lags behind the national averages in terms of social and economic performance indicators, even the supporters of the land claims have noted with concern that the many unresolved land titles and tenure claims have resulted in uncertainties adversely affecting the regions economic climate and investment opportunities (Cape York Peninsula Development Association [CYPDA] 1996, p. 7).

CYPDA notes that the economic development of the region is constrained by lack of strategic infrastructure and the absence of a clear vision by administrators for the future of the region (1997, p. 2). In this context tourism is a small but growing industry that is gradually becoming important to the region's economy and the development of its many communities. Concurrent with the growth of Cairns and other northern Queensland tourist destinations during the late 1970s and early 1980s, fishermen, hunters, and four-wheel drive enthusiasts in search of adventure began to arrive in the area. With the state's primary industries in recession the Queensland government recognised the economic potential of the regions 'pristine' and 'remote' natural assets and began to actively promote ecotourism and the wilderness experience to domestic and international markets, and to investors in tourism infrastructure projects and facilities (Strang 1995, p. 56). Other tourism products in the region include Aboriginal cultural events and festivals, historical WW II relics, colonial history, rodeos, horse races and other types of rural events, and such recreational and nature based activities as fishing, crocodile races, bird watching and wilderness interpretation (CYPDA 1996, pp. 15, 39, 44; cypda.com.au 2001). Total estimated visitation to Cape York in 1995 was less than 70,000 with an estimated annual value of \$26 million. However, these numbers are very low compared to the key tourist areas in the FNQ region that are closer to the major hubs such as Cairns and Port Douglas where, for example, Cape Tribulation in 1995 attracted some 250,000 visitors (CYPDA 1996, p. 4), and some 461,200 people visited Mossman Gorge and the Daintree rain forest area ([www.wettropics.gov.au](http://www.wettropics.gov.au)).

Information relating to the region's tourism is scant and somewhat unreliable and may best be regarded as only being broadly indicative. Total annual visitation to Cape York Peninsula is approximately 80,000. Of these, 20,000 visit the top of Cape York whilst 60,000 visit the lower parts of the peninsula. The three main visitor types include independent travellers, FNQ recreational visitors, and group travellers. Seventy eight percent are domestic tourists whilst international tourists constitute 22% of total visitors. The states of origin of domestic visitors expressed in relative percentages are New South Wales 22%, Queensland 21%, Victoria 17%, and South Australia 16%. Independent travellers spend 16 days in the region whilst domestic group travellers and international tourists stay approximately ten days. It should be noted that CYPDA cautions against over-reliance on the data due to questionable methodology and sources (CYPDA 1996, p. 21).

The ruggedness, the size, and the infrastructure of this wilderness region restrict tourist access. The road system consists mainly of unsealed roads - the main one being the north-south Peninsula Development/Telegraph Road which connects the tip of the Cape with the southern towns and, further down, with Cairns. Whilst parts of this road become impassable during the wet, it is the principal means of access to the region. It follows the overland telegraph line on the high ground that is the northern end of the Great Dividing Range and is regarded by four-wheel drive enthusiasts as the ultimate four-wheel drive wilderness experience (CYPDA 1997, p. 1). Air travel is the second most important means of tourist access, and the Cape is also serviced by extensive air links. Many airports are located throughout the region, ranging from small dirt strips to larger airports with runways capable of handling medium to heavy aircraft. Limited RPT services connect Cairns with the major towns further to the north, whilst numerous charter operators provide intra-regional services on demand (CYPDA 1996, p.48). Other means of transportation and access include coastal cruising operators sailing between Cairns, the Cape, and the Torres Strait, the occasional cruise liner, and private yachts visiting the northern waters.

The main attributes of the Cape's tourism facilities are presented in Table 4.5 below. Most of these enterprises are small and are operated by individual entrepreneurs. Only five enterprises offering accommodation, food and drinks, and one camp ground, are Indigenously owned but are managed by non-Indigenous managers. The remaining

businesses are all owned and managed by whites. Not included in the above figures are the many basic campgrounds across the Peninsula without facilities that are available for use by campers. Furthermore, of the many enterprises offering fishing trips and cultural tours, only three are owned and operated by Indigenous people (CYPDA 2201, personal communication).

Following the identification of tourism as a key economic development industry in 1996, CYPDA have made significant efforts to ensure the coordination of strategic developments that are cognisant of the wishes and concerns of the Indigenous people and the environmental values of the

region. Following the recommendations of the Management Plan for Tourism on Cape York, five regional peak bodies including the Cape York Land Council, ATSIC Peninsula Regional Council, Cook Shire Council, CYPDA, and the Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation in 1997 joined to form

Table 4.5 Main types of tourism facilities, Cape York

Accommodation	No.
Hotels	8
Motels	9
Road house/guest house/cabins	13
Caravan parks & commercial camp grounds	10
Resorts	3

the Cape York Tourism Advisory Group (CYTAG). This group was charged with responsibility of implementation and co-ordination of the region-wide tourism plan according to the interests of the communities, commercial stakeholders and industry organisations, state and federal government agencies, and other contributors. As such, CYTAG provides an important contemporary example of the expression and organization of Indigenous tourism interests that, by scale and structure alone, departs from the Torres Strait approach to tourism development.

#### 4.9 An overview of the Northern Peninsula Area

The unofficial name of the northern-most part of the Cape York Peninsula is the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA). From the Dulhunty River, it extends some 100 km north to the tip of the Australian continent. It is the home to some 2500 Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Although the area's broad characteristics have been included in the general description above on Cape York, a more detailed account of tourism in the NPA is

desirable as it provides important information relating to the social and commercial context of the *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* and its owners - the Injinoo Aboriginal community.

The Injinoo community largely consists of the descendants of the five main Indigenous groups who inhabited the NPA prior to the arrival of whites in the mid 1900s. Although some writers claim that Injinoo is primarily populated by Aboriginal people (Altman 1996, p. 59), the ABS census suggests that only 82 of Injinoo's Indigenous population of 320 regard themselves as being Aboriginals. Of the remainder, 111 persons classified themselves as Torres Strait Islanders whilst 127 identified themselves as being

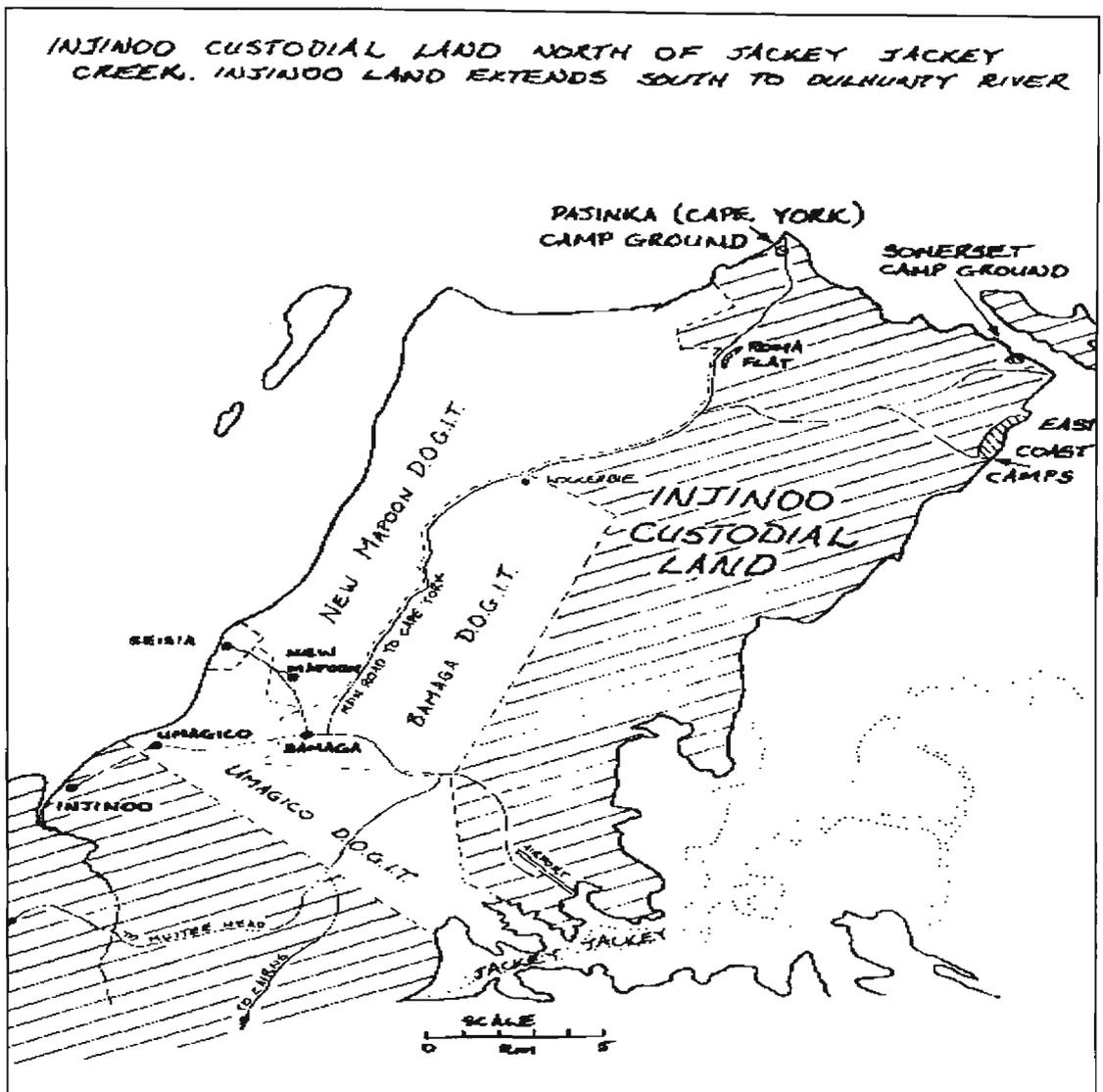


The Northern Peninsula Area

both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ABS 1996, I01) - the latter category pointing to the frequent practice of intermarriage between Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in the NPA. The Injinoo community has traditionally claimed custodial ownership and responsibility for nearly all the land that comprises the NPA.

Additionally, in the years from the late 1940s to the mid 1960s, four new settlements were established on traditional Injinoo lands: Seisia (population 184) and Bamaga (population 754) which are Islander communities developed to accommodate mainly Saibai Islanders who were relocated from Saibai Island following the destruction there caused by a tidal wave; and two new Aboriginal towns established nearby at Umagico (population 227) and New Mapoon (population 276) to provide new homes for the dispossessed Aboriginal communities from Lockhart River and Weipa respectively. Despite objections from Injinoo, the Queensland government in the mid-1980s issued Deeds of Grant in Trust to each of the four new communities who subsequently exercise complete control of the land surrounding their respective townships.

Figure. 4.2 The NPA



Source: Injinoo Community Council 1994.

The development of tourism in the NPA appears to have been uneven and uncoordinated and is probably attributable to the parochial aspirations and opportunities, as well as the political orientations of each of the communities. Of the two Islander communities, Seisia display the strongest commitment to tourism development. Joseph Elu, the community Council's chairman who is also an ATSIC commissioner and the chairman of the Indigenous Business Australia (formerly the Commercial Development Corporation), has identified tourism as a main option for the Seisia's economic development (Altman 1996, p. 60; Elu 2000, p. 12). The community is situated at the waterfront with the only deep-water jetty in the NPA where the daily ferry service connects Seisia and the rest of the NPA with the Thursday Island and the Torres Strait. This strategic location has enabled the development of a number of small scale tourism enterprises, most of which are conducted by non-Indigenous entrepreneurs under rather loosely-defined lease arrangements with Seisia council within premises owned by the Council (Altman 1996, p. 63). These enterprises include a campground and holiday cabins, a takeaway food store, fishing expeditions and boating tours, tackle shops, etc., and the Saibai people

occasionally perform traditional island dances for visitors during the peak season. Whilst most of these businesses have proved quite successful, the financial benefits tend to go to non-Indigenous operators (Altman 1996, p. 65). Due to its locational advantage and the successful conduct of some of its tourism enterprises, Seisia constitutes a major competition to *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*.

Bamaga is the largest of the communities and is the centre of the NPA administration. Until recently Bamaga did not view tourism as an economic development option and therefore did not invest in the development of tourism assets although much of its infrastructure, such as the supermarket and the service station, did derive some income from travellers and visitors. However, Bamaga has recently sought more direct participation in the tourism industry and has established a small 3-star accommodation 'resort' in the township which is likely to offer direct competition to *Pajinka*. Bamaga has engaged in a strong promotional efforts which seeks to advertise its tourism business, as well as publicising the attractions at Seisia with whom Bamaga have shared affinities (<http://www2.eis.net.au>).

New Mapoon and Umagico have not viewed tourism as a priority and have, until recently, had only very limited involvement in tourism. However, following the growth in the regional tourism and the encouragements from CYPDA, both have recently sought with white partners or managers to develop basic accommodation and other facilities to cater for the fishing fraternity and off-road adventures.

Injinoo Aboriginal community has significant interests in tourism and is regarded as a catalyst for Indigenous tourism development in the region. As will be discussed more fully later, Injinoo owns *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*, a number of camping grounds north of the Jardine River, the Jardine ferry, and a number of other business operations and tourism infrastructure developments. Travellers arriving in the NPA by road are charged \$80 per vehicle by the Injinoo council. This impost includes a return ticket for the ferry plus a levy for the use and upkeep of the campgrounds in the area. The council also exerts a strong management influence over the strategically important local airport. All of Injinoo's tourism facilities are scattered throughout the region and none are found within the actual community. Most of the campgrounds have been developed away from the

community in an attempt by the residents to concentrate camping into specific areas and thereby control some of the negative impacts associated with tourism.

Finally, there is the popular *Punsand Bay Safari and Fishing Lodge*, a comparatively large complex consisting of air-conditioned cabins, fixed tents, a licensed open air restaurant, beach front camping ground, swimming pool, and other facilities. It is strategically located off the main track north of the communities but just south of *Pajinka*. It stands on 160 acres which Injinoo regard as its traditional territory, but which has been controlled since 1985 by the non-Indigenous owners via a 30-year tourism lease arrangement with the Queensland government. Despite prudent management this enterprise has been operating at a loss for many years and has only recently begun to earn a very modest profit for its owners (Melbourne 2001, Personal communication). An inventory of the main tourism facilities in the NPA is presented in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6 Tourism facilities in the NPA**

Facilities	New Mapoon	Bamaga	Injinoo	Seisia	Umagico	Punsand Bay	Pajinka
Grocery/super market	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Fuel		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Fishing	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lodge/cabins/hotel/ Motel	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Camping	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Boat ramp			✓	✓		✓	
Service station		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Tours/charters				✓		✓	✓
Airport			✓				
Restaurant/takeaway	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Swimming pool						✓	✓
Ferry/boat service			✓	✓		✓	
Car hire				✓			
Attractions						✓	✓

Source: CYPDA 2001, Personal communication.

#### **4.10 A brief history of Injinoo Aboriginal community**

Prior to colonial settlement in the 1860s, the NPA was the home to seven distinct main Aboriginal groups who were the predecessors of the Injinoo people of today. They were hunters and gatherers who spoke closely related languages, and who were interconnected through a complex web of warfare, alliances, marriage and exchange relations. The major groups included the Gudang, Yadhagana, Wuthathi, Angkamuthi, Atambaya, Unduyamo, and the Gumakudin. Whilst it is possible to identify the present members of the first five groups, the descendants of the two last groups are difficult to locate. Sharp believes the Gumakudin was absorbed into the Yadhagana group, and although she refers to the Unduyamo as being part of the Red Island Point settlement (Sharp 1992, pp. 14-16), she does not provide any information of their fate. Nor have local informants in Injinoo have been able to supply details on the descendants of the Unduyamo.

The arrival of European settlers had devastating effects on the Aboriginal groups in the NPA. The ill-fated attempt in 1864 by the Queensland Government and the Colonial Office in Great Britain to establish a white settlement at Somerset on the shore of the Albany Passage, on the southeastern side of the tip, provided the main catalyst for change and conflict. It was the plan that Somerset would become a base for scientific and missionary activities in the area, and be a military outpost that enabled control of the Torres Strait and 'the eventual colonisation of northern Australia, New Guinea and the Indonesian Archipelago' (Sharp 1992, p. 45). The issue of ownership of the land upon which this new city was to be built did not arise since the Executive Council of Queensland had declared that:

... the various tribes of the Australian Aborigines cannot be said to claim any proprietary right in the soil over which they wander, but which they never occupy or cultivate.

(Sharp 1992, p. 7)

John Jardine, the first Police Magistrate appointed to Somerset, founded and expanded the settlement and brought cattle and other commercial activities to the NPA. Although abandoned by the government in 1877 (Singe 1994, p. 87), the Jardine family and their descendants remained at Somerset where they pursued their business activities in

pearling, plantations, and cattle grazing. These continued until after WW I after which the settlement was finally deserted (Hall 1995, p. 76).



During this time the white settlers showed little sympathy for the local Aborigines whom they sought to eradicate with bullets and poisoned

flour (Sharp 1992, p. 40). Despite their prowess in warfare, the local Indigenous people were no match for the well-armed Europeans intent on appropriating the land for their own use. Such were the scale and the intensity of the destruction of the traditional Indigenous society that:

The settlement at Somerset

In the space of forty years, the Aboriginal population in northern Cape York was reduced from Government estimates of over three thousand to less than a tenth of that number, chiefly as a result of the arrival of the government settlement at Somerset (Pulu) and the construction of the overland telegraph line straight through the centre of Cape York Peninsula. Introduced diseases, shootings and kidnappings dislocated the Indigenous culture that had existed for thousands of years.

(Injinoo Community Council 1994, p. 3)

The Aboriginal groups, however, were not completely destroyed. Following the cataclysmic events of the second half of the 1800s, the few survivors regrouped and forged new identities and alliances. At the beginning of the 1900s, the remnants of some of the original clans had migrated to camps at Utingu, Umagico, Seisia, and at the mouth of Cowal Creek (Injinoo - small river) on the northwest coast. Here they intermingled with resident groups to which they had connections via friendship or marriage and a new settlement developed which later became known as Injinoo (Sharp 1992, p. 85).

The development of Injinoo is of particular interest. By 1911 a community was developing from the survivors of the five major groups: Angkamuthi, Atambaya, Wuthathi, Yadhaigana, and Gudang. Regional administrators did not gather up these people against their wishes, as was the usual practice. Instead, these Aborigines were reported to have come together of their own free volition and thus established a small self-governing community (Sharp 1992, p. 89). According to information supplied by Sharp, their innovation and self-reliance impressed a number of observers. The Chief

Protector of Aborigines noted in 1916 that Injinoo ‘... was established by themselves and... carried on without European management’ and, later, that ‘... these people support themselves entirely by working their own fishing vessels and gardens, selling their produce in Thursday Island’ (Injinoo Aboriginal Community 1994, p. 5). Another writer opined ‘... unique in its Aboriginal establishment and control, its absence of white supervisors and the existence of a self-run and fully elected “legislative council”...’ whilst another described the community as an ‘Aboriginal utopia’ (Sharp 1992, p.90). This view is shared by Sharp who, furthermore, implies that this idyllic state is still present in the contemporary social and political life at Injinoo (1992, p. 148). Similarly, Byrne, a former community adviser to Injinoo described it as ‘... the most integrated community of Aboriginal and Islander people... in Australia... who... see themselves as one people’ (Byrne 1993, p. 83).

However, some controversy exists over the portrayal of Injinoo as a harmonious and consensual community. Whilst Sharp often relies on the Chief Protector's information to authenticate the ideals of collective endeavours, she dismisses without proper explanation his later, and less flattering, accounts of the community's development (Sharp 1992, p. 94). Finlayson is highly critical of Sharp's depiction of Injinoo which she describes as ‘euphemised’. Sharp, she claims, ‘... appears to ignore the distinction between complicitous description and critical analysis’. Consequently, Finlayson ‘... remains unconvinced that the story of Injinoo is as guileless as Sharp would have us believe in her claims of innovation, consensus and independence’ (Finlayson 1992, p. 94). The purported communal practices and collective values of Injinoo are of central importance to this research and will be addressed in chapter seven.

As the community grew so did the desires for a stronger cultural identity and for greater social coordination. In 1923 the community invited the Anglican Church to establish a mission there and, in 1936, the community with a population of approximately 218, built its first school. By 1939 the community was self-supporting and self-administering with its own elected council who acted as law providers and magistrates with the council operating its own policing system (Injinoo Aboriginal Community 1994, p. 5).

The commencement of white settlement in the 19th century in the NPA witnessed the erosion of control by the groups residing at Injinoo over their traditional lands. In

addition to land that had been usurped by white pastoralists and entrepreneurs, the Queensland government and other parties had claimed other large tracts of land over which control was exercised via special leases. Of these, two are noteworthy: The Punsand Bay lease that was established in the 1870s, and the leasehold of 1923 that was situated at the very tip of Cape York. They share many similarities: both were usurped without Indigenous consent for the purpose of establishing the telegraph link between the Australian continent and Thursday Island, the original size of each was 3000 acres (though the Punsand Bay lease was eventually reduced to 160 acres), and both were later to be used for the development of tourism facilities by white operators.

A number of events occurred after the Second World War that affected the autonomy of the community. Injinoo was placed under the control of the Department of Native Affairs whose white manager had absolute control over community and its inhabitants. Livestock and gardens were confiscated and nearly all the land that constitutes most of the NPA, and which traditionally had belonged to Injinoo's five founding Aboriginal groups, was now taken over by the Department. Additionally, in the years from the late 1940s to the mid 1960s, four new settlements were established on traditional Injinoo lands: Seisia (population 184) and Bamaga (population 754) was developed to accommodate mainly Saibai Islanders who were relocated from Saibai following the destruction there caused by a tidal wave; and two new Aboriginal towns were established nearby at Umagico (population 227) and New Mapoon (population 276) to provide new homes for the dispossessed Aboriginal communities from Lockhart River and Weipa respectively. Given the increase in population the department of Native Affairs established its new administrative centre in Bamaga that led to further loss of the rights and freedom of Injinoo's 320 Indigenous inhabitants (Injinoo Aboriginal Community 1994, pp. 7-8; Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996, p.1). Despite objections from Injinoo, the Queensland government issued Deeds of Grant in Trust to each of the four new communities who subsequently exercise complete control of the land surrounding their respective townships. DOGITs do not recognise customary rights to land and hence the prior rights of the Aborigines centred at Injinoo to the land granted to the other communities were officially ignored (Sharp 1992, pp. 140-141).

Despite these setbacks, Injinoo made further progress towards economic self-sufficiency and self-governance. Through the Community Services Act, the community incorporated

and introduced self-administration in 1985. This enabled the community to safeguard and promote its collective interests in administration of community services, land management, business ventures, and the maintenance of its culture. The community developed a number of business enterprises purpose of creating both employment and profits for the residents: A community store, liquor canteen, a banking agency, transport including a bus service and the Jardine ferry, a community construction service and a cement plant, earth moving, a small road house, a number of camp grounds and several other enterprises. The community's resolution to join the CDEP in 1988 in order to administer the CDEP scheme saw further impetus towards the community's economic and administrative aspirations.

Sharp has offered unqualified praise for Injinoo's progress which, she claims, is 'moving towards becoming a prosperous, independent community again under modern condition' (1992, p. 140). There can be little doubt that the community is politically very proactive and its leaders express deep commitment the goals of achieving economic development and social progress for their constituencies. However, Sharp's claim may need to be tempered by currently available information. It seems that whilst many of the enterprises perform important social roles, some of them have not been particularly productive in economic terms whilst others, including the store, the canteen and the banking agency, did not operate successfully and consequently were closed down (Injinoo 1999, Personal communication).

The community's involvement with tourism began fortuitously in 1979 when the Bush Pilots Airways (BPA) acquired two leases of approximately 3500 acres at the tip of Australia from the previous lessees. As well as being a favourite hunting and fishing spot, this site was also of great historical and cultural significance to the community. The leases which consists of 2915 acres on a 30 year lease plus a perpetual lease of 530 acres upon which the *Wilderness Lodge* and the campground are located, were originally appropriated without the consent of the traditional owners and were bought by BPA for \$3,200 - again without the consent or knowledge by the Injinoo community (Sharp 1992, p. 138). With an estimated 20,000 tourists annually making the overland drive up the Cape to the tip, BPA gambled on the potential of tourism and, in 1986, constructed the Cape York Wilderness Lodge four hundred metres from the northern-most tip of the Australian continent. BPA and the Lodge subsequently came under the control of

Australian Airlines that, for lack of profitability of the hospitality venture, sought to divest itself of the Lodge (Roberts 1996, p. 148). Following considerable political pressure by the community on politicians and commercial interest groups, the community was eventually able to purchase the Lodge in 1992 for \$2.25million. Injinoo created a new business entity – the Injinoo Aboriginal Corporation (IAC) – and took out a commercial loan for \$500,000. It also secured a number of grants to make up the balance (Byrne 1993, p. 85). In what was regarded as a strategically shrewd move, Injinoo had acquired not only the leasehold to a large tract of land, it had also obtained the Lodge and the associated income stream which it was expected would enable the community to exercise continual control over its own traditional land for the rest of the lease period after which Injinoo expected to secure permanent title through the recognition of their traditional ownership of the land (Pajinka 1997, Personal communication).

Reflecting similar sentiments and aspirations to other Australian Indigenous communities, Injinoo's acquisition of the Lodge was largely integral to a broader and more pervasive move that began in the early 1980s to regain control of the traditional lands that constitute nearly all of the NPA. The main issues of concern related to the negative impacts of tourism including environmental degradation, the erosion on bush tracks by four-wheel drive enthusiasts, rubbish, and the general trespassing by tourists on their 'place', and it was believed that ownership of the Lodge would enable the introduction of controls to minimise the excesses of the tourists (Roberts 1996, p. 148; Byrne 1993, p. 82). Other motives included the desire for income generation to lessen the community's economic dependency on welfare handouts and thus maintain civic vitality and foster cultural revival (Byrne 1993, p. 82). As noted by Roberts, the community could well do without tourism but *Pajinka* is at the end of the road and many Australians take it as their birthright to travel to the very tip of the country. The primary goal of the community was not so much taking over a tourism business as it was to control tourism and facilitate the development of the business in a manner that were economically, culturally and environmentally sustainable (Roberts 1996, pp. 148-149). In this manner, Roberts presents the Lodge as a means to achievement of the ends as identified by the community.

Very little literature is available on the actual business operation at *Pajinka*. Although it employs some non-Indigenous people, including a white manager and other key

personnel, most of the staff either are Aboriginals, Islanders, or have mixed ancestry. Byrne notes that the community has been very proactive in its attempts to achieve self-determination and self-management and this is reflected in the operational management structure in which the manager is under the direct control of the IAC whose Governing Committee are involved in the decision making processes and who are accountable to the community for the activities at the Lodge (Byrne 1993, p. 84). Roberts suggests that the resort serves an important social function by the way it promotes Indigenous culture. Instead of being presented with ‘canned culture’ involving contrived dance performances and artificial cultural activities, Roberts claims that guests have the opportunity to experience contemporary Indigenous culture in a normative and authentic manner by visiting the local community, mixing with off duty staff, or going fishing or bush walking with an elder. Concurring with Langton (1994, p. 9). Roberts maintains that, in tourism terms, *Pajinka* is proving to be a successful undertaking (Roberts 1996, p. 154). Similarly, an article on Indigenous tourism culture in the Conservation Gazette rated *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* as ‘... one of the prime examples of successful eco-tourism that is controlled by local Aboriginal groups’ (1996, p. 2). These opinions portray the Lodge as a successful enterprise, implying that Injinoo’s strategy relating to issues of ownership and operational management of their tourism facility offered a significant viable alternative to the often-recommended proposition of joint venture participation with non-Indigenous partners based of either equity partnership or lease back arrangements (Altman 1989, p. 74; Altman and Finlayson 1993, p. 44; NCSTT 1994, p. 79; Coopers and Lybrand 1995, p. 6). The veracity of these views will be assessed and commented upon in chapter seven.



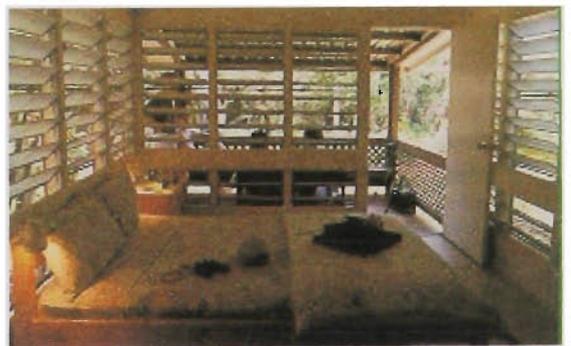
#### **4.10 Pajinka Wilderness Lodge**

This section consists of a descriptive account of the *Lodge* that will provide a contextual setting for the discussion of the operational and cultural data in chapter seven. The main sources of information include travel brochures, published personal accounts and impressions by former guests, and the numerous promotional materials published by this prominent tourism enterprise.

*Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* is situated nearly 40 km north of the Injinoo community, only

400 metres from the tip of Cape York - the northernmost point of Australia – and is surrounded by lush woodlands, small groves of rainforest, mangroves, and expansive white sand beaches. The low-profiled buildings and the architectural style of the sprawling complex are sympathetic to the tropical climate and the ecology of the area. The open-sided design of the main hospitality buildings incorporates the use of louvres instead of walls to allow for ventilation and to create an open interface between guests and nature. The well-kept grounds have been landscaped using local flora and the generous spacing of guest cabins has minimized environmental impacts. The nearby staff quarters, the maintenance and engineering facilities, the power generators and water reticulation system, and other infrastructure facilities are unobtrusively located in the forest a short walking distance from the guest facilities.

The publicity material and brochures provide information on *Pajinka's* accommodation and service products. The Lodge consists of the six bungalows that are set around the spring-fed swimming pool. Each bungalow consists of four self-contained units with separate entrances and verandas, private ensuite showers and septic toilets. Many of the comfortable units have a double and two single beds and *Pajinka* can accommodate up to 78 guests. Although a public phone is available at the reception, there are no mini bars, televisions or radios, clocks or telephones in the rooms. Due to the limitations of the power generators, there is insufficient electricity to operate air conditioners and, apart from the daily the sea breezes, ceiling fans provide ventilation in the rooms and the restaurant. In one corner of the restaurant is a small informal library with popular reference materials on the region's history, fauna and flora. Additional guest facilities include an open-sided reception, a modest 'Billy' hut that serves as a retail outlet for souvenirs, T-shirts, books, and personal items, a small laundry available free of charge to house guest. A marquee in the adjacent rainforest provides a very basic conference facility for up to 100 guests. The camping ground with basic amenities and a kiosk that sells confectionary, soft drinks, barbeque packs and bait is located 200 metres to the south of the residential complex.



The open restaurant and bar provide tourists with a limited range of food and beverage products. Houseguests are charged an inclusive tariff that includes accommodation and all meals. Consequently, the casual restaurant provide hot and cold self-service buffets for breakfast, lunch and dinner for the guests who can also access any time a central table where they can make ordinary tea and coffee for themselves. Non-residents are charged a fixed price for the buffet meals. The food is basic but generous and the use of buffets reduces the need for extensive communication between guests and floor staff, who are generally not featured in the restaurant. The small selection of moderately priced wines, spirits, beers and cocktails is merchandised via a simple wine and drinks list. On such special events as the arrival of passengers from cruise ships anchored offshore, conferences, or celebrations by local community groups at the Lodge, the capacity of the 60 seat restaurant is expanded to its maximum of 110 and the restaurant area will be decorated with palm fronds and the guests will occasionally be offered the traditional islander *Kup Mari* – banana leaf wrapped food cooked in a ground oven, or else be provided with a bountiful barbeque of seafood, fish and meats, and self-serve salads. A simple form of *a la carte* service is only offered during the very quiet periods when low guest numbers do not warrant setting up buffets. For most of the normal operations, restaurant guests tend to collect their own beverages from the bar, and table service is often limited to such supplementary assistance as the clearing of guests' tables by the casually attired floor staff. The restaurant furnishings comprise simple captain's chairs, tables with colourful floral cloths and napkins. Bud vases with local flowers adorn the tables, and the sturdy cutlery, crockery and glassware consist of a variety of mixed utilitarian patterns. A few plastic tables and chairs are provided around the pool but, lacking sun umbrellas, are not used to their full potential as most guests prefer to sit in the shade of the restaurant. Other items



of interest in the restaurant include the display of a few Indigenous artefacts, some historical pictures from the area, as well as the inquisitive wildlife that often decide to visit the restaurant.

According to its brochures, *Pajinka* aims at providing restful retreat and the opportunity for guests to learn about the land and the people, and to engage in a variety of pastimes. *Pajinka* has developed a number of products to meet the expectations of a range of special interest markets. These include birdwatching, wildlife and nature interpretation, exploration of the regions history and culture, and sports fishing. Under the guidance of the resident naturalist or Indigenous guides, *Pajinka* offers a number of half and full day interpretation fieldtrips to sites of cultural, natural and historical significance. These include the rain forests, beaches and estuaries, the historical ruins at Somerset, and the rock art gallery in a nearby cave. Road transport to the more distant sites is usually by one of *Pajinka*'s several 4WD vehicles whilst nearby points of interest, including the greatest attraction - the tip itself where the Indian Ocean meets the Pacific - can be accessed on foot. Additionally, guest information publications suggest that mountain bikes can be hired at the reception for those seeking to independently discover out-of-the-way places.



As it is the main tracking point for the immeasurably large number of birds that stop on their annual migration to and from Papua-New Guinea, *Pajinka* is regarded by many birdwatchers as offering the ultimate opportunity to observe rare and exotic birds. The annual flights occur during the 'green season' and culminate in January when *Pajinka* hosts 'Nature Week' that attracts bird watchers from around the world. A special bird hide has been constructed 18 metres up in a large tree which enable observers to experience a true 'bird's eye' view of the birds and their natural habitat.

Several other natural and cultural attractions are located along coastline and on many of the nearby islands. The area offer excellent saltwater and estuarine fishing and, according to the brochures, guests can hire dinghies with outboard motors on a self-drive basis or employ *Pajinka*'s local fishing guides. Bait and fishing tackle can be hired from the *Lodge*, and the chef will usually cook any fish caught to the angler's favourite recipe. Not

far from the *Lodge* are the remains of the coconut plantation established at Utingu in 1911 by the Australian author Jack McLaren who wrote of his experiences of the local people in his classic novel *My Crowded Solitude*. Located just off the coast some 17 km to the west of *Pajinka* is the historically significant Possession Island where, in 1770, Captain Cook claimed British possession of the eastern part of Australia. Additionally, significant historical and cultural attractions exist in the vibrant township on Thursday Island which also has a number of interesting retail shops. However, lacking a boat of suitable proportions and being dependant on calm weather for the use of its small motor dinghies, *Pajinka* seldom conduct tours to these destinations. Nor does *Pajinka* provide night tours along the beaches to observe turtles or spot the many crocodiles that inhabit this area.

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

This chapter has addressed the historical, the broad economic and environmental issues, and the social factors relating to the development of tourism in Gagudju National Park and the Northern Peninsula Area, and has outlined the responses by the Gagadju and Injinoo communities to the development of imposed tourism on their lands. Desirous of regaining control of their traditional lands, the presence of tourism presented the traditional owners with an intractable dilemma. How can they to resolve the contradictory aspirations of limiting any potential negative impacts of tourism whilst at the same time maximising the economic and educational benefits and use it as a conduit to tell the Aboriginal story and contribute to the process of reconciliation? The Indigenous people could well do without tourism, but it literally came with the territory - the corollary of obtaining control over their traditional lands necessitated their involvement in an industry in which they had little experience. Tourism was the means to an end - the latter being the regaining of the ownership of their traditional lands, and the achievement of social and economic progress. On the basis of information presented, it is possible to draw conclusions about a number of important similarities and differences between the developments of tourism in Gagudju and at *Pajinka*.

Many autochthonous factors exist that has affected the developments and the viability of the two enterprises. This includes the problems associated with conducting business in remote locations, the presence of local competition, and the highly seasonal nature of demand that have effected tourism developments in both areas. Similarly, regional

differences in economic development and the existence of alternative local sources of income, different community histories and other unique cultural factors have resulted in the adoption of two dissimilar forms of tourism involvement.

Several conditions can be identified which facilitated the Gagadju people's strategy to minimise direct participation in the hotel operations. The comparatively more diverse regional economy provided the local Indigenous people with greater employment and investment opportunities and many individuals opted for work in the ANWPS, mining, and elsewhere in preference to the stressful and potentially alienating hotel environments. Furthermore, the scale and the complexity of the large enterprises exceeded scope for self-management and have mitigated against direct operational involvement. Being in a major tourism region with many competitors with strong links to the national and global tourism industry, the ownership of the tourism enterprises compelled the Gagadju Association to form alliances with mainstream tourism and hospitality organisations and other experts to provide the necessary management expertise. Against their hopes, some of the enterprises have not been successful and have failed to generate the expected economic and educational benefits for the community, and has led to dependence on commercial management companies, government agencies and external organisations.

It thus seems that history has again confirmed that the means influence the end - especially where the means have been invested with incompatible motives. Despite the apparent relevance of this axiom to the developments in Gagudju, tourism presented the local owners with a 'Hobson's choice' that left little alternative for the Gagadju people in their quest to regain control of their lands. Recognising the consequences of the historical, political and economic developments in Gagudju National Park, it is difficult to imagine which alternative paths would have led to greater success for the Gagadju people.

It has not been possible to ascertain the extent to which Injinoos community's strategy was influenced by recommendations of the consultant advising the community in 1991 on the acquisition of the *Lodge*. The original feasibility study and business plans have not been available and it is not clear what strategy options or recommendations may have been made to the community. However, several conditions seem to have favoured Injinoos community's preference for direct involvement in the operations of *Pajinka Wilderness*

*Lodge*. One impetus arose from the nature of the land tenure itself. Unlike Gagudju where the return of the land to the traditional owners resulted in incomes from rents and other sources, Injinoo's acquisition of *Pajinka* was subject to a lease agreement that imposed several responsibilities on the new operators. Being tenants on land to which they claimed custodial ownership, the IAC had now accepted liability to fulfil certain contractual obligations, including the payment of rents to the government, as well as meeting other loan repayments. With little economic development in the region, the *Lodge* was viewed as a potentially important source of income and jobs for the community. Also, the nature of tourism at the NPA and the scale of operations at *Pajinka* were much smaller and less daunting compared to the much larger and complex business enterprises in Gagudju. In 1992, tourism was less developed in this remote region, and *Pajinka* faced relatively little competition in catering to a relatively small market in the relaxed and informal industry setting of the NPA. Whilst it shared many similarities with *Cooinda Lodge*, including the lay-out of the buildings, their markets, campgrounds and other comparable products, the operations at *Pajinka* were smaller, less complex and was perceived by the locals as being manageable. Although *Pajinka* had not been financially successful under its previous owners, some of Injinoo's prominent individuals had developed some measure of management capabilities through the operations of other community-based enterprises and were confident that they could turn the tourism business around. Any lack of operational expertise could be addressed by employing managers and staff with the requisite knowledge and skills. Finally, the historical foundations of the community provide some cultural explanation for Injinoo's determination. Although there are grounds for some scepticism about claims of progressive communalism and consensual harmony in community affairs, historical accounts have portrayed the people at Injinoo as being self-confident, assertive and entrepreneurial. Accepting for the moment that these dispositions are culturally accurate, it is not surprising that Injinoo opted for a hands-on approach to the affairs of their tourism enterprise.

The next chapter will introduce the research methodology and the strategies for data treatment. This will include a rationale for the use of a multi-method approach, and explanations for the relationship between the research aims and the various quantitative and qualitative instruments chosen for this research.

# Chapter Five

## Research Methodology and the Treatment of Data

### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research methodology and the strategy for treating and analysing the data are discussed. A justification is provided for the adoption of a multi-method research design, followed by an explanation of the relationship between the aims and the quantitative and qualitative instruments that have been deployed. Issues relating to sampling frames, sampling techniques and data collection are discussed. Aspects of questionnaire design, scaling and coding, structure and contents relating to each instrument will be discussed under separate headings and the key characteristics and roles of each instrument will be highlighted. The strategy for analysing the data will be outlined, and the chapter ends with issues relating to ethics and confidentiality.

### 5.2 The multi-method approach

This section will provide a brief outline of the research parameters and a justification for the chosen methodology. A multi-method comparative research strategy was formulated to achieve a detailed understanding of the nature of the communities' engagements with tourism, as well as identifying the critical factors affecting the operation of *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*.

As discussed in chapter three, cultural research presents a number of problems that are best resolved by using a multi-method approach. Tayeb has discussed the influence of ethnocentrism and the resultant difficulties of developing valid operational definitions of culture (Tayeb 1994, p. 428). Others have voiced similar concerns, and have stressed the need for equivalence in research construct and instrumentation, conceptual and ideographic equivalence, and functional equivalence in cross-cultural samples (Tamer and Ajay 1997, p. 73; Temple 1997). Issues of equivalence and validity have been addressed by such researchers as Hofstede whose extensive investigations have helped to formulate cross-cultural etic constructs which identify the main cultural dimensions that commonly characterise value systems, and form the basis of societal norms of cultural groups (Hofstede 1984, p. 22). In the search for cross-cultural equivalence the use of etic

constructs has, however, prompted researchers to focus on culturally neutral characteristics in order to achieve breadth and exactitude. Often this is achieved at the expense of depth of cultural understanding. By contrast, the lack of equivalence is precisely what is of interest to anthropologists and others seeking to understand the uniqueness of individual cultures. The ethnographic, or emic approach, results in greater depth of understanding of the cultures under investigation, but lack the objectivity and cross-cultural validity of the etic approach (d'Iribarne 1997, p. 46; Chapman 1997, p. 11). Others have pointed to effects on culture of such variables as education, occupations, organizational context, age, and gender, and caution against unwarranted generalizations (Tayeb 2001). Walsh's discussion on the differences in Indigenous and non-Indigenous modes of communications has also highlighted the need for caution when attempting to employ etic instruments to Indigenous cultures. He suggests that the dyadic and contained communications which characterise surveys based on personal interviews during brief field trips may be at variance with the communal and continuous mode of communication practiced by some or all of the Indigenous participants (Walsh 1977), and may affect data collection. These epistemological dilemmas are best resolved by using a methodology involving both quantitative and qualitative techniques to collect data and to validate and explain observed cultural phenomena (Malhotra, Hall, Shaw, Crisp 1996, p. 137; Hofstede 1984, p. 18).

Whilst culture is the main focus of this inquiry, the aims transcend the topic of culture and adopt a holistic approach to operational practices and other factors which influence the viability and organisational format of *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*. To this end, other quantitative instruments and qualitative techniques will be employed to analyse the main elements of the business operation.

### **5.3 The research design**

The researcher undertook several field trips between 1996 and 2002. This included four visits to the northern Cape York Peninsula area, and two trips to Gagudju National Park and Darwin in the Northern Territory. The first was a familiarisation visit to *Pajinka* and Injinoos community, Cape York, for the purpose of 'sitting down' with the Indigenous owners, their managers and staff. This was needed to develop the familiarity and mutual respect which underpins the relationship between researcher and participants. Broad research themes had been canvassed through previous communications with the

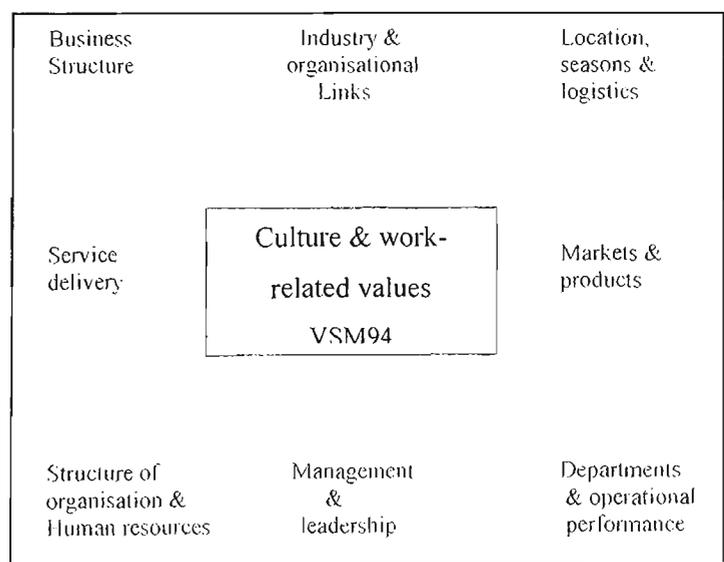
Indigenous owners, and the visit was used to refine the research topic and to identify any additional areas of mutual interest. Sources of operational data, including management information systems, were evaluated in terms of availability and relevance to the research. The VSM94 was presented to management, and exploring and comparing various meanings confirmed the suitability of the content. Data collection was undertaken during two subsequent visits in 1997 and 1998 respectively. A visit was also made in 1997 to Gagudju National Park to administer the VSM94 to the non-Indigenous sample and to obtain other operational information.

Another visit was made to *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* and Injinoo community, and to the Gagudju National Park towards the end of 2002. Following protracted periods of impecunious trading, the lodge became insolvent and ceased operations during 2001. The Gagudju tourism properties in the Northern Territory had suffered a similar fate in the previous year but had sought different solutions to their problems. The aim of the final trip was to obtain additional longitudinal data.

The main research topics relating to the structure and operation of the Lodge are indicated in figure 5.1 and provide a foundation for the aims outlined in chapter one. The following instruments and methods were used to collect primary data: Hofstede’s cultural values survey module (VSM94) and a

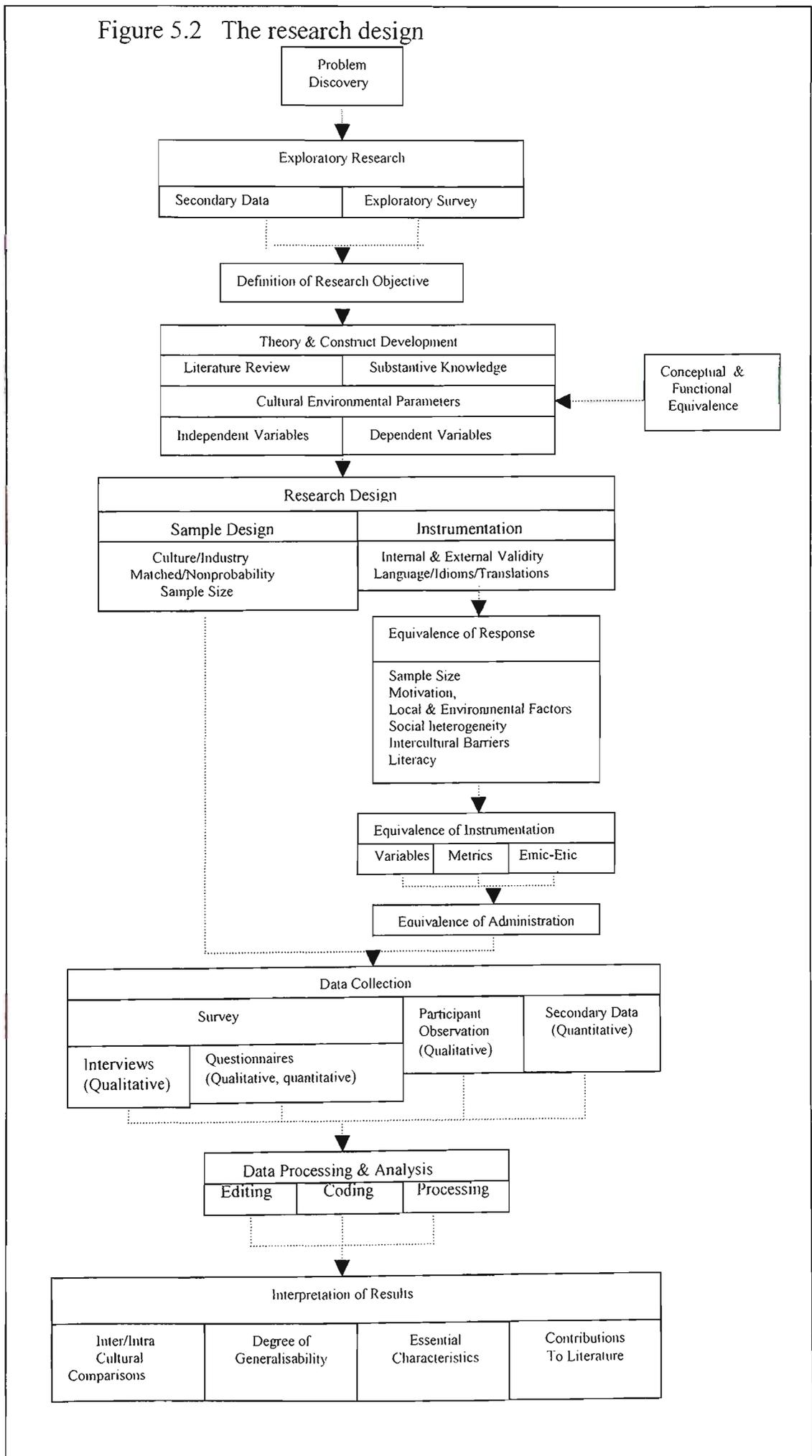
modified demographic questionnaire, a market survey questionnaire, two qualitative questionnaires. The methodology also included participant-observations plus in-depth interviews with all participants, as well as taped discussions with selected informants. Relevant secondary data have been identified

Figure 5.1 Main research focus



through the use of extensive literature searches and reviews and have also been included in the research. A hospitality operations audit grid was developed to define common industry characteristics and assist in the collection and evaluation of secondary data from

*Pajinka's* existing files and records. This will be used to construct a profile of the enterprise. A process view of the research design is presented in Figure 5.2.



#### 5.4 Sampling and sources of data

The main sampling frame for this research was:

- (i) *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* and Injinoo community provided the basis for the collection of the *Lodge's* operational data and trading results, the VSM94 questionnaire, the qualitative work-related survey, and the longitudinal qualitative survey. A market survey was also conducted on a national sample of guests who had stayed at *Pajinka*.
- (ii) The *Crocodile Hotel* and *Cooinda Lodge* in the Gagudju National Park provided the frame for the VSM94, the qualitative work-related survey, and limited operational data and trading results. Additionally, the longitudinal survey was conducted in Jabiru and Darwin, and on 'country' in the Park and included both Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals from the Gundjehmi Corporation, the Gagudju and Jabulugku Associations, and the Djigidarba Enterprise Aboriginal Corporation, and other individuals.
- (iii) Additional information has been obtained from a diversity of sources in Cairns, Darwin, and elsewhere.

*Pajinka* represents the Indigenous sample whilst the two Northern Territory properties represent the non-Indigenous sample. *Pajinka* was selected as the main site for investigation unit for this research as it possesses a number of attributes that are critical to the research aims: First, its scale of operations and its diverse range of tourism products represent many of the operational characteristics and problems encountered in the many smaller and limited-product based Indigenous tourism operations discussed in chapter two.

Second, the absolute minimum sample population required for the VSM94 is 20 respondents per cultural group (Hofstede 1994b, p.3). Given the research priority of the cultural survey component, *Pajinka* was the only remote location tourism enterprise capable of meeting the minimum sampling criterion. In addition, *Pajinka's* staff consisted mainly of Indigenous people. This included, at the time of the first visit, management and nearly all the staff involved in the daily operations. Finally, there was a close community involvement in *Pajinka's* affairs and the IAC's members participated directly in the decision-making. Secondary operational data and historical information for *Pajinka* were relevant and available.

As discussed in chapter three, functional equivalence is important to the validity of the comparative data. The *Crocodile Hotel* and *Cooinda Lodge* were identified as providing

the best non-Indigenous matched sample to compare with the VSM94 data from *Pajinka*. In this research, culture is the most significant independent variable, and work-related values are the dependant variables. The presence of extraneous variables may compromise the results and need to be eliminated or controlled (Malhotra et al. 1996, p. 189). The VSM94 requires that the cross-cultural comparisons should be based on matched samples of respondents who are as comparable as possible on all criteria other than culture (Hofstede 1994b, p. 2). Whilst it is difficult to achieve a perfect match, the two Gagudju hotels were selected on the basis that they best met the requirement for carefully matched samples of Indigenous and non-Indigenous respondents. Additionally, the Gagudju properties represented an important alternative strategy for Indigenous participation in tourism. Operational data from the two hotel properties are also expected to be comparable to *Pajinka's* data due to the operational and organisational similarities between the three enterprises.

### **5.5 Samples, instruments, and data analysis**

Judgmental sampling is used for the collection of data for the VSM94 survey and the related demographic survey, the qualitative work questionnaire, and for the operational data survey. *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* and the two Gagudju hotels were selected as case studies for this research on the basis of their respective ability to best comply with the methodological requirements of the main research instruments and thus meet the aims of the research. Whilst the judgmental sampling technique is capable of yielding precise and illuminating data, this type of non-probability sampling is subject to limitations that may restrict the applicability of findings to other populations (Malhotra et al. 1996, p. 308). For this reason the current research is classified as exploratory.

### **5.6 The value survey component**

Hofstede's empirically derived VSM94 is the main quantitative instrument used in this research. It attempts to identify and measure the effects of culture on work-related values and compares these between respondents from the Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural groups. The construct validity of the five value dimensions that make up the VSM94 has been supported by a large number of replication studies (Hoppe 1990; Robertson and Hoffmann 2000; Pizam 1993; Harrison 1993, 1994b; Steenkamp, Hofstede, Wede 1999). High correlations with data obtained through numerous different but related cultural value constructs have also provided significant external validity for Hofstede's framework

(Herkenhoff 2000, Hofstede 1994, pp. 62-63, 1998b, pp. 14-18; Hofstede and Bond 1987, pp. 14-19; O'Connor 1995, pp. 40-41).

Whilst it is desirable to trial the instrument to evaluate potential problems with wording, meanings and structure (Zikmund 1994, p. 216), the validity and the numerous replications of the construct, and the assessment with key informants during the exploratory visit to *Pajinka* lessened the need for pre-testing the VSM94. The VSM94 consists of 20 content questions in addition to a short section with seven multiple-choice questions and one open-ended demographic question. The 20 content questions allow for computations of the five dimensions on the basis of four content questions per dimension. A copy of the questionnaire is presented in appendix 4.1.

All content questions are structured scale questions that are scored on a Likert-type ordinal five-point scale ranging from (1) 'very positive' to (5) 'very negative' attitude toward the attitudinal object. Mean scores are calculated to two decimal places for each of the content questions. The index scores for each of the five dimensions are derived from the mean scores from the sets of four questions that constitute the respective dimensions. In the calculation of the index scores for the dimensions, the mean scores for each of the content questions are standardised to control for acquiescence. In this regard, Hofstede often encountered acquiescence in the case of question numbers 1 to 14, that all relate to work-goal importance (Hofstede 1984, p. 59). The content questions mean scores have also been standardised to ensure equal weighting in determining the respective dimension index values and to ensure that the index value falls within the scale of 0 – 100, though it is technically possible to achieve individual dimension index scores that go beyond this scale (Hofstede 1994a, p. 5). This scale allows countries or cultural groups to be ranked on the basis of their index scores. These rankings do not measure the absolute positions of samples but indicate the relative positions and enables the comparisons of the five dimensions between different cultural groups (Hofstede 1994c, p.25). Replication studies have confirmed that whilst the five dimensions represent five functionally equivalent universals, the constructs do not necessarily have strong quantitative equivalence (Hoppe 1990, p. 64). A matrix showing the respective contents questions for each of the five dimensions as well as the formulae for calculating the index scores are presented in appendix 4.2.

In addition to culture, it is acknowledged that such co-variables as occupation, education, gender, and age may also influence respondent answers and thus affect the findings (Hofstede 2001, p. 50). The effects of these variables are best controlled by carefully matching the respondent samples on the basis of gender, age, education, occupation, and industry. The demographic section of this research instrument was modified from Hofstede's generic type to include industry specific categories that could yield more precise information about individual respondents and ensure greater equivalence between the two populations. Nominal scales were used to record demographic information.

Administration of the questionnaires and data collection from the two samples occurred over a seven-week period during the late 1996/97 wet season. Likert-type scales are relatively easy to administer and are suitable for methods based on personal interviews (Malhotra et al. 1996, p. 255). The VSM94 was administered through structured personal interviews of approximately one-hour duration with each respondent with a break in the middle to minimise respondent fatigue. A qualitative questionnaire (refer appendix 4.3) was also administered to the *Pajinka* sample.

Participation was voluntary and each respondent was informed of the purpose of the survey, and of the confidentiality and the anonymity of their personal responses. All the questionnaires were personally administered in a one-to-one setting with the individual respondents in which the researcher compiled the information on the basis of the respondent answers. Any qualitative issues which emerged during the session as being important to the respondents or which provided insights into the reasoning for certain responses were noted and explored after the interview was concluded. In cases where respondent answers to individual questions were dissimilar to the general trend of the group's response, the researcher was able to question the respondent's reasons and confirm that the answer was not biased through lack of comprehension or misunderstanding of the question. The use of personal interviews to administer the VSM94 further enhanced instrumentation, conceptual and functional equivalence as well as eliminating response errors.

The subjects were carefully screened according to admissibility criteria. In the case of the *Pajinka* sample, only subjects who were employed by the IAC and were of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander origins, or a mixture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, were

included in the Indigenous sample. Respondents also had to be able to demonstrate connection to the region through birth or family ties. Both Indigenous management personnel and staff were eligible for inclusion in the survey, that ultimately resulted in 25 useful responses. A total of seven non-Indigenous staff was included in a separate survey. Amongst them were subjects who later became managers of *Pajinka* and whose values are of interest to this research. The responses of this non-Indigenous sample will be processed separately and will not be included in the Indigenous category. The non-Indigenous matched sample from the *Crocodile Hotel* and *Coinda Lodge* included a total of 69 subjects encompassing management, supervisory, and operational staff. Of these, only 45 were Australians who satisfied the criteria of admissibility. The responses from the rest of the sample population were excluded from the calculations, as they would have distorted the non-Indigenous dimension index scores. The excluded group consisted of one Indigenous person and 23 non-Australians, mainly New Zealanders, most of who were employed in short-term jobs.

As a consequence of its structured format the VSM94 was pre-coded with a separate number for each item. All data were checked for consistency and cleaned for errors prior to manual transcription into SPSS 10.0 for Windows and Microsoft Excel 2000.

The first step in the analytical process will be to investigate the characteristics of the data. Insofar as the characteristics of the data can influence the types of inferential techniques available for statistical treatment, a commonly accepted procedure is to explore the distribution of the dependant variables for outliers and normality initially before proceeding with more complex statistical manipulation and analysis (Coakes and Steed 2001, p. 29). However, research conducted elsewhere using Hofstede's questionnaires and similarly relying on non-probability sampling suggest that the data obtained often fail to display normal distribution (Herkenhoff 2000). Additionally, the tests and techniques that form part of the present strategy are sufficiently robust to departures from normality (Malhotra et al. 1996, p. 421). Using this strategy, the variables will initially be examined for normality of distribution at the construct level using both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic with Lilliefors, and the Shapiro-Wilks statistic, and Normal Q-Q Plots. Extreme cases of skewness and kurtosis may be corrected by transformation of variables using natural logarithms (Turner 1989, p. 79).

Reliability testing of results refers to ‘the degree to which measurements are free from error and therefore yield consistent results’, and is commonly regarded as integral to the assessment of the validity and reliability of the research instrument (Zikmund 1994, p. 288). Attempts to apply such tests as Cronbach’s alpha to test the reliability of the VSM94 instrument have generally not been successful (Herkenhoff 2000) and have, on occasions, generated some controversy (Hofstede 2001, p.463). As the VSM94 has been designed to measure cross-cultural data from a large number of countries - 10 or more - attempts to apply reliability calculations on individual scores are ecologically fallacious, and may be meaningless or misleading (Hofstede 2001, p. 463; Personal communication). Whilst some studies report the successful use of Cronbach’s alpha on Hofstede’s dimensions, these studies have been based on variants of Hofstede’s instrument which has been significantly modified in order to measure responses at the individual level, and which are not comparable with the VSM94 (Robertson 2001, Personal communication, c.robertson@neu.edu). Consequently, and reflecting the strategy adopted by others (Herkenhoff 2000), the reliability of the VSM94 will not be tested through the application of formal calculations to the data collected in this research but is accepted on the basis of the large body of published evidence that support the convergent and nomological validity of Hofstede’s construct (Hofstede 2001, pp. 463-466, 503-522).

The literature confirms the suitability of the t-test as a post-hoc comparison test to determine whether sets of mean scores are from the same or from different populations. Zikmund (1994, p. 520) and Malhotra et al. (1996, p. 421) recommend the use of the t-test to evaluate the assumption that the mean scores of the dependent variables will be significantly different for two independent sample populations where the number of observations is small and the standard deviations are unknown.

The t-test must meet certain underlying assumptions relating to scales of measurement and normality prior to analysis. Violation of these assumptions may degrade the accuracy of test results. The data should be metric dependant, measured on an interval scale, and be normally distributed (Malhotra et al. 1996, pp. 420-421). As noted above, the t-test is fairly robust to departures from normality, and will be the preferred test to measure the independence of the two sample populations. However, in the case of significant departures from normality and the inability to perform successful transformations, such non-parametric tests as the Mann-Whitney U test may be used instead. Last, ‘there is a

long and venerable history' of using ordinal items, and summing them to produce a scalar value, and then treating that value as if it were really an interval score. In this context, the Likert-type scale used to record the responses of the two independent samples in the VSM94 may be regarded as an interval scale that is suitable for producing data in accordance with the current analytical strategy that, it is envisaged, will include a two-tailed, independent groups t-test with the default confidence level of 95%.

In addition to measuring the significance of differences of the means of the 20 dependent variable responses, the t-test will also be applied to the weighted and standardised means that constitute the scores from which the comparative dimension indices will be computed. This will provide measurements of the significance of the differences of the VSM94 dimension index scores of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, and will therefore be a more precise and relevant indication of value differences between the two populations.

Garson recommends the use of MANOVA to identify and measure both the main effects and the interaction effects of categorical variables on multiple dependent interval variables (Garson 2001). This research will utilise MANOVA initially for (i) the purpose of comparing the groups formed by the main categorical independent variables on the group difference in the interval dependent variables, and (ii) to identify the independent variable that has the greatest effect on the dependent variables. Thus, recognising the possibility that such demographic data as gender, age, and occupation may, in addition to culture, contribute to the variance of the five dimensions, MANOVA will be used to explore the data and identify the relative contribution of these factors to the variance between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous index scores on the five VSM94 value dimensions. Additionally, '*n*-way' ANOVA tests with post-hoc comparisons will be used to further explore significant between-groups and within-group variances.

## **5.6 The qualitative surveys**

Hofstede suggests that many replications studies are caught in the straightjacket of the VSM94 which, by itself, may not necessarily be the best instrument for detecting the essence of cultural of cultural differences in other populations. Consequently, he recommends the integration of such techniques as secondary data analysis, in-depth interviews and participant-observation to acquire empathy and understanding of the

respondent cultures. Triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data obtained across different cultures is more likely to provide better insights and lead to greater synergy and theoretical advancement (Hofstede 2001, p. 465).

Hofstede (1984, p. 18), and Malhotra et al. (1996, p. 280) refer to unstructured questions as being suitable for collecting information on respondent attitudes and perceptions. Open-ended questions can reduce the influence of potential observer bias and encourage respondents to express their views freely. Provided the recording and the coding of answers was precise and contained adequate details, the data collected through this method can provide rich insights. These may be used through a process of triangulation to interpret responses to structured questions. Conversely, qualitative methods may be subjective and unreliable (Hofstede 1998a, p. 479) and, unless paired with quantitative methods, are unlikely to produce consistent results in cross-cultural research. These observations are relevant to the two qualitative questionnaires discussed below - the work survey, and the longitudinal survey discussed in the next section.

### **5.7 The qualitative work questionnaire**

This instrument was developed to provide data on a range of work-related issues and values that are relevant to this research. It consists of 17 open response questions and two multiple-choice questions. These have been formulated to provide qualitative information about individual respondent perceptions and attitudes to their jobs and the work environment. A copy of the questionnaire is presented in appendix 4.3. The 19 questions form three clusters around to the respondent perceptions of a range of organisational practices, attitudes, and values that were identified during the exploratory visit as being relevant to the understanding of Indigenous tourism operations. Value, as used in this work, refers to ‘a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others’ whilst attitudes are defined here as ‘a relatively enduring organisation of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner’ (Hofstede 1998a, p. 478). The organisation of the questions is as follows:

- (i) Statements on organisational practices – questions 1, 2, 10, 12, and 17. These questions will provide information relating to formal and informal organisational structures, causes of conflict, and autonomy in decision-making at the level of service delivery.
- (ii) Attitudes – questions 3, 14, 15, 16, 18, and 19. Answers to these questions will indicate how staff feel about the demands of their jobs and the fit between the job

requirements and their own competencies and skills. The data will also reveal if parochialism is present in the minds of the respondents. The answers will also indicate staff's commitment to the service ethic, and the factors effecting staff/guest interactions. (iii) Values – questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 13. These questions seek to identify the quality of the working environment and desirable attributes of work relationships. Some questions explore the relationship between the individual, the community and the family whilst other questions probe the causes for disagreements and stress in the workplace and the desired means of conflict resolution. The section is expected to reveal if respondent work values are influenced by factors pertaining to traditional relationships and social practices.

The items form a horizontal and vertical matrix in which the questions interrelate across the three clusters of this instrument as well as with respective dimensions of the VSM94. For example, answers to question 13 '*How should disagreements between staff and management best be resolved?*' (which is a 'value' question) builds upon the answer to question 12 '*What are the most common causes for disagreements between staff and management?*' (which is a question relating to 'practice'). Recognising the limitations of the sample size and the potentially large range of responses, attempts will be made to statistically triangulate the qualitative data with the responses to the VSM94 data. Correlation analysis will be used to identify and measure associations between respondents' qualitative data and the demographic details contained in the VSM94.

This questionnaire was administered at the same time as the VSM94 to the two respective populations. Comments made previously about the VSM94 regarding the method of administration, interview format and compilation of individual response information, and criteria of admissibility also applies to this instrument. The qualitative survey resulted in a total number of 17 Indigenous and seven non-Indigenous useable responses from *Pajinka*.

The resultant data was edited for errors and consistency, and ambiguities were clarified through subsequent communications with individual respondents. Data treatment began by preparing the data for statistical analysis. This involved post-coding the unstructured question and the qualitative information obtained during the interviews. Following the recommendation of Malhotra et al. (1996, p. 385) the contents of the total range of qualitative responses was analysed to identify common and recurring theme responses

which were subsequently grouped into several discrete categories of themes to which individual codes were assigned. The information was post-coded using the same field and record structure as the VSM94 data worksheets, and was manually transcribed into SPSS 10.0 for Windows. Attempts to statistically triangulate the VSM94 data with the coded qualitative data have been unsuccessful. Due to the size of the Indigenous sample and the fragmented group responses, the quantitative approach to triangulation is not possible. Consequently, a qualitative interpretation has been of the responses which, following discussions with Hofstede, and based on a textual interpretation of his paradigm, has made it possible to group the responses under the five dimensions.

### **5.8 The longitudinal survey**

A series of significant parallel events have occurred recently which can provide further insights into the political, organisational and cultural factors that impact on such businesses. Facing difficulties arising from inadequate management supports and experiencing severe financial problems, the Gagudju Association and the Injinoo Aboriginal Corporation both faced insolvency and each organisation entered into separate negotiations with the Indigenous Business Australia (IBA), ATSIC's commercial division with the intentions of establishing a joint venture with IBA who would purchase equity in the properties and become the major share holder in the respective properties. The joint ventures would thus secure the necessary financial resources and management support for the respective communities to ensure the survival the properties. Although presented with a similar option, including comparable terms and conditions, the presence of different community attitudes and priorities, different policy agendas and political aspirations led to divergent responses by the two communities: The Gagudju Association accepted the IBA offer and, although it is now a minority partner, the two hotel properties are still trading. However, in their search for solutions elsewhere, the Injinoo community declined IBA's offer - resulting in Pajinka being formally declared insolvent and is now closed to the public. Investigation of these events will enable the development of a detailed longitudinal life-cycle perspective of Indigenous tourism enterprises together with an evaluation of its ultimate success or otherwise in achieving the hopes and aspirations of the community.

Two separate open-ended 'direct approach' type questionnaires have been developed to provide up-to-date information on these recent developments. Whilst the questionnaires share similar format, they also include questions not previously asked which will provide

reflective information relating to specific topics and themes that are relevant to each of the tourism enterprises. These questions focus on the relationships between the community and the enterprises, community expectations and attitudes to tourism, industry partnerships and government supports, structures of civic governance and the processes of community participation in commercial decision-making. Other questions explore the respective communities' motivation for participating in tourism and their assessments of the outcomes including the benefits and the costs to the communities. Copies of the questionnaires are presented in appendix 4.4

The questionnaires were administered in one-to-one, in-depth interviews with community leaders and others involved in the decision-making processes relating to the tourism operations at *Pajinka* and Gagudju at the end of 2002. Following the recording and transcription of responses, the contents of the text was analysed for primary themes and categories, as well as for latent context information. Definition of categories and identification of prototypical text themes was developed inductively and revised during the processes of analysis. Where needed, telephone and email was used in the post-event analysis to clarify details and further explore significant emergent issues. Finally, the intersubjective comprehensibility and the validity of responses was confirmed through a process of triangulation with the responses from other subjects, and with the qualitative and quantitative data collected previously in this research.

### **5.8 The Marketing Analysis**

It has been claimed that market research plays a pivotal role in optimising the survival of businesses by providing management with relevant, valid and current information that enables them to identify, anticipate and satisfy customer demands profitably (Malhotra et al. pp. 2-8). As discussed in chapter two, there is a paucity of marketing data relating to Indigenous tourism enterprises. The research at *Pajinka* offered the opportunity to develop a research instrument and conduct a limited mail survey that would contribute to the understanding of market segmentation characteristics, customer product preferences, tourist attitudes to 'authenticity' and learning about Indigenous culture, travel patterns and remote location accessibility, and integration of Indigenous tourism enterprises with mainstream tourism. Being outside the scope of this research this instrument was not used for the two Gagudju properties. The limited need for information relating to their customer

segmentations and annual demand cycles will be met from secondary sources – mainly the relevant management information systems.

The survey population for the market analysis was selected from guests who visited *Pajinka* using a modified simple random sampling technique. The sample frame included all domestic tourists staying at *Pajinka* from January to June 1998. Due to difficulties associated with making contact and concerns with potentially low rates of response, international tourists were deleted from the frame, as were domestic tourists staying at the *Lodge* during the second half of 1998. The sample size comprised 224 guests representing a cross-section of *Pajinka's* domestic customers. Acknowledging the commonly expressed concerns regarding the limitations of this type of probability sampling technique (Zikmund 1994, p. 379), as well as the potential for bias resulting from the time frame, a comparison was made of the demographic data of the survey population and *Pajinka's* domestic tourist market profile generated by *Pajinka's* management information system which suggests that the survey data is sufficiently representative of the domestic segment.

The original instrument consisted of 23 items relating to attitudes, motivations and expectations, and five demographic questions. As the responses to eleven of the questions are either commercially too sensitive or may infringe staff anonymity, only the findings relating to 12 of the content questions will be reported here. As questions were pre-coded the original numbering of questions has been retained. The questions are structured, multiple-choice format using ordinal scales. Three questions also provided a facility for the respondents to record additional comments. Some items were developed from issues identified in the tourism marketing literature (Moscardo 1996; Danaher and Arweiler 1997; Ryan and Huyton 1998; Pearce 1998). Other items were included to provide answers to marketing issues that were of concern to *Pajinka's* management. Limitations inherent in *Pajinka* management information system and its daily application also restricted the scope of the questionnaire. The wording and structure of the items were given careful consideration to ensure consistency of understanding and minimise response errors, and the instrument was edited by experienced hospitality and tourism market researchers prior to mail-out.

The mail survey comprised the outgoing envelope, a cover letter, the questionnaire, and a prepaid return envelope. As is customary (Zikmund 1994, p. 208), the cover letter

provided respondents with information relating to the importance of the research, instructions on how to complete and return the forms, a statement stressing the anonymity of individual responses, and contact details in case of need for further clarifications and comments. An incentive in the form of a book on Cape York was offered to the respondents for the timely return of the completed questionnaires. The use of incentives is common practice in mail survey as it results in a significant increase in response rates (Zikmund 1994, pp. 209-212). In this survey, 99 useful responses were received, giving a 41% return rate. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in appendix 4.5.

Data was collated, processed and coded, and graphed using the SPSS 10.0 for Widows and Excel 2000 statistical programs. The few questionnaires containing incomplete responses were clarified through follow-up telephone calls to the informants. Additional data from *Pajinka's* computer records was collected during a visit to *Pajinka* by the researcher at the end of 1998 and the beginning of 1999.

### **5.9 The Hospitality Operation Audit and Historical Research**

This section was designed as a checklist to assist the researcher in conducting a total operations audit that would yield comprehensive operational profile information relating primarily to *Pajunka Wilderness Lodge*. The collected data will be used to develop the organisational background for the quantitative research instruments and to assist in the development of a holistic understanding of many complex facets that constitutes the total operation. As *Pajinka* is the main object of this research, only limited data to be collected from the two Gagudju properties for comparative purposes. This include information relating to the history, geography, and tourism development in the Gagudju national Park, as well as summarized data relating to marketing, staffing, and organisational structures. The structure and content of the checklist was developed to address a range of operational and organisational issues, practices and common characteristics regarded as central to most tourism enterprises with hospitality facilities (ATSIC 1995a, Coopers and Lybrand Consultants 1996; NCSTT 1995; Tourism Training Australia [TTA] 1994; Australian Outback Tourism Developments [AOTD] 1995; Industry Commission 1996; Leiper 1996; Horwath 1996, Bergin-Seers et al. 2003). The structure of the checklist enables the systematic collection of information and data relating to the main operating departments.

The audit will be conducted according to the topics listed under two main headings: The History and Organisational Objectives; and Operational Format and Characteristics, which includes business structure and investment details, products and markets, industry and organisational links; structure of organisation and human resources; management and leadership; ancilliary departments and supports; and departmental profiles. Other main topics include Profitability and Measurements of Operational Performance, Service Quality, Management Perceptions of SWOT, and Geographical Factors and Logistics.

This part of the research uses both qualitative and quantitative data. Following the consent of the traditional owners and the support from the management and staff at *Pajinka*, an understanding of the enterprise was formed during the second and third visits by observing and/or participating in the daily activities of the main departments. Formal and informal discussions were also undertaken with management, staff, and community advisers. Observations and verbal information from informants were summarized and recorded as field notes. Formal interviews were tape-recorded and key points were subsequently transcribed. Additional data obtained from existing business records will be compiled with the view to developing an operational profile for descriptive and comparative purposes. Other secondary data relating to the geography, the history, and the development of tourism in the region will be identified through literature searches and reviews. A copy of the operational audit checklist is included as appendix 4.6.

### **5.10 Ethics and Confidentiality**

In accordance with the regulations of Victoria University's Human Research Ethics Committee, this research complies with the ethics and anonymity requirements outlined in approvals HRET 82/97 and BHREC 2002/27. Prior approval to conduct this research was obtained from the participating enterprises, clans, organisations and associations, and from individuals. In the case of *Pajinka*, approval was secured from the Indigenous owners residing in Injinoos and their managers at the *Lodge* following communications from Melbourne and a visit to *Pajinka* during which copies of all questionnaires were perused and accepted. Approval for conducting the VSM94 and the operational research at the *Crocodile Hotel* and *Coinda Lodge* was granted by the managers of the properties prior to the researcher's arrival in the Northern Territory. The conduct of the longitudinal survey was authorized and supported by the members and representatives of the

Indigenous groups and clans upon whose land the enterprises are located, as well as other relevant individuals.

All respondents were informed of the purpose of the research and that participation was voluntary. In the case the work-related surveys conducted at the two Gagudju properties, staff received a memo from management that introduced the researcher and the project to the staff whose voluntary participation was encouraged by management. Most interviews were conducted outside working hours. The procedures were a little different at *Pajinka* where, according to custom, the researcher and the project was formally introduced to management, the Senior Resident Executive Officer (an elder), and the staff to be discussed and approved. Following explanation and discussions of the purpose of the research, the methods to be used for data collection, and the format of the interviews, the gathering expressed support for the project and recommended participation by all in the interviews. Participation was voluntary and the interviews were to take place when convenient to the respondents in the light of duties and other constraints.

All participation was subject to conditions of anonymity and confidentiality. All returned questionnaires and other business documents were to be kept under security until no longer required at which point they will disposed of in an appropriate manner. The researcher would conduct all interviews personally to insure confidentiality of responses. Each respondent was informed that they could discontinue their participation if they felt uncomfortable about the interviews. Respondents were free to withhold answers to specific questions and could change answers previously given to questions during the interview. Each respondent was informed that no-one, whether representatives of the management or the owners of the participating enterprises, or community elders, or any other individuals, would be allowed access to the questionnaires or to the information provided by individual survey respondents. Additionally, permission for the direct use or disclosure of actual commercially sensitive business data and other privileged management information collected as part of this research must be obtained from the participating organisation prior to publication of this thesis.

## **5.11 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the chosen methodology, has explained the various instruments used for the collection of data and has outlined the strategies adopted for treatment and

analysis of the data. The multi-method research structure adopted for this research is an innovative solution to the emic/etic dichotomy effecting cultural research especially in small-scale groups and societies where the number of respondents are insufficient for quantitative investigations.

Continuing the conceptual practice of proceeding from the macro perspective to the micro, and from the general to the specific, the next two chapters will present and analyse the comparative primary research data for the two study regions. Since *Pajinka* is the main focus of this research, discussions of the two Gagudju properties in chapter six will be selective and are not intended to provide exhaustive coverage of these enterprises.

# Chapter Six

## Presentation and Discussion of Data on Tourism in Gagudju National Park

### 6.1 Introduction

The data underpinning this chapter is based on the sources outlined in the preceding chapter on methodology. It comprises the results from the qualitative and longitudinal surveys and identifies recent changes to relevant regional tourism enterprises. The data has been collected, coded and analysed, and summarised, but is yet to be edited and written up in a thematically structured format. Interview transcripts and topic summaries are available upon request. The statistical treatment of non-Indigenous results from the VSM94 instruments administered at Gagudju have been completed and is presented as part of the information in chapter seven.

### 6.2 Recent tourism developments in Gagudju.

This section highlights significant events that have recently impacted on both the Gagudju Association's enterprises and on the future development of Indigenous tourism in the park. Declining mining royalties payments and reduced incomes from tourism have adversely influenced the local economy thus necessitating the formulation of a new regional Indigenous tourism strategy. Additionally, the combined affects of reduced incomes and inappropriate business management practices forced the Gagudju Association to sell equity in their tourism properties and accept joint venture arrangements that provided the financial inputs required avoid the imminent prospect of insolvency. Being highly pertinent to this research a discussion of these developments will provide significant context information to the subsequent presentation and discussion of the Gagudju data.

Table 6.1 presents a longitudinal overview of tourism and other enterprises owned by Indigenous and non-Indigenous in Gagudju National Park. It lists the main tourism and related enterprises owned by Indigenous people, either as sole owners or as joint venture partners, as well as the tourism enterprises that were fully owned by non-Indigenous interests in 1997 and 2002. The cultural centres and most of accommodation business can

be considered large enterprises whilst the tour operations and artefact businesses are generally small-scale. The most important changes between 1997 and 2002 concerns the decline of Indigenous ownership of many the enterprises. Several of the smaller businesses ceased trading, including the *Wild Goose Tours* and *Daluk Daluk* that were previously identified by Altman (1988) as examples of successful enterprises. Similarly, Indigenous equity in the large accommodation enterprises and the cultural centres has also declined primarily as the results of the establishment of joint ventures with non-Indigenous organizations. By comparison, the small to medium-scale tourism enterprises that were either wholly or partly owned by non-Indigenous interests seems to have enjoyed greater stability over the same period.

Much of the past development of the regional infrastructure and tourism facilities in the park has been sustained directly and indirectly from uranium mining and related activities. Whilst mining royalty payments have helped finance the investments in tourism facilities, such other infrastructures as roads, the services and amenities available in Jabiru township are to a large extent attributable to the contributions to the local economy by ERA and its resident workforce. The future of mining in the park is unclear: The current low prices paid for uranium, the short remaining lifespan of the Ranger mine, the emergence of unfavourable exchange rates of the Australian dollar, and the continued opposition by the Mirarr clan to the development of the infrastructure required for the alternative new mining site at Jabiluka are likely to result in substantial fall in mining activities with corresponding decreases in direct and indirect financial benefits to the Aboriginal people (Access Economics 2002, pp. 57-59).

A concurrent decline in regional tourism has further eroded the local economy and the financial viability of

Gagudju's tourism enterprises. Tourism numbers and spending by tourists in Northern Territory grew significantly during the five period

**Table 6.2 Visitor Numbers to Major Northern Territory Parks**

	Gagudju	Uluru	Litchfield
1994	240,000	307,000	234,000
1999/00	216,000	379,000	275,000
Increase (decrease)	(24,000)	72,000	41,000

Source: Access Economics (2002, p. 68)

from 1994 to 1999. However, Gagudju National Park has been unable to maintain its

market share. The statistics presented in Table 6.2 reveal that tourism visitations to Gagudju National Park declined by approximately 10% whilst the number of tourist visitors to the comparable, and competing, destinations of Uluru and Litchfield National Park grew by 23% and 17% respectively during the same period (Access Economics 2002, pp. 62-68).

Reasons for the decline in Gagudju tourism include reluctance by tour operators to conduct tours in the park. Anecdotal evidence suggests that gate fees, restrictions to tourism access to many sites and locations within the park by the park's management and by Aboriginal residents, and the latter's avoidance of direct participation in tourism, has curtailed business opportunities and many tour operators prefer to take tourists to Litchfield which is seen as 'user-friendly' and is more accessible from Darwin. Others point to inappropriate marketing strategies which has emphasised packaged tours and the lack of attempt to market Gagudju National Park as a separate destination to such growing international market segments as backpackers and other 'free and independent travellers' (Access Economics 2002, pp. 69-70).

Despite the decline in visitations tourism in general continues to provide additional sources of income for community organizations and individuals. The gate charges and access fees was regarded as the main source of income, followed by retail sales of arts and craft at the main galleries in the Park. Prescribed individual income from tourism now exceeds personal income derived from mining royalties. According to financial information received recently for the financial year 2001-2002, the approximate annual per capita disbursements to the 256 persons on the Kakadu List from mining royalties was \$2,400. This is considerably less than the *per capita* tourism income paid to the beneficiaries of the Gunlom land trust whose interests are directly affected by tourism facilities and infrastructure. Total park income for this period was \$960,989. Deducting the rent derived from the park lease (\$215,663) which contains income that are not strictly tourism related, the annual *per capita* income from the park gate fees and other tourism concessions to each of the 88 land trust beneficiaries was \$8,470. This income does not include such other payments or revenues derived from tourism as the sale of arts and craft, tours, employment, or from the hotel properties. Despite the recent decline in visitation to the park tourism has become the most significant source of income for many of the resident Aborigines.

Nevertheless, participation in tourism has remained problematic during the mid to late 1990s and reached a nadir in 1999 when a significant decline in regional tourism arrivals further eroded the local economy and the financial viability of Gagudju's tourism enterprises. The main contributing factors leading to situation have been discussed earlier, but may be summarised here. The large and cumbersome organisational context which had made the Gagudju Association unresponsive to business imperatives, a lack of separation between commercial and social objectives, internal nepotism and corruption, protracted periods of business mismanagement, extreme seasonal fluctuations in business demand and high staff levels resulting in unsustainably high cost structures have been confirmed as the main causes. Some informants believed that the sub-optimal performance of the GAI and the tourism enterprises was to some extent attributable to their own lack of management expertise which prevented them from monitoring and auditing the performance of their past managers.

Coupled with the decline in tourist visitations and reduced income streams, the Aboriginal owners became unable to meet their obligations to the creditors (Australia National Parks and Wildlife Service 2001; Access Economics 2002). In an attempt to stave off the imminent prospect of insolvency, in 1999 the Gagudju Association accepted the recommendations of their key advisors to establish a joint venture with the CDC (now the IBA). The new arrangements resulted in organisational restructure able to accommodate the joint venture partners and increase the participation by clan organisations in the management of a diverse range of commercial and civic activities. The formation of the joint venture also saw the injection of capital for the purposes of debt-retiring and to finance much-needed maintenance to the run down hotel properties. Although other proposals were, received the 'warehousing' arrangement and IBA's concessions to the desire by the Indigenous owners to retain control over their assets appealed, to key decision makers. The following section will identify several important aspects of the joint venture.

### **6.3 The Gagudju tourism joint ventures**

Whilst certain commercially sensitive details of the arrangements are not publicly available, some basic details have been obtained from public records and the literature that provide important insights into this significant landmark case. CDC entered into joint ventures with Gagudju Association in 1999 when it acquired 70% of the *Crocodile Hotel*,

*Cooinda Lodge*, the *Warradjan and Bowali Cultural Centres*, and the *Yellow Water Cruises* for \$5.95 million. Two new companies were formed and a transfer of key management functions occurred by which Gagudju Tourism GCH Pty. Ltd. became responsible for the *Crocodile Hotel* and Gagudu Tourism GLC Pty. Ltd. assumed overview of *Cooinda Lodge* and the boat operation on Yellow Water. Pre-existing title arrangements remained in force and control and access to land were largely unaffected by these events. It is estimated that IBA invested a total of \$3.5 million in GCH and \$3.3 million in GLC respectively, including other financial inputs from loans and share issues (ATSIC 2000, Collins 2000). IBA's payment of \$5.9 million for 70% equity suggests an approximate total asset value of \$8.5 million. Accepting the danger of drawing too many conclusions from the incomplete nature of the financial data, it nevertheless seems that by 1999 the Indigenous equity in the facilities had declined significantly from the original investments which, on the basis on available information (Altman 1988, 1989; Schulz 1999) may conservatively be estimated to be between \$20 - \$23 million. This highlights the danger of uncritical promotion of Indigenous participation in tourism as means of facilitating economic growth.

Common to IBA's arrangements with other associates across Australia, is the practice of limiting its own voting power to a maximum of 50%, even in ventures where IBA is the major partner (ATSIC 2000). The current leaner company structures represents an attempt to maximize organisational efficiency whilst at same time reflect IBA's acceptance of Indigenous aspirations for self-management. It is also a recognition of the corporate nature of the Murrumburr and Mirarr clans as the legitimate representatives of their respective 'countries' at Cooinda and Jabiru on which the tourism assets are located. This is a significant improvement to the previous management structures. Prior to the formation of the joint ventures with IBA inputs into the management of the tourism enterprises was limited and, for a variety of historical and political reasons did not include representatives from all the major clans whose 'country' was affected by tourism developments. In particular, the Mirrar people whose past anti-uranium mining and unease with the IBA joint venture proposal had resulted in their marginalisation during the negotiations and the subsequent restructure that followed the take-over by IBA as the major shareholder of the Gagudju assets. Despite being the most populous of the three major landowning clans, and the fact that both Jabiru township and the *Crocodile Hotel* were located on their custodial land, the initial joint venture arrangement was problematic

as it did not proportionally reflect the interests of the Mirrar clan. It endured until April 2003 when the Murrumburr incumbent on the GCH board was replaced with a Mirrar director, thereby achieving equal voting power on the board and enhanced community representation for the Mirrar people in the management of their tourism assets.

The composition of the current board is a partial acknowledgement of the traditional Aboriginal practice that only traditional owners can speak for their country. The membership of each board include an independent chairperson, an executive officer, two IBA directors and two Aboriginal directors who have equal responsibility and voting powers on matters pertaining to the tourism enterprises located on their specific 'countries'. The presence of the same two IBA directors on both boards reflects IBA's cross-ownership of the enterprises. Additionally, the chairperson and the executive officer sit on both boards. Given the synergies that result from the close operational links between the Gagudju tourism enterprises, the multiple board membership also serves as a stabilizing force against potential fractions along clan lines. Acknowledging the cumbersome and unresponsive nature of previous arrangements, the new leaner structures also represent an attempt to maximize corporate effectiveness and decision-making by improving direct communications and consultations with the members of the constituent clans.

The Six Continents hotel group/Holiday Inns was appointed as manager of the three enterprises and the *Bowali and Warradjan Cultural Centres*. All managers and nearly all the staff are non-Aboriginals and only a few Indigenous people, most of whom are from other communities in the Northern Territory or from interstate, are employed in these enterprises. The contractual arrangements related to the tourism properties have been subject to much academic interest in the past (Altman 1989) but little concrete information have been available. Unverified anecdotal evidence suggests that the original management fees were recently reduced from an equivalent of 13% to 10% of gross revenue, though current industry practice makes it highly unlikely that the fee structure would be based on such a high flat rate of gross revenue.

The arrangements also include unique cross-cultural management initiatives and several industrial relations provisions intended to increase Indigenous employment and enhance the Gagudju partners' capacity for commercial management (Corrugated Road 2003).

Integral to the joint venture is the deal where profits from the enterprises were to be held in trust for two years before the Aboriginal partners could commence equity buy back. Whilst the initial term of the joint venture is seven years, several informants were hopeful of regaining full ownership by 2010.

Remarkable improvements in the financial viability of the enterprises are evident since the establishment of the joint ventures with IBA. The cruise operation and, to lesser extend, the shop and the petrol station at *Cooinda* continue to provide the primary income streams. Both accommodation properties have also begun to generate operating profits – the *Crocodile Hotel* in particular, which in 2002 made an annual profit of \$19,000. This is the first profit by this enterprise in many years and whilst modest it is a significant milestone against the negative market effects arising from the demise of Ansett and global events such as SARS and the rise of international terrorism. This turnaround has facilitated much-needed repairs and improvements to the buildings. Buyback funds held in trust accounts in 2002 reportedly exceeded \$750,000. IBA and the boards of directors have adopted a proactive role in the strategic management of the enterprises and have achieved significant cost reductions by rationalizing operational practices including implementing capacity and market sharing arrangements between enterprises during the wet season.

Several other small joint venture tourism enterprises exist in the park. The Jabulukgu Association, and some of its more prominent individuals, have both been proactive in creating successful business alliances with other local non-Aboriginal tourism operators. Typically these are to a large extent managed by the non-Aboriginal partner and rely on privileged access to land claimed by the Bunitj and the Mirrar clans and for which the traditional owners receive payments. These include *Magella Tours*, *Guliyambi Tours*, and the *Lakeview Caravan Park* and are the types of enterprises identified by Access Economics (2002) as being most commensurate with Indigenous resources and aspirations.

#### **6.4 Indigenous attitudes to tourism and tourists.**

The principal driving forces that led to local involvement in tourism was outlined in chapter four. It was suggested that some of eminent traditional owners regarded tourism as an opportunity to share the Park with others in the belief that it would facilitate

cultural revival for the Indigenous people, promote better cross-cultural and environmental awareness and enhance their prospects for self-management, and for reconciliation. Like many communities elsewhere, they had formed a vision in which tourism was a central component but, unlike other Indigenous communities elsewhere, it was a 'Hobson's choice' as tourism pre-existed the formal granting of land title and they were legally obliged accept tourism activities in the Park.

Responses provided by local informants suggest common support for these broad aspirations and ideals associated with the involvement in tourism. When asked to identify the benefits tourism had brought to the communities, the informants confirmed the importance of tourism as a means for sharing culture, educating others about the significance of 'country', and promoting racial tolerance and mutual respect.

Many of the participants recognised the dilemmas affecting the regional economy and expressed support for joint ventures in tourism as an alternative to uranium mining. Acknowledging Indigenous people's lack of business resources and emphasising the importance of small family-based enterprises, one informant who had experience with joint ventures suggested '... Tourism can be a family thing – the right joint venture can create employment, experience and learning how to operate business. So a joint venture is a good place to start'. Others believed that tourism in general helped improve access to some jobs and contribute additional sources of income for community organisations and individuals. The few informants who have had involvement in tourism through their own small enterprises, had acquired some basic business management skills and appreciated a sense empowerment from being in control of their own destinies. Others pointed to benefits of being able to occasionally enjoy such additional leisure amenities as the swimming pool, shops, and cafes, and other improvements to the local social infrastructure.

However, there was considerable unanimity among the informants in identifying perceived negative impacts of tourism, and most of them highlighted a range of common topics of concern. Most informants indicated strong concerns over the environmental and cultural impacts of tourism. One informant stated '... tourists go on special country where they shouldn't go' ... (and) ... 'we have problems with the environmental impacts of Yellow Waters and many of us want to shut it down and preserve the area' ...

(because) '...country comes first' (Interview). Most of the Indigenous informants regarded tourism as intrusive as many tourists trespassed on 'country' and accessed sacred sites without the permission of the traditional owners. Many of these places have great cultural, economic and psychological significance to the Indigenous people and all informants expressed expressed anger or concern over the resultant environmental degradation caused by inappropriate tourist activities.

The few informants who had worked in tourism had developed preferences for certain segments based on national stereotypes that had been developed through direct interaction with the tourists. The following comments were made about the tourists: They're annoying people and get under your skin. There are all different types. Some respect the land and the people but others don't get what they expect! Friendly ones are the nice ones. Japanese are lovely, friendly, quiet, smiling and have never got a problem. Americans are very loud, outspoken, they're OK but a bit whingey. They're informal. Australians are OK, not different to usual. Germans are pushy and demanding. The worst are probably Americans and Germans (Interviews).

Nearly all informants raised behavioural dissonance as a major cause of concern to those who had direct involvement with tourists. According to one Aboriginal informant, traditionally inclined clan members '... are from outstations and they wouldn't like it inside the *Crocodile Hotel*. It's not what they are used to. People get very shy. They don't like people staring. It's the Bining (Aboriginal) way. They feel shamed and naked. They wonder what you want. You're being nosey. They feel that this is their place and what are you doing here?' This difference in inter-cultural behaviour was confirmed by another informant '... eye contact is normal for whites but in black culture (it) is seen as a confrontation' (Interview). The direct stare and 'in-the-face' manners of many tourists often lead to feelings of acute discomfort and embarrassment to many traditional Aborigines causing them to '... stay in the background' and avoid direct contact with tourists. Other barriers included '... numeracy and literacy problems and traditional values, and it is difficult for us to work in the upmarket businesses' ... (though) '... few will admit it.' The same informant added '... I doubt that it is worth making a career in tourism. It is hard with families' (Interview).

The absence of traditional owners often necessitates the employment of non-local Indigenous staff to conduct cultural and environmental interpretation tours. This resulted in breach of social etiquette as ‘... nobody should speak for somebody else’s country (Interview). The practice by many tourism operators of employing extroverted outsiders of bi-cultural origins to deliver unapproved cultural commentary to tourists was regarded with candid cynicism:

there is conflict between coloured people. A full-blood will feel uncomfortable as a half-caste speaks up but we feel shame for that half-caste – pretending to know more. Five minute blakfellas, acting flash. In the past people refused to accept they were Aborigines, but now it’s all the rage. You may be regarded as an Aborigine but you don’t know the local culture.

(Interview)

These opinions are not unusual, and reveal the presence of underlying cultural and racial tensions arising from conducting tourism activities on Indigenous land without adequately engaging with the traditional owners.

A few local Aboriginal informants indicated less aversion to tourism. One would ‘... like to work at [details withheld] ... and travel’ (Interview) whilst another claimed to ‘... like tourism’ ... (and) ...’I used to work at the (capital city tourism facility) so (contact with tourists) is not a problem’ (Interview). These comments were made by young and confident local Aborigines who were accorded the same status as other traditional owners even though they were from ‘mixed’ backgrounds. Work in front-of-house positions such as food and beverage service placed staff at the forefront of the cultural interface between host and guests, and required careful balancing of competing expectations and claims, and personal abilities. Although they too occasionally felt discomfort or embarrassment from the encounter, their familiarity with ‘white culture’ made it easier for them to adapt to the various forms of interactive behaviours required when dealing with international and national tourists, and with their own fellow clans people. One local Indigenous informant who had worked in the hotels for a short period identified a different kind of cultural pressure placed on them by other kin ‘... cultural practice makes it normal for traditional owners to often ask for benefits (from staff) but I grew up both ways and can say no to to them – it’s not okay’ (Interview). This statement illustrates the attempts by some local patrons frequenting the bars to apply the traditional practice of ‘demand sharing’ to the new commercial domain in a calculated attempt to obtain personal non-traditional gains, and the ability by individuals to use their bi-cultural backgrounds to

segregate the traditional domain from the modern economy, though such refusal is not without risk as it may result in the expression of hostility in activities and relationships which occur in the traditional domain.

Some respondents also believed that the engagement with tourism and the ownership of the enterprises had in the past encouraged nepotism, even corruption, and has resulted in differential access to income and political control over Gagudju Association's resources (DNS01802). This had almost resulted in '... the death of us with corruption, hard time, insolvency, (and) pitted family against family' (InterviewGIR02102).

Many people were skeptical about tourism's ability to provide the Aboriginal owners with adequate and fair rewards for the use of their cultural and natural resources and expressed opposition to business activities which failed to recognise Indigenous aspirations and preferences. Referring to the small annual levy of \$500 per bus that is charged to operators conducting tours in Gagudju, informants claimed '... tourism companies ... they get many benefits. Money is paid elsewhere ... they pay \$500 yearly per vehicle and they got it made. The money (all the profits) goes to the company... (and) '... we only get the gate fee' which '... is not enough to start your own business' (Interview). Others believed that many tourism operators were opportunistic '... We are sick of people pushing us around and keeping money ... we have had enough' and '...[name of relative] tried tourism with other people but was ripped off' (Interview).

Similar concerns were evident in attitudes to the Gagudju Association's involvement in the *Crocodile Hotel* and *Coinda Lodge* prior to the formation of the joint venture with IBA. The association lack the necessary experience and '... there were no checks and balances' and '... the business was ripped off and there was too much nepotism and mismanagement...People influenced us in the past and kept our eyes closed' (GIR02102). One informant was dismissive of most of the practices of large-scale tourism that was under the control of non-Indigenous people, claiming that '...there aren't too many benefits. It's empty!' (Interview).

These views express strong reservation about the ability of tourism to deliver equitable outcomes to the traditional owners and many indicated the need for greater Indigenous control and for the development of small-scale tourism enterprises. Given their history of

dispossession, the desire for self-management and the ability to decide their own futures was evident in the statements provided by several key informants. A non-Indigenous person summed up the dilemma thus: '[the] Traditional owners are more concerned about control even if it costs them money - they still prefer to have control over the country. They are almost willing to cut off their nose despite their face' (Interview). One informant was doubtful about their ability to control tourism '...I don't think we had control in the past or else we wouldn't be as shitty with the developments as we are... We have had enough of people showing tourists our land. We need to teach our culture – it's the missing bit', but concluded '...if we can control tourism it might be okay. It's hard – like a roller coaster' (Interview).

The negative effects from alcohol abuse on the communities was a primary concern to every informants. Tourism, it was claimed, had led to '... grog, more people, more places' ... and resulted in greater '... net economic benefit (which) is drunk up' (Interview). Clan affiliations was often invoked by dominant individuals '... at *Cooinda*, to get free grog' (Interview). It is claimed that more than 100 people are banned from the hotels and social tensions often occur between non-Indigenous staff and management who have to pacify intoxicated or barred Aboriginal customers. The traumatic consequence of alcohol abuse was highlighted by frequent claims of domestic violence, physical illness, disruption to children's education and the break-down of family relations. One informant dispaired '... We have a big grog problem, it is still killing us ... (and) '... it affects all aspects of our culture including family life. Education for example, kids can't sleep at night due to drunk adults fighting and carrying on which affects their schooling, or eat well when there is alcoholism in the family' (Interview). Substance abuse was widely recognised as being responsible for to the kind of social dysfunction that also exists across the East Alligator River in Arnhem Land river (Trudgen 2000) which has led to widespread decline of male involvement in family and social affairs. As alcohol has ravaged the clans many men are unable to fulfil their traditional duties of caring for 'country' and females are often called upon to act on behalf of the men. According to one informant women now play a significant role in community governance '... on local committees it is the women making decisions' (Interview). For others the additional pressures on women are more pervasive :

As alcohol has ravaged the clans many men are unable to fulfil their traditional duties of caring for the country and females are often called upon

to act on behalf of the men. We care more and have more to think about and still also have to look after our kids. We have traditionally always been under male control but with the new economic situation and the culture breakdown many women have become self-empowered and more independent.

(Interview)

The decline of male participation in the traditional domain has also affected women's capacity to deliver cultural tourism products. According to one senior Indigenous informant '...usually men do it but alcohol has stopped that. Like, art sites are familiar, and men they are experts. There's the issue of what is secret and what can be shared'(Interview). These comments point to some of the impacts arising from alcohol and substance abuse and the increased pressures and stresses placed on women as they assume new roles in family and community structures, and commercial decision-making in attempt to hold their communities together.

These statements convey the informants belief that tourism is a major link in the cycle of alcoholism and social degradation. Whilst tourism activities and the provision of alcohol to park visitors and to park residents have increased in recent years, other sources of supply of liquor exist that are not related to tourism and which continue to circumvent the efficacy of the 'dry community' status of Jabiru. Additionally, alcoholism is a social disease whose depredation are evident in other communities where there is no tourism. Given the intrusive and culturally alien nature of the high-profile tourism activities in Gagudju the popular perception of its role as the main contributor to alcohol consumption is understandable. The financial contribution by tourism to the regional economy and the accompanying image of consumeristic lifestyles may have the affect of encouraging some locals to consume alcohol. However, no substantial evidence is available to explain the nature of the relationship that may exist between tourism and the incidence of alcohol consumption in Indigenous communities, and it may be impossible to segregate the social affects of tourism from the transformative impacts of mining, dispossession, and other historical events.

### **6.5 Indigenous perceptions of joint ventures.**

Most of the respondents who had involvements in joint ventures that included non-Indigenous partners generally regarded such arrangements as beneficial as they enabled access to resources and expertise they themselves lacked.

Several informants believed the joint venture between GAI and IBA had resulted in improved economic, educational and employment opportunities for the local communities and expressed support for the new arrangements. IBA was regarded as an essential contributor of capital and management and one non-Indigenous informant described IBA as a ‘... white knight’ who first ‘... stopped the trend towards devaluation and began major renovations’ and ‘... secondly , put money in the bank account’ and ‘... thirdly has turned a failing asset around ... there is understanding by the TO’s that they have a future in those assets’ and ‘... fourth, local employment’ (Interview). Using more muted language other informants expressed awareness of the central role played by IBA in providing the checks and balances and corporate governance that was lacking previously. Some also acknowledged that their involvement with the joint venture partners had provided them with new learning experiences which had enhanced their knowledge of some of the basic aspects of corporate processes and hospitality and tourism management.

Whilst the Indigenous informants recognised the importance of the economic and managerial benefits they frequently stressed the human side of doing business with IBA: ‘I don’t think they are out for themselves ... they seem helpful, (and they are here) to speak for the business so Gagadju can be in place again’ (Interview). This comment described the informant’s perception of the IBA directors and highlights the importance that Indigenous people place on trust and the human dimension in their relationships with others.

Several informants identified other initiatives that emerged following the formation of the joint venture. These include the presence of training and employment opportunities as well as the provision of other tourism-related products such as the production and display of arts and craft, experiential tourism, and cultural and environmental interpretation activities. A few informants had completed the first hospitality training course provided under the Indigenous Employment Training and had graduated with Certificate Two in Hospitality. Some claim to have been offered further training or corporate traineeships elsewhere in properties associated with IBA or a hotel management company).

It has also been suggested that the greater emphasis on Indigenous tourism has resulted in greater production and display of arts and craft, experiential tourism, and cultural and

environmental interpretation activities which have enabled more local individuals to derive some income through direct and indirect involvement in tourism. However, their ability to maximise the potential benefits continues to be constrained by the presence of a number of cultural values and social practices, and whilst many dilemmas have been resolved by the formation of the joint venture the engagement with tourism continue to remain problematic for the local partners. Some of these critical issues relate to tourism per se including the intrusiveness and the negative social impacts and environmental degradation, and the behavioural dissonance arising from service encounters with tourists. Sharing similar values and economic circumstances with other Indigenous people in Australia they understandably prefer the benefits of tourism without the associated costs and subsequently favour a reduction in tourist numbers and greater control over tourists' activities in the park. Drawing on information obtained during the personal interviews conducted during 2002 this section will highlight issues of concern to the Indigenous partners.

Evidence from Gagudju suggests that a joint venture with IBA does not necessarily resolve all problems experienced by the local partners. Favouring a more relaxed lifestyle and outdoor work in preference to the alien and stressful character of large-scale tourism, very few locals have availed themselves of the increased opportunities for work in the hotel properties. The innovative Indigenous hospitality and tourism training programs offered via Gagudju Tourism have mainly benefited other Indigenous people from across Australia have benefited from Others have expressed some skepticism about the joint venture's ability to provide them with greater control and self-management.

Whilst IBA and others have attempted to address these issues, a divergence still exists between the commercial organization and local Indigenous social structures and cultural practises. The commercial ethos, the irreducible emphasis on profits, and the modus operandi of the corporate decision-making processes that characterize these large-scale enterprises, differ significantly from local cultural values and practices. Furthermore, unfamiliarity with complex commercial concepts and the obligation to consult extensively with their clan constituencies often constrain the Indigenous partners from making informed and timely decisions. Consequently, some have expressed concerns over their lack of sovereignty and their new dependency on external non-Indigenous expertise for the ongoing management of their assets (Jabiru 2002, Personal observation).

Indeed, because of a preference for outdoor work and a more relaxed lifestyle, few Indigenous people have availed themselves of the increased opportunities for work in the hotel properties.

In addition, there is strong anecdotal evidence that exists which points to the transformational impact of tourism on social structures. Notwithstanding the frequent references to the primacy of harmonious relations, most respondents believed that the engagement with tourism and the ownership of the enterprises had encouraged nepotism, even corruption, and has resulted in differential access to income and political control over Gagudju Association's resources. Despite current efforts to unify the different interest groups, the competition for control over financial, material and political resources associated with tourism continues and is evident in vertical and horizontal social divisions between families, clans and clan-based organisations, and between the genders.

The competition for control over financial, material and political resources associated with tourism has resulted in vertical and horizontal social divisions between families, clans and clan-based organisations that continue to separate the people most respondents also believed that the engagement with tourism and the ownership of the enterprises had encouraged nepotism, even corruption, and has resulted in differential access to income and political control over Gagudju Association's resources. The competition for control over financial, material and political resources associated with tourism has resulted in vertical and horizontal social divisions between families, clans and clan-based organisations that continue to separate the people although many, often non-Indigenous individuals, are increasingly attempting to unify the different interest groups. Other social impacts include some negative perceptions of the influx of non-local Indigenous trainees, and expressions of antagonism resulting from competition between local individual Indigenous entrepreneurs and aspirants wishing enter the Aboriginal culture industry. Others expressed feelings of shame and embarrassment over the lack of success by the Gagadju Association in managing their business affairs.

Overleaf:

**Table 6.1 Overview of tourism and other enterprises owned by Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Gagudju National Park**

<b>Aboriginal Owned/JV's Tourism Enterprises 1997</b>	<b>Aboriginal Owned/JV's Tourism Enterprises 2002</b>	<b>Non-Aboriginal Owned Tourism Enterprises 1997</b>	<b>Non-Aboriginal Owned Tourism Enterprises 2002</b>
Crocodile Hotel (Gagudju Assoc.)	Crocodile Hotel (Gagudju Assoc/IBA)	Aurora Gagudju (Aurora Resorts)	Aurora Gagudju (Aurora Resorts)
Cooinda Lodge (Gagudju Assoc.)	Cooinda Lodge (Gagudju Assoc/IBA)	Gagudju Air Services	Gagudju Air Services (Privately owned)
Yellow Water Boat Cruise (Gagudju Assoc.)	Yellow Water Boat Cruise (Gagudju Assoc/IBA)	Hire Cars (Territory Rentals)	Hire Cars (Territory Rentals)
Warrandjan Cultural Centre (Gagudju Assoc.)	Warrandjan Cultural Centre (Gagudju Assoc.)	Caravan Park (ERA)	Gagudju Animal Tracks Tours (Priv. Ind/non-Ind. JV.)
The Border Store (Gagudju Assoc.)	The Border Store (Gagudju Assoc.)	Gorge & Waterfall Tours (Priv. Owned)	Gorge & Waterfall Tours (Priv. Owned)
Mobil Service Station (Gagudju Assoc.)	Mobil Service Station (Gagudju Assoc.)	Lord's of Gagudju tours (Priv. Owned)	Lord's of Gagudju tours (Priv. Owned)
Gagudju Assoc. Work Shop (Gagudju Assoc.)	Gagudju Assoc. Work Shop (Gagudju Assoc.)	Jabiru Tourist Centre (Priv. owned)	Jabiru Tourist Centre (Priv. owned)
Murrawudi Shop (Djabulukgu Assoc.)	Murrawudi Shop (Djabulukgu Assoc.)	Heli North (North Aust'n Helicopters)	North Aust'n Helicopters (North Aust'n Helicopters)
Magela Tours (Private Indigenous/Non-Ind. Joint Vent.)	Magela Tours (Priv. Ind./Non-Ind. JV.)	Gagudju Holiday Village	Gagudju Holiday Village
Guluyambi Tours (Djabulukgu Assoc./Non-Ind. JV.)	Guluyambi Tours (Djabulukgu Assoc./Non-Ind. JV.)		Gunbalanya Air Charter (Priv. Owned)
Wild Goose Tours (Privately owned)	Lakeview Caravan Park (Djabulukgu Assoc.)		
Daluk Daluk Screen Printing (Gagudju Assoc.)			
<b>Non-Tourism Investments</b>	<b>Non-Tourism Investments</b>		
Buffalo Farm (Gagudju Assoc.)			
Construction Works (Gagudju Assoc.)	Construction Works (Gagudju Assoc.)		

# Chapter Seven

## Presentation and discussion of the data

### 7.1 Introduction

There are six specific aims of this investigation. These are outlined below, and this chapter presents data and related discussion that contribute to the overall understanding of the general themes.

1. To develop understanding of the organisational and political processes, and the expectations and nature of the cultural priorities that influence Indigenous community decisions relating to their participation in tourism. The investigative methods will include extensive literature analysis, as well as structured participant-observations, and the design and administration of open-ended qualitative questionnaires to be administered on locations in Cape York and the Gagudju National Park in the Northern Territory.
2. To develop a comprehensive operational profile of an Indigenous tourism facility, *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*, through the collection and analysis of primary and secondary operational data, and by participant-observations and interviews.
3. To administer Hofstede's Value Survey instrument (VSM94) to (i) the management and personnel at a select tourism operation owned and staffed by Indigenous people (*Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*), and (ii) to one or more comparable ventures (the *Crocodile Hotel* and *Cooinda Lodge*, Gagudju) operated and staffed by non-Indigenous personnel, in order to identify, measure, and explain cultural differences in management and work related values and organisational behaviour between the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous populations.
4. To undertake an enterprise audit with a view to evaluating the organisational structure of the prevailing management system, and the delegation of responsibilities in the context of the need for *Pajinka* to respond efficiently and

effectively to demands and expectation place on the enterprise by customers, the community, and government agencies.

5. A qualitative questionnaire has also been administered as part of the present research process for the purpose of identifying a range of work-related values, preferences and concerns amongst the operational staff and management at *Pajinka*. The findings will be used in a triangulation method and will provide additional qualitative background data to the results of the VSM94 empirical analysis.
6. To design and administer a market survey questionnaire to provide a profile of current customers, and to evaluate customer responses to the *Pajinka* product. In addition to contributing to the understanding of guest perceptions of Indigenous cultural tourism and the importance of 'authenticity', it is also envisaged that the findings will form the basis for undertaking future product development and marketing strategies.

## **7.2 Tourism and the Injinoo community**

Interviews conducted between 1997 and late 2002 confirmed Injinoo's motivations for engaging with tourism at *Pajinka*. These reasons were presented in chapter four and included social, cultural and economic considerations as well as an overriding desire to regain control over 'country' that had been usurped by whites (Interviews). Other reasons included the potential for training and employment, as well as providing a setting for the telling of Injinoo's story to non-Indigenous people - and thereby contribute to the process of reconciliation (Interviews).

However, evidence emerged from the interviews that suggested that the decision to engage with tourism was not unanimous. Many, especially older community members, had negative perceptions of tourists and tourism in general. Their perceptions and attitudes towards tourism occurred within a value paradigm that reflects the predominance of traditional priorities and concerns. The main issues cited by the respondents were environmental and 'quality of life' issues including concern over unauthorized access to land generally, and to important sites specifically, the inability to control the behavior of tourists, noise and 'buggering up the bush', the

occasional lack of etiquette, and the pressure by visiting hunters and fishermen on the wildlife and marine resources which supplement the domestic economies of the local residents (Interviews). Other community members were opposed to commercial tourism on the grounds of unfamiliarity with enterprise requirements and feared the risk of business failure (Interview).

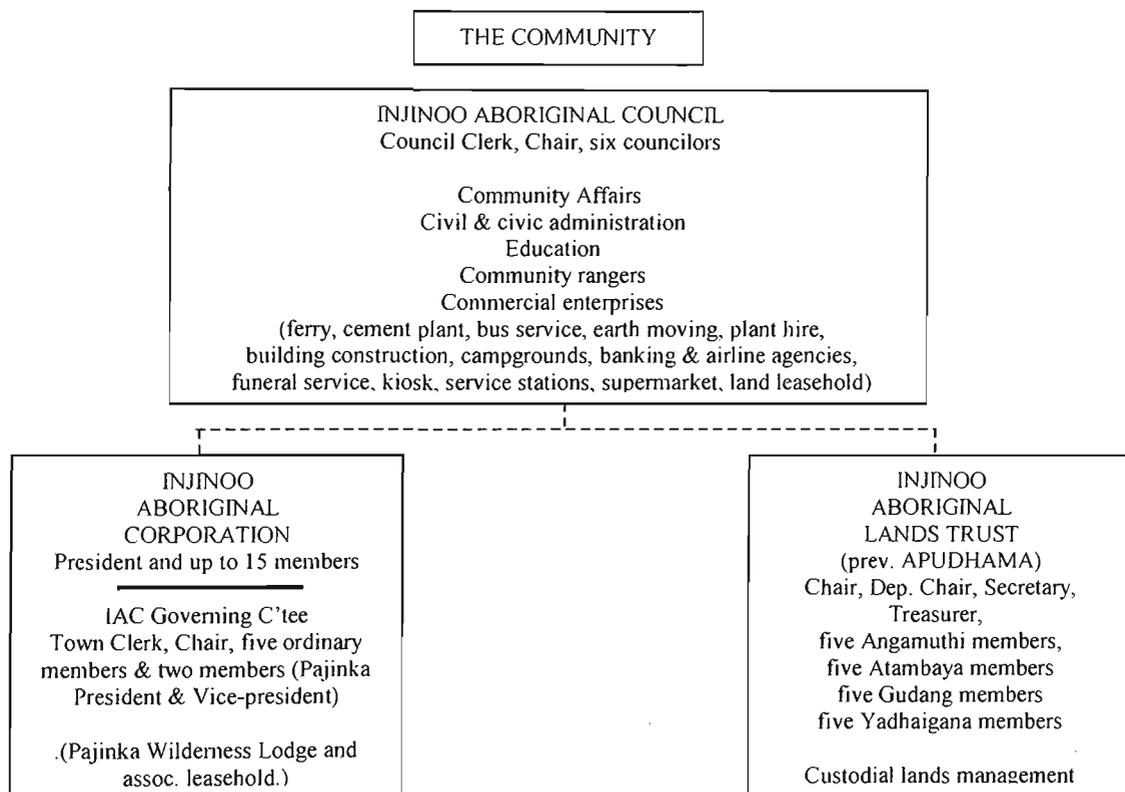
However, tourism literally came with the territory, and the primary concern was to gain control of the land before it was sold to other non-Indigenous parties. There was a belief that environmental transgressions could be contained via such measures as providing guides and by limiting tourist access to certain areas. Contrary to consultants' caution, the proponents of the purchase of the leases and the enterprise succeeded in their endeavors and acquired the leaseholds with the explicit intention of improving the profitability of the *Lodge* and use the income stream to underwrite the lease costs.

The interviews revealed differences in the informants' perception of tourists. Some regarded tourists as cash cows that could bring large amounts of income to the community, others expressed more market realism, and others saw those tourists with interest in culture and country as benign sources of wealth for the community (Interviews). Thus, though many of Injinoo's leading citizens originally had negative views of the social and environmental impositions of tourists, tourism was accepted as a *fait accompli* and most seem to have adopted a utilitarian acceptance of the acquisition of *Pajinka* as a means to further the community's social, cultural and economic aspirations.

### **7.3 The social and organizational context of Injinoo Aboriginal Corporation.**

This section will present an overview of the IAC and locate it in the broader context of community governance and corporate management structures. The IAC is one of three management groups that make up the Injinoo's community administrative structure. The Injinoo Community Council is the principal organization and is responsible for local government such as order, education, civic works and the CDEP, and administration, as well as the community's other commercial enterprises. It is also the lessee of the 2915 acre lease which is adjacent to *Pajinka* and is subject to considerable tourism activities such as tours, fishing, and interpretation walks. The

Injinoo Lands Trust (ILT) (previously known as the Apudhama Association) which is responsible for the management of the custodial lands which makes up most of the area north of the Dulhunty River that is not covered by the DOGIT's that are controlled by the other communities. It consists of representatives drawn from four of the original land-owning groups, though apparently there are no Wuthathi members on the ILT. The Injinoo Aboriginal Corporation is responsible for the proper management and operations of *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* as well as being the lessee of the smaller associated leasehold of 530 acres (Injinoo Aboriginal Community Council 2002, Personal communication). The following chart depicts the broad outline of Injinoo's structure of organisation including the composition and the administrative responsibilities of each organization:



The arrangements reflect an emphasis on social participation and accountability, and commercial functions. The cross-organizational linkages that exist specifically between the community council and the IAC include financial transfers such as CDEP funds and other public supports, as well as joint memberships in organizational governance. These arrangements are suggestive of holistic and democratic ideals that accord priority to community representation and participation in the management of civic programs and other collective resources for the benefit of the community. The arrangements also reflect an attempt to maintain some degree of separation of the

community from the affairs of *Pajinka* and thus reduce the potential for conflict of interest. Thus, the three main organizational entities were intended to be clearly delineated in terms of their charters and organisational distinctiveness. The arrangement also reflects the aim to separate the affairs of IAC and *Pajinka* from the community and thus maximize its prospects for success.

The Injinoo Aboriginal Corporation (IAC) was incorporated in 1992 as a separate legal and organisational entity responsible for *Pajinka*'s operations and overseeing the appointed managers, as well as meeting the lease obligations to the Queensland Department of Natural Resources. Reflecting the prevailing ideology of the Aboriginal Corporations Act, IAC's Articles of Association included other non-commercial objectives such as the protection and development of Injinoo's culture, traditions and heritage, and the enhancement of the community's relationships with visitors to the Cape and with other Aboriginal and Islander communities, environmental protection, and social development (Injinoo Aboriginal Community Council 1997, Personal communication). The social philosophy of the IAC is evidenced in the composition of its membership that generally consists of between 11 and 15 members and includes the Injinoo Council Clerk, the councillors, and other appointed local Indigenous people. Furthermore, the IAC can only distribute profit and assets to the Injinoo Community Council. In recognition of the potentially cumbersome nature of the corporation a smaller governing committee was established to provide corporate management for *Pajinka*. Although originally restricted to a maximum of five, recent practices have seen this rise to seven or eight committee members. Appointments to the IAC embody the principle of representation of community interest and is based on local processes – including via the elected to the community Council or through appointments made at public meetings (Injinoo Aboriginal Community Council 2002, Personal communication).

The nature of organizational jurisdictions and the synergistic alliances between the administrative groups to some extent contradicted the principle of community – enterprise separation. Reflecting the social aspirations of the community, the IAC's employment policy was a collaborative initiative with the community council that aimed at using the CDEP to develop employment opportunities at *Pajinka* and thereby promote careers in tourism and hospitality. Whilst preference was initially

given to Injinoo residents their lack of hospitality and tourism skills resulted in policy changes to include individuals from the other four communities and the nearby islands, provided they possessed the necessary skills and qualifications for the job. As most of the Indigenous staff at *Pajinka* could demonstrate connections with Injinoo, the council was able to underwrite a significant part of the labour cost for 15 of *Pajinka*'s workforce of approximately 25 by employing them under the CDEP scheme. Thus, the CDEP became the means whereby the enterprise became structurally integrated into the local economy and political processes.

The organizational arrangements were also constrained by a local propensity for robust politics. Civic and commercial affairs tend to be dominated by small groups of aspiring individuals who, in the quest for the collective interests of their constituency and for personal eminence, will often have multiple memberships in different community organisations including the IAC, the ILT, and the community council. Membership of boards and other institutions of governance were based on representation and business expertise was not a prerequisite for directorship of the commercial enterprises.

As a result, the structures of governance tend to be highly factionalised and represent the interests of dominant community groups who compete over the capture and control of resources. To some extent, the political cleavages reflect the heterogenous composition of Injinoo's population. Hence, whilst the legal objectives may have been satisfied through this plan, local *realpolitik* frustrated the principle of enterprise-community separation and resulted in the IAC being integrated into the local administrative structures and political processes (Injinoo 2001, Personal observation).

The politicization and internal fragmentation of Injinoo's commercial and civic institutions have been further acerbated by the presence of intra-clan competition, endo-familial rivalry, and some nepotism (Injinoo 1999, Personal observations). Disunity and conflicting priorities among Injinoo's 'big men' have often diverted attention away from commercial issues to political considerations and resulted in commercially imprudent decision-making which have had adverse effects on the efficiency and financial viability of some of Injinoo's enterprises, including *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* (Injinoo 1997, 1998, 2002, Personal observations). Furthermore,

the large membership of IAC's governing committee and its unwieldy quorum rules made it difficult to convene meetings and make timely business decisions (Injinoo 1996, 2000; Personal observations; Interviews). Notwithstanding Sharp's description of Injinoo as a harmonious and consensual civic society, its social and political life reflects characteristics similar to those discussed in chapter two.

#### **7.4 Management and the organizational context of *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge*.**

Drawing on information obtained through interviews and available records from *Pajinka* and Injinoo, this section will present an overview of *Pajinka's* structure of organization and its locus in broader context of community governance and corporate management structures. An organizational analysis will be provided together with discussions of the nature and effectiveness of management practices at the *Lodge*.

Lacking industry experience and functional capacity, the IAC has relied on the services of paid managers to oversee and conduct the business at *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* on their behalf. Figure 7.1 [missing] depicts *Pajinka's* organisational structure at its maximum configuration during the peak tourism season. It also highlights the position of the Resort Manager as the organizational interface between the IAC and the Lodge. *Pajinka's* original organizational structure was comparable to the functional structures found in other small resort operations and, to a large extent, reflects a standard industry approach to matching available resources with market demands. The figure reveals unity of command with clearly articulated lines of authority and communications, and the formation of typical front and back of house departments based on specialization of labour, products and services (Interview).

By necessity, the figure is somewhat misleading as it presents *Pajinka's* organization in a static and structurally factionalized manner. As is often the case in small enterprises that are subject to high levels of seasonal variability, *Pajinka's* organizational practices and structure are highly dynamic: The transition from peak to low season was accompanied by the departure of most staff and the departments contract vertically and horizontally resulting in multi-tasking by management, supervisors and the few remaining staff. Similarly, the relationships and activities that form part of the daily operations belie the apparent vertical nature of the organization. The structure appears somewhat top-heavy and the position of operations manager

added an additional tier to the original hierarchy, though this was later omitted from the organizational arrangement by subsuming some of the responsibilities for operational matters under the resort manager's duties and merging the two positions (*Pajinka* 2000, Personal observations).

*Pajinka's* organizational arrangement indicates the presence of certain unique cultural circumstances and operational constraints that serve to differentiate it from other resorts. Following IAC's acquisition of the *Wilderness Lodge* from Australian Airlines in 1992, a marketing manager was employed and the critical functions of marketing and sales were decentralized and relocated to *Pajinka's* new office in Cairns. This decision had not been part of IAC's strategic plan but was prompted by the reluctance by many mainstream tourist wholesalers and retailers, including several tour companies and other operators servicing Cap York, to promote *Pajinka* as an Indigenous tourism destination. Mainstream industry reactions to Injinoo's purchase of the Lodge ranged from hostility and disbelief to scepticism, and a reluctance to risk the loss of established markets on the unproven capacity by local Aborigines to supply the right products (Interview; Cairns 2000, Personal communication; Byrne 1993). It was expected that the new Cairns office would enable greater exposure to local and regional markets and thus secure the continued volume of tourists that was necessary to sustain *Pajinka*.

The position of the Senior Resident Executive Officer (SREO) reflects the community's unique cultural and commercial concerns. Given the reliance by the IAC on non-Indigenous managers the SREO served an important role in representing community interests, and in upholding the integrity and cultural values of the staff and the traditional owners in workplace practices. The position was held by a highly respected elder whose main responsibility were to provide cross-cultural advice to *Pajinka's* managers and to maintain harmony and cooperation between staff. He also acted as a buffer between the community and the enterprise and was able to diffuse such negative practices as excessive and noisy behaviour in the staff quarters by visitors, or attempts by members from the community to invoke the sanctions of kinship or traditional ownership to demand drinks or other non-traditional resources from staff who otherwise would find such refusal difficult (Interviews). Thus, by drawing on cultural sanctions based on age and seniority the position of the SREO

served as a strategy to both achieve community-enterprise separation by segregating negative social imposts, as well as a means of integrating positive cultural institutions into the conduct of the enterprise.

The data collected at *Pajinka* on management practices reveals fundamental aspects of the organizational interaction between the IAC and *Pajinka* and the community's dependence upon their salaried resort managers. IAC's initial resort manager had been employed previously as a manager by the Australian Airlines and was hired due to his operational familiarity with the enterprise as well as his respect for the social and cultural aspirations of the new owners. Continuity in the provision of food and beverage service, accommodation, and local tours was achieved by retaining product formats from the previous mode of operation but new products were added to incorporate local content. These included a larger range of day and half-day tours emphasizing the ecology and the history of the area as well the occasional supply of Indigenous cultural events such as the kup-mari, and corrobories were staged on the beach for passengers from cruise ships anchored off the beach. The corrobories were performed by children and was seen by the elders as an important means of cultural revival (Interviews). The presence of locals in the provision of tourism products and their mingling with guests outside work hours increased the Indigenous content of the host-guest interaction and heralded a shift away from the previous somewhat contradictory emphasis on eco-tourism and fishing holidays towards a greater emphasis on cultural tourism based on authentic encounters with Indigenous people in a contemporary context. Consequently, the new mode of operations at *Pajinka* sought to accommodate community aspirations for greater cultural presence and enhanced cross-cultural relationships and firmly integrated the *Lodge* into the local Indigenous economy.

Lacking the sanctions based on traditional authority, the manager recognized the need to cultivate close and personal relationships with the IAC and other community leaders by involving them in the affairs of the *Lodge* and promoting a sense of ownership. These alliances also enabled management to exert leverage on political factions in an attempt to extract outstanding CDEP payments to meet the monthly wages bill, and to achieve timely decisions by the governing committee on commercial, organizational and environmental matters pertaining to the enterprise.

Some attempts were made to develop the management potential of promising locals but the dynamic nature of community relationships and the immediacy of family demands prevented the sufficient progress of the Indigenous owners' capacity for self-management of the Lodge (Interview).

It can be argued that *Pajinka's* prospects for commercial success was to a large extent influenced by the quality of management and its ability to develop appropriate service products and articulate the organizational arrangements and practices necessary to accommodate the cultural and social forces whilst achieving commercial viability. In common with other Indigenous enterprises in remote locations, *Pajinka's* failure to generate profits during its long formative period can be attributed to a variety of factors including the barriers to entry that were discussed in chapter two.

The acceptance by the IAC of some managerial prerogative in decision-making, and the clear reporting lines and defined areas of responsibilities and accountabilities that was inherent in the initial arrangements generally seem to have resulted functionally adequate practices of managerial control and delegation at the *Lodge*. Little evidence exists to suggest that the quality of management and the organizational practices during the initial stages were incommensurate with the IAC's objectives (Interviews). However, evidence suggests that subsequent management has proved problematic and resulted in the emergence of non-standard and sub-optimal operational practices at *Pajinka* that contributed to its eventual insolvency.

Following the amicable departure of IAC's inaugural manager in early 1996, a range of dysfunctional management practices emerged which were symptomatic of political and organizational conflicts which did little to prevent the onset of organizational entropy at *Pajinka*. In the absence of firm leadership, a negative culture developed based on ill-contained personal ambition, personality politics and petty jealousies, and feelings of job insecurity due to lack of enterprise profitability. This resulted in horizontal and vertical conflict between supervisors and staff, and between the *Pajinka* and the Cairns office, and was most apparent between aspiring non-Indigenous individuals. Additional fragmentation occurred following the creation of the short-term DEET funded position of training officer (Interviews).

Unsuccessful attempts were made during 1996 to re-engineer *Pajinka's* organizational structure in such a way as to *accommodate* the personal ambitions and skills of the main antagonists whilst, at the same time, integrating the functional imperatives of hospitality into the main departments. Using information from various sources (Interviews; *Pajinka* 1996; Personal observations), it has been possible to gain an overview of the emerging organizational format and management practices. This is depicted in Figure 7.2 [missing]. Analysis of the very basic job descriptions that had been compiled for some of the supervisory positions reveal the presence of overlapping responsibilities, multiple reporting lines, and fragmentation of otherwise coherent duties and activities which made the system unworkable. As an example, the two management portfolios of sales and administration, and marketing and product development, were largely to be conducted from the Cairns centre whilst front and back office management and operational management were situated at *Pajinka*. This geographical division was to a large extent prompted by a desire to maintain spatial separation between incompatible personalities. However, the arrangements contradicted basic principles of departmentalisation and organizational effectiveness such as the integration of common duties, span of control, expertise, and proximity which are considered orthodox hospitality industry practices. Importantly, the continual management crises at the *Lodge* diminished the community's desires to be involved and the contribution of cultural products became something of the past.

To some extent the evolution to the flatter structure seems to have been driven by non-Indigenous interpretations of what constituted normative Indigenous processes of governance. The administrative arrangements at *Pajinka* was characterized a propensity towards overlapping organizational units, multiple accountability and reporting lines, and a political fluidity which resembled those encountered in the civic administration of the community where priority was accorded to representation and process – often in preference to measurable economic outcomes. The emphasis on process was evident in the diagram that related to the organizational arrangements that had emerged by the middle of 1996. Given the lack of enterprise experience, the Senior Resident Executive Officer's elevation to the higher position was symbolic of paternal roles of mediation in the internecine struggles amongst the predominantly non-Indigenous supervisors. The attempt to rely on a cultural solution to moderate the inter-personal conflicts among non-Indigenous personnel was an inappropriate and

ineffectual acknowledgement of the extent of the internal conflict at *Pajinka*. The lack of a unified chain of command based on experienced leadership at *Pajinka* prevented timely and decisive managerial intervention to address the organizational problems in an effective and efficient manner.

In the absence of firm executive control, changes to the untenable organizational practices were haphazard and were often the result of power struggles among competing individuals that saw the rise and the departure of many employees. Protracted periods of declining productivity and unsuccessful political strategies led to the subsequent closure of the Cairns office and the transfer of some of the administrative and marketing functions to *Pajinka* (*Pajinka* 1999, Personal observation). The Indigenous office manager rose briefly to prominence as resort manager before that position was assumed by the non-Indigenous training officer whose original contract had expired following the cessation of his DEET-funded position (*Pajinka* 1996, Personal observation). Following the eventual and very abrupt departure by the non-Indigenous resort manager the administrative records were found to be in a state that made financial reconciliation difficult (Injinoo 1999, Personal observation).

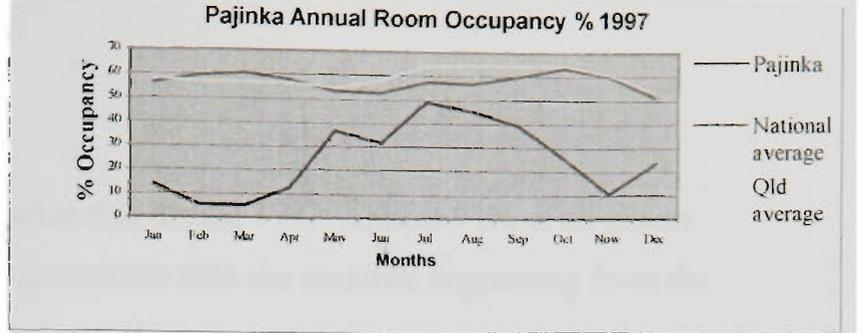
In the absence of executive control, organizational volatility continued and business objectives and customer service became victim to negative internal practices. The position of resort manager was again briefly occupied by a young Indigenous person before being taken over by the non-Indigenous maintenance engineer who was subsequently promoted following the former's resignation. Unable to secure the support needed from the traditional owners to maintain good relationships with individuals from the community and among the staff, the non-Indigenous manager hurriedly departed following several instances of interpersonal conflicts with other Indigenous staff (*Pajinka* 1999, 2000, 2002, Personal observations). This left *Pajinka* without supervision for the period preceding its eventual closure.

The IAC's two attempts to employ Indigenous managers to oversee *Pajinka* is instructive for understanding the practices and problems faced by Aborigines in managing their own tourism enterprises. In an attempt to achieve greater self-management of the *Lodge*, the president of the governing committee was employed

as office manager in 1996. Although lacking in industry management experience, the new office manager had completed year 12 education and had developed competency in a range of administrative tasks including bookkeeping, banking, and other essential office skills through his previous employment in civil governance positions. However the tenure was unsuccessful. It was suggested that the manager was subject to demand sharing by several community members for access to commercial resources and this severely compromised managerial performance and financial commercial prudence (Interviews). Indigenous rules of etiquette also prevented the manager from moderating the improper behaviour by certain older traditional owners who occasionally visited the bar at *Pajinka*. The incompatibility of managerial duties and social and kinship practices resulted in high levels of stress and anguish that, amongst other problems, led to avoidance behaviour and eventual departure by the manager (Interview PPA1996). Additionally, the appointment resulted in the politisation of organizational relationships at the *Lodge* which weakened the checks and balances between *Pajinka* and the IAC that were necessary to prevent the potential for conflict of interest (*Pajinka* 1996, Personal observation. Interview). Similarly, the young and capable but inexperienced Indigenous person who was later promoted to the position of resort manager at a stage when *Pajinka's* fortunes were plummeting also found the task insurmountable and left after a short while in search for other and less stressful pursuits (Interview). Overall, the decline in leadership and management control was accompanied by corresponding decline in service product quality.

### **7.5 Analysis of *Pajinka's* markets and evaluation of the total service product**

Chapter five outlined the main regional tourism trends in the Northern Peninsula Area and described *Pajinka's* tourist products. This section will present a profile of *Pajinka's* markets and will evaluate the role of 'authenticity' in the selection of *Pajinka* as a destination. The fit between market expectations and the supply of service products will be evaluated, and *Pajinka's* marketing strategy will be evaluated in the context of financial sustainability. The sources of information include *Pajinka's* reservation system, financial records, a survey of 99 domestic tourists, and personal observations and discussions with staff and guests at *Pajinka*.



**Graph 7.1 Pajinka Annual Room Occupancy (%) 1997**

Graph 7.1 depicts the seasonality associated with tourism in the NPA region. The 1997 annual occupancy rates for Queensland and Australia for hotels and motels have been included for comparisons. Relative to the national average, the Queensland annual demand pattern shows only minor seasonal variation. However, compared to both the national and Queensland averages, *Pajinka's* annual room occupancy shows extreme seasonality. The monthly pattern show peak demands for accommodation during the height of the dry season between July and September, and more than 76% of the annual revenue is generated during the six months from May to October. Business demand drops during the wet season and for four months occupancies fall below 15%. On the one hand, these extreme fluctuations pose unique staffing and capacity problems for the management. Of perhaps greater significance is the low level of *Pajinka's* overall occupancy rates that were 24.7%. This is much lower than the average occupancy for Australia and Queensland that were 57.4% and 59.4% respectively (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. no. 8635). As *Pajinka's* guests were charged an all-inclusive tariff per person, a more precise indicator of yield is the occupancy based on room nights. Analysis of guest histories reveals that room night occupancy was only 12% of total room nights available during 1997 (*Pajinka Reservations System 1998*), suggesting insufficient levels of demand to sustain the enterprise financially.

Table 7.3 presents *Pajinka's* market mix during 1997. Almost 94% of all guests staying at the lodge were domestic tourists with the majority originating from the eastern states. Comparable to the Gagudju tourism markets, the home state is the most important source of business. The Queensland segment constitutes nearly 62% of total guests, followed by New South Wales 915.4%) Victoria (13.9%). Analysis of the Queensland segment has revealed that 30% of room nights booked during December and January were by guests from the local Northern Peninsula Area and nearby Torres Strait islands (*Pajinka* Reservations System 1998), thus providing an important source of income during a critical time of the low season.

<b>Domestic</b>	<b>No's</b>	<b>%</b>
Queensland	2042	61.7
New South Wales	510	15.4
Victoria	460	13.9
Western Australia	31	0.9
Australian Capitol Territory	29	0.9
Northern Territory	15	0.5
South Australia	12	0.4
Tasmania	9	0.3
<b>Total Domestic</b>	<b>3108</b>	<b>93.8</b>
<b>International</b>		
United States	119	3.6
New Zealand	28	0.8
United Kingdom	20	0.6
Italy	10	0.3
France	10	0.3
Germany	4	0.1
Asia and other	13	0.4
<b>Total International</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>6.2</b>
<b>Total Visitors</b>	<b>3312</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 7.3** *Pajinka's* market mix, 1997

The international tourists constituted 6.2% of total guests and the United States segment was 3.6%. Whilst the latter is comparable to the Gagudju figures for US guests, *Pajinka's* international market segment is much below the average Gagudju international segment which was 34% of all guests staying at the *Crocodile Hotel* and *Coinda Lodge*. Notably, *Pajinka's* market mix indicates a failure to attract guests from Europe and Asia.

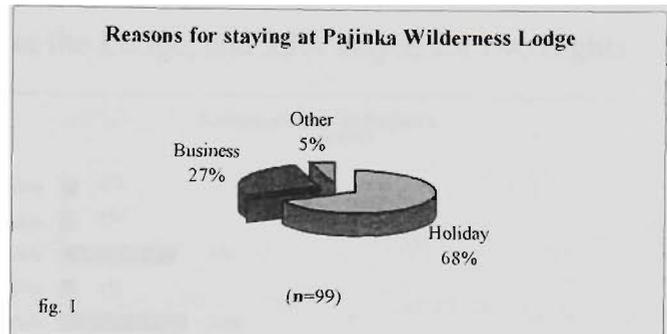
As explained in chapter five, time constraints, convenience and the small size of the international segment were reasons for limiting the marketing survey to domestic tourists who had stayed at *Pajinka* during the first half of 1998. The data from the survey is presented in the following paragraphs. The demographic details in Table 7.4 suggest that the major customer segment is male, middle class and middle aged. The segment tends to be tertiary educated and have a professional or business background. Approximately 60% of the respondents earn more than \$36,000 per annum, whilst the annual income of 41.4% of the total sample exceed \$ 50,000. Nearly 56% of guests arrived by air and almost 69% travelled as part of a group. Almost 71% of the respondents visited *Pajinka* during the dry season .

**Table 7.4 Pajinka's major customer segments**

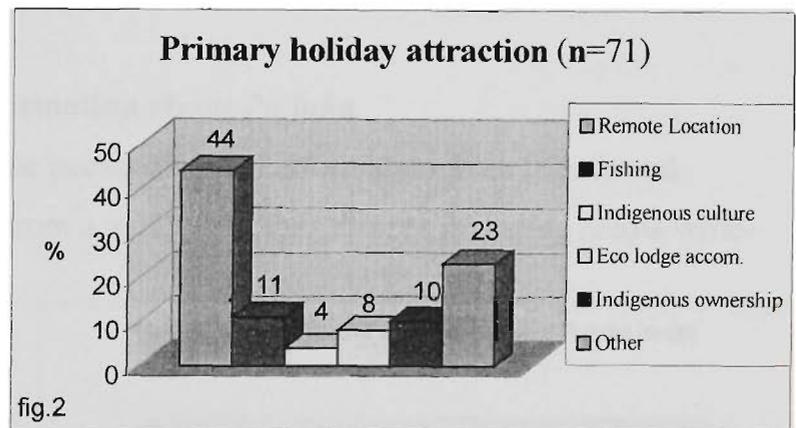
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	67	67.7
Female	30	30.3
No response	2	2.0
<b>Age</b>		
16-24	1	1.0
25-34	10	10.1
35-49	34	34.3
50-64	35	35.4
65+	18	18.2
No response	1	1.0
<b>Occupation</b>		
Professional	37	37.4
Homemaker	9	9.1
Science	1	1.0
Medical	3	3.0
Business	28	28.3
Student	0	0
Other	19	19.2
No response	2	2.0
<b>Education level</b>		
Primary	0	0
Secondary	41	41.4
Tertiary	33	33.3
Post Graduate	21	21.2
No response	4	4.1
<b>Income level</b>		
Under \$25,000	8	8.1
\$25-35,000	14	14.1
\$36-50,000	19	19.2
Over \$50,000	41	41.4
<b>Mode of transport</b>		
Air	55	55.6
Car	20	20.2
Boat	10	10.1
Other	13	13.1
No response	1	1.0
<b>Travel arrangements</b>		
Part of a group	68	68.7
Independantly	30	30.3
No response	1	1.0
<b>Season of visit</b>		
Dry season	70	70.7
Wet season	28	28.3
No response	1	1.0

## 7.6 Reasons for staying at Pajinka.

When asked to identify the reason for their stay at *Pajinka*, 27% of the respondents selected 'Business'. Although some respondents may have included answers based on unusual definitions of 'business' (for example, traditional Aboriginal business), it nonetheless appears that commercial considerations are important motivations for a large segment of the market – larger in fact than assumed by management. Appendix two contains a summary of qualitative comments provides some additional insight into nature of some of the business-related reasons for staying at *Pajinka*.



The data indicates that the majority (68%) of the survey population stayed at *Pajinka* for holiday reasons, and that *Pajinka* has a number of popular holiday attractions. Appropriately, remote location is the main attraction to the largest segment of the market responding to this survey.

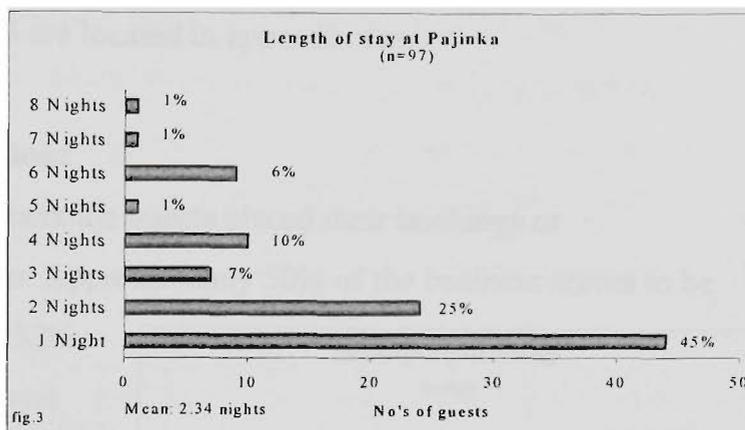


Although 'Indigenous ownership' and 'Indigenous culture' have been used prominently in *Pajinka's* advertisements, these aspects seem to be relatively unimportant to the majority of the respondents when taken individually. However, the combined market of these two attractions is 18%, suggesting a potential for reconfiguring the advertising message to maximise the value of this segment. Fishing appeals to 11% of the respondents, and eco-tourism to 8%. The latter is complimentary to 'Indigenous culture' however fishing may be regarded by some as potentially being contradictory to notions of ecology and the preservation of wildlife. The category 'Other' represents 23% of respondents. The summary of qualitative comments for question 2 in appendix two suggest organised tours are included in this

segment. Clearly, this represents a significant segment and it may be assumed that its financial contribution to *Pajinka* is very important.

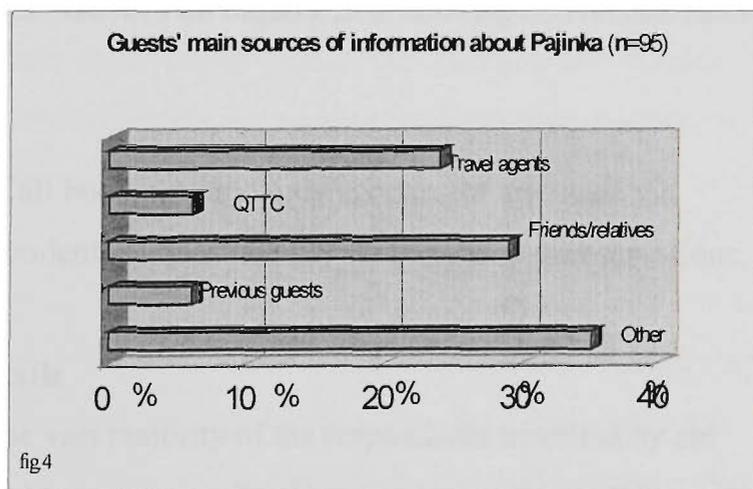
### 7.7 Length of stay at Pajinka

The data indicate the length of night stays by the guests at Pajinka. 45% of the responding guests spend only one night at the Lodge, and 25% stayed for two nights only. The average stay for the survey guests was 2.34 nights, with 70% of guests stayed two nights or less. These are very short visits that should be of concern to management who need to ascertain the underlying reasons. Short stays by guests limit the opportunities for value adding and upselling, with unfavourable implications for revenue generation.



### 7.8 Guests' sources of information about Pajinka

The data indicate that 70% of the guests obtained information from friends and relatives, previous guests, and from a variety of other sources including media write-ups, editorials, and general reputation of the Lodge. These findings suggest that word-of-mouth and goodwill are critical factors in motivating people to promote *Pajinka*. It is also the cheapest and most authentic form of advertisement, resulting in

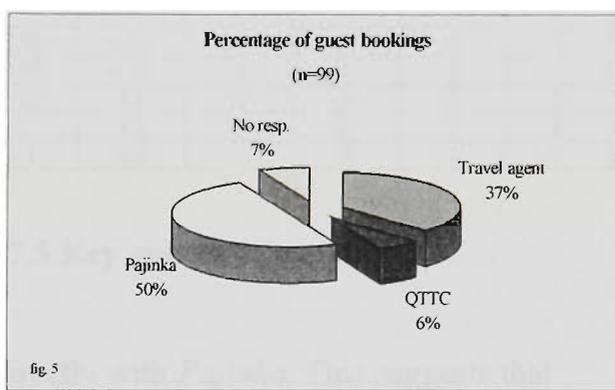


revenue free from agent's commissions. It is therefore important that the delivery of the total service product be structured with customer goodwill in mind as this is the most efficient way to retain and further develop the markets. It is noteworthy that only 6% of guests mentioned that they had obtained their information from QTTC. On the surface, this suggest that QTTC is not a direct main contributor to *Pajinka*'s guest

flow, and this may give rise to questions regarding the efficacy of the type, method, and conditions of QTTC's promotions of *Pajinka*. Approximately 24% of guests obtained information about *Pajinka* from their travel agent. This is a significant number and, as the research was not able to reveal any links between the travel agents and QTTC, *Pajinka*'s management should endeavour to find out how much of the retail sales by the agents were due to QTTC wholesale activities. The summarised qualitative responses to question 13 are located in appendix two.

### 7.9 Methods of guest reservations

The data provide an overview of where the guests placed their bookings or reservations for their stay at *Pajinka*. Approximately 50% of the business seems to be derived from direct bookings, with 37% and 6% coming from travel agents and QTTC respectively. As indicated by the qualitative comments to question 14 in appendix two, it seems that making direct reservations can be problematic. As mentioned above, direct reservations can



lead to high yield guest revenue, and the reservation system and booking inquiries and procedures must be streamlined to maximise the take-up rate. Unfortunately, management was unable to provide statistics on inquiry/firm booking conversion rates and on the level of lost business.

Travel agents account for 37% of all bookings, and only six percent are made via QTTC. Seven percent of the respondents did not identify their method of reservations.

### 7.10 Access and visitation details

Table 7.3 [missing] reveals that the vast majority of the respondents travelled by air. Guests travelling by car and 'other' means – usually other form of vehicular transport including motorbikes – constitute nearly 36% of the sample population. These statistics highlight *Pajinka*'s dependence on the upkeep of the feeder roads, and on the efficient and courteous operation of the ferry service. Most guests found the access to *Pajinka* easy, and 68% travelled as part of a group that, on the basis of anecdotal evidence, tend to be small rather than large. Another 30% of the respondents travelled

independently. Approximately 71% visited *Pajinka* during the dry season whilst 28% arrived during the ‘green’ season. A summary of relevant qualitative statements is included in appendix two.

**7.11 Summary of demographic details.**

A summary of key guest characteristics is presented in Table 7.5. Guests from Victoria, NSW and Western Australia on average spend more nights at *Pajinka* than guests from other states. Guests from NSW, Western Australia and Queensland tend to rate their stay at *Pajinka*

higher than do the guests from South Australia and Victoria. In percentage terms, 24% of guests from NSW, 59% of Victorian guests, and 64% of

TABLE 3  
Demographics summary

Guest origin state	Average guest nights	Overall value rating	Booking Arrangements			
			Agent	QTTC	Pajinka	Other
NSW	2.39	4.52	19	3	8	3
VIC	3.82	4.18	5	1	10	1
QLD	1.68	4.5	10	2	27	3
SA	2	3.5	1	0	1	0
WA	2.4	5.8	2	0	3	0

**Table 7.5 Key guest characteristics**

Queensland guests make their reservations directly with *Pajinka*. This suggests that NSW and Victoria are high yield markets. Management should attempt to expand the Queensland segment and efforts should be made to increase the average stay by Queensland guests. In all cases, management should encourage the tendency for making direct bookings. The number of responses from South Australia and Western Australia are too small to be of any significance for making further disaggregated analysis.

**7.12 Relationships between *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* and the IAC**

The relationship between management, the resources of the *Lodge*, and the IAC is problematic and require attention by the main stakeholders. The main issue relates to lack of organisational flexibility and responsiveness. Two radically different strategies exists which may solve this problem. One will be discussed in the next section, whilst the other will be briefly outlined below.

Due to rules pertaining to committees and quorums it is very difficult to convene the governing committee on a timely basis. Apparently, it is equally difficult to achieve

firm policy outcomes and decisions during the rare occasion when the committee do meet. Due to restrictions of authority, management is often limited in its ability to deal with the many issues that constantly arise in the course of meeting guests' needs and responding to a dynamic and ever-changing market economy.

Research has shown that Indigenous business enterprises are more likely to succeed when they are kept separate from the affairs of the community and the community councils. Very often a gap exists between the values and the way the community conduct its affairs, and the requirements inherent in operating a modern business enterprise in a competitive environment. It is therefore recommended that the governing committee should determine how to best to effect separation between the various organisational entities. This would involve a number of legal and social issues – alterations to the articles of association, etc., as well as the political ability to convince the IAC of the need for greater autonomy for the *Lodge*.

The issue of autonomy and the need for accountability and responsibility should be considered in the context of the proposed structure of organisation mentioned in the previous section. Thus, if the proposed structure, and the current management, is acceptable to the IAC, then it is recommended that *Pajinka Wilderness Lodge* be maintained as a separate business entity with the manager and the SREO reporting directly to only one senior community office holder. Although this person may also be a member of other IAC committees, it is imperative that he/she be appointed not only on the basis of standing in the community but also on the basis of business experience and/or aptitude for management and interest in developing knowledge in the tourism industry.

Much of the organizational conflict can be attributed to the contradictory relationship that existed between the IAC and its managers. Without experience in hospitality and tourism and lacking general business management skills, the IAC were unable to provide executive direction and control over its appointed managers. Instead, a reversal had occurred in which the IAC had become reliant upon their managers for business advice and operational control. The contradiction between formal authority based on legal ownership and the power arising from the possession of expertise left the directors in the unenviable position that made it difficult for them to exercise their

corporate responsibilities with due diligence and prevent the decline of their assets at *Pajinka*.

This option involves the hiring by IAC of a person, or a husband-wife team, to manage the property on behalf of the IAC. This method has been used since the purchase of the *Lodge* and it is the current method used. As the IAC is fully familiar with this method, only a brief outline of the main characteristics will be presented here. The positive aspects include:

- The IAC has the ability to negotiate directly with potential management applicants and, with the existing legal framework of industrial relations laws, can determine conditions of employment and termination of all staff. For many Indigenous people mutual trust and shared personal attributes are of fundamental importance to successful relationships, and under this method the owners of *Pajinka* are free to select managers with whom they feel they can work.
- The IAC have complete and direct access and control over all the resources, policies and operational procedures pertaining to the *Lodge*. They can intervene directly in the conduct of the business without having to engage in formal and lengthy negotiations.
- ‘Small is beautiful’ and the quality of personalised relationships is often expressed in vernacular terms of familiarity. The manager will frequently have a strong sense of commitment to the viability of the business and the well-being of the staff and display more loyalty to the owners than is the case in larger organisations. A manager is therefore more likely approach the job with a degree of dedication and time input that exceed the conditions of their employment.

On the other hand, a number of important factors exist which may be considered as part of the equation.

- As indicated by ATSIC’s own research, many of the problems experienced by Indigenous enterprises can be attributed to poor management advice and practices. As a result of the commonly perceived deprivations associated with remote location living and other factors, many community enterprises are unable to attract quality managers with extensive industry experience. Consequently,

many businesses are managed by non-Indigenous individuals with inadequate or inappropriate training and expertise, and some of the businesses often fail to realise the goals and the expectations of the community.

- Due to communication difficulties and lack of industry-specific knowledge, it is very difficult for indigenous owners to assess and check on the postulated credentials of management candidates. Cases exist where managers have presented false employment histories and claimed expertise that was irrelevant to the position being sought.
- The Indigenous owners are totally dependent on the professional competence and personal stability of just one person. If for any reason the manager walks out of the property, the owners will be without the expertise that is required to operate the business. Given the remote location and the comparatively low rewards paid to the manager, it may be some time before a suitable replacement manager is appointed. It is generally agreed that married couple management teams are often more stable and dependable than singly and young male managers.
- No system of control can prevent the potential for fraud that exists in the single manager/high cash taking business scenario. A rigorous financial control system can reduce financial losses but cannot eliminate theft should a manager decide to help him/herself to the cash takings. This is not a problem in owner or family-operated enterprises, and is much less of an issue in the other management alternatives.

### **7.13 Concluding remark**

Tourism was never invited nor was the consent of the locals sought. Responses are supportive of the belief that control of land is more important than the material or commercial benefits that can accrue from land

# Chapter Eight

## Conclusion and Recommendations for Further Research

### 8.1 Introduction

The work has raised a number of issues that are worthy of further investigation. For example, there are questions regarding:

- Comparisons of the participating enterprises and the effects of different histories, native title and control over land, on the development and management controls of their tourist enterprises.
- Changes in Australian government policy on Indigenous tourism development and Indigenous responses to joint ventures with Indigenous Business Australia.
- Towards an improved understanding of cross-cultural management and work-related values among Indigenous participants in the tourism industry.
- The commercial efficacy and social consequences of alternate management strategies.
- Indigenous empowerment and strategies to overcome social, cultural, educational, locational, and commercial barriers to success in tourism ventures.
- The impact of commercial imperatives on community social relations and cultural practices.
- The applicability of Hofstede's paradigm to research in Australia.
- The use of data triangulation as a means of resolving the dichotomy of the emic-etic methodologies.
- Language, meaning, and semantics in conducting cross-cultural research among Indigenous Australians.
- Contribution to the debate on divergence and convergence of management and work practices in the hospitality industry.
- Replication studies and future research in remote Australia.

Persistent references to the social and cultural benefits points to the presence of a value system in which the benefits of being involved in tourism are measured more in terms of social and cultural benefits than in terms of commercial outcomes. This suggests a holistic paradigm antithetical to the economic rationalism emerging in the approach by IBA.

Apart from the common knowledge of the financial plight of the properties owned by the Gagudju Associating no respondents were aware of the financial contributions of tourism to the local economy or the clan-based associations. Some apprehension was expressed over the financial losses incurred by the hotel properties, however the loss of control over the businesses, and the embarrassment of failure and resultant loss of face seems to be of greater concern to the participants.

Social development and cultural practices has not resulted in the creation of the capacities required to overcome the obstacles arising from the disjuncture that exists between the scale and the commercial culture of their tourism enterprises and the scale of the objects and processes of their daily social and cultural activities.

Acknowledging the efforts by IBA and others to develop the management competencies of their Indigenous partners, such abilities usually only emerge, if at all, following prolonged gestation. In essence, long-term employment in the hotel properties was circumscribed by a variety of factors. In additions to those mentioned previously these included such issues as

- (i) cultural incompatibilities such as differences in work-related values (preferences for social relations, flexibility and a relaxed work environment instead of the focus on productivity and employee competition and inter-departmental conflicts.
- (ii) the requirement for competent service delivery required technical skills which many did not possess despite having received some training.
- (iii) others behaviour with Indigenous notions of modesty and respect and felt compromised and embarrassed when employed in front-of-house positions.
- (iv) the tenants of the 'service ethic' and the demanding nature of some guests were incompatible with the social pride and the aspirations by some local trainees who regarded restaurant service as a form of servitude.

(v) the alien nature of the hotel environment and the uncertainties of the outcomes of interpersonal transactions inherent in the service encounter was a cause of stress for many trainees...

**It was at this point that Ray Simonsen lay down his pen. In bringing this volume to publication, his work colleagues have tried, in a tangible way, to pay homage to a respected academic, a dedicated teacher and valued friend.**

**Vale Ray**

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