Gidyea Fire

A study of the transformation and maintenance of Aboriginal place properties on the Georgina River.

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Queensland

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and my own work, except as acknowledged in the text. This material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

Material from this research (particularly chapters 1-3) has contributed to a number of jointly published works and technical reports (Memmott, Stacy & Long 1997, Memmott & Long 1998, Long & Memmott 1999, Memmott & Long 2000, Memmott & Long 2002, Memmott, Long, Bell, Taylor & Brown 2004, Long, Memmott & Thompson 2005). Where I was the sole author of sections of joint publications and those sections are used in the text they are not acknowledged. Co-authorship is acknowledged where I was the primary author for sections of co-authored material that is used in this thesis (this applies particularly to the section on cultural landscapes in Chapter 2).

Stephen Long

Dr Paul Memmott
Principal Supervisor
Many thanks to the Aboriginal communities, families and individuals from the Georgina River and Northwest Queensland in general who participated in this research and shared their knowledge and experiences of place. I am also grateful for the friendship extended to me and the occasional parties shared. I am indebted to the Dajarra Aboriginal community including members of the following families: Age, Ah One, Armstrong, Bismark, Bookie, Clarke, Condren, Connelly, Costello, Dempsey, De Satge, Marshall, Major, Punch, Rankine, Rose, and Simmons. Thanks to Margaret Punch and Keith Marshall and their family. Thanks to the support of the Jimberella Cooperative.

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In memory of the gidyea fires shared with those who have passed on.


Long, S. & Memmott, P. 1999, ‘Submission to Native Title Services, Department of Premier and Cabinet, for the Review of Queensland’s Indigenous Cultural Heritage Legislation’, Aboriginal Environments Research Centre, Department of Architecture, University of Queensland.


PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS RELEVANT TO THE THESIS BUT NOT FORMING PART OF IT


ABSTRACT

In this thesis a platform of knowledge is provided for the development of enhanced Indigenous cultural heritage legislation by examining the specific nature of the cultural heritage of a Queensland Aboriginal group, the Dajarra Aboriginal community of Northwest Queensland for whom the Georgina River is a heartland in their cultural geography. The thesis was conducted during a period when the Queensland Government began to recognize demands for more effective Indigenous cultural heritage legislation. Queensland’s latest Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation, introduced in 2004, emerged from a history of legislation dominated by an archaeological model of cultural heritage. However, despite some improvements this new legislation has maintained a physically orientated model of cultural heritage. Therefore Queensland’s Indigenous societies, their places, place knowledge and certain types of place-specific behaviours continue to be exposed to imposed change.

The thesis examines the ‘lifeworld’, the ‘everyday’ experiences of place of the Dajarra community. A broad definition of culture and an interactive model of place, coupled with a phenomenological approach provide a theoretical framework to engage with and describe cultural heritage as Dajarra people themselves experience it. The cultural heritage of Dajarra people involves interactions with a diversity of places and various combinations of behavioural, knowledge and physical properties. All of the places examined were interrelated with other places to form both small and large-scale place complexes.

This dissertation reveals that the cultural heritage of an Aboriginal community lies not just in the physical environment but also in the diverse everyday people-environment interactions of that community. Effective cultural heritage legislation must be capable of encompassing this diversity. Cultural heritage is essentially dynamic, it is found in processes of change, it is found in ongoing people-environment interactions as well as those of the past. It is argued that Aboriginal people hold ‘active cultural heritage rights’; these are rights to interact with places and rights to control action in places. Ideal cultural heritage legislation would recognize these active rights and provide for Aboriginal control of them, that is, Aboriginal defined and controlled change. This study reveals that it is difficult to separate places in time and space from other places with which they are co-dependent or inextricably intertwined. Studies of Aboriginal people-environment interactions and legislative measures must respond to the broader place complexes within which individual places are embedded and within which the everyday experiences of place are had. It is shown that there is a range of ways that an Aboriginal cultural heritage community can be defined and a range of Aboriginal people that might have interests in the cultural heritage of an area. Lastly, the thesis calls for the adoption of an interactive model of place as a foundation to cultural heritage studies and legislation in order to respond to the cultural heritage of Aboriginal people as they themselves experience it and wish to experience it.
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# ABBREVIATIONS

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AHC</td>
<td>Australian Heritage Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>AWRC</td>
<td>Australian Water Resources Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDEP</td>
<td>Community Development Employment Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.A.I.A</td>
<td>Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAIRA</td>
<td>Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACS</td>
<td>Department of Family and Community Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICOMOS</td>
<td>International Council on Monuments and Sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUCN</td>
<td>International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.T.</td>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QR</td>
<td>Queensland Railways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QRC</td>
<td>Queensland Resources Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QTIC</td>
<td>Queensland Tourism Industry Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QWIG</td>
<td>Queensland Indigenous Working Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RNE</td>
<td>Register of the National Estate</td>
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<td>WRG</td>
<td>Water Resources Group</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Since the European invasion of Australia, various processes of change have been imposed upon Aboriginal cultures and peoples. These processes of imposed change have affected places significant to Aboriginal people; such places have been disrupted, degraded and in some instances destroyed. Processes of cultural change have affected place knowledge. In parallel, non-indigenous forces have attempted to prohibit Aboriginal place-specific behaviours. Places significant to Aboriginal people, place knowledge and certain types of behaviour continue to be threatened by imposed change.

Cultural heritage legislation in Queensland, and elsewhere in Australia, which is intended to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage, has been criticized for its failure to adequately do so. At the foundation of Queensland’s Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation is a narrow model of cultural heritage that reflects the role that the discipline of archaeology and its traditional interests have had in the development of legislation in that State. The focus of this model is on managing changes to the physical environment and until the introduction of new cultural heritage legislation in 2004 it was primarily concerned with objects and physical evidence of past human occupation. This focus largely excludes contemporary Aboriginal societies and denies a multiplicity of Aboriginal heritage types and values. Whilst a number of works provide significant critiques of Queensland’s Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation, few have suggested an alternative to the model of cultural heritage which it imposes.

Since the 1970s, definitions of cultural heritage have diversified. Cultural heritage is no longer considered simply pertaining to the distant past, rather it is increasingly seen to include the recent past and the present. These developments are yet to be fully recognised in Australia, particularly in relation to Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation.

Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation must be informed by Aboriginal concepts of cultural heritage. A platform of knowledge of the specific nature of Aboriginal cultural heritage is required. There is an emerging recognition of this principle yet there remains a limited understanding of Aboriginal concepts of cultural heritage. Thus, the broad aim of this research is to investigate the specific nature of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Queensland.

To achieve this aim, Chapter One provides an overview of Queensland’s Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation. The nature of this legislation is described within the context of Queensland’s history of policy and legislation concerned with Aboriginal people, developments in the discipline of archaeology and developments in heritage research more broadly. In Chapter Two definitions of culture and place that are useful for investigations of Aboriginal cultural heritage are established. The contemporary application of place theory to
cultural heritage studies is described and an overview of significant studies of Aboriginal place properties is presented.

There are two intertwined questions that directed this research. The first is, what is the nature of Aboriginal cultural heritage? However, since existing models of cultural heritage are flawed a new approach to the study of cultural heritage was required. This thesis employs an interactional model of place to get at a diversity of Aboriginal relationships with the environment, those of the past, those of the present, those of the future, behavioural properties and knowledge properties as well as physical properties of place. Thus the second question is, what is the nature of Aboriginal people-environment interactions?

In Chapter Three the suitability of a phenomenological approach to the research questions is illustrated. Phenomenology provides an approach which is capable of being inclusive of contemporary Aboriginal societies and their cultural heritage traditions. A case study of the people-environment interactions of the Dajarra Aboriginal community of Northwest Queensland, is introduced. The field methods that were employed are described.

Chapter Four extends the introduction to the Dajarra case study by providing an historical overview of people-environment interactions in Northwest Queensland. This perspective explores the dynamic properties of the cultural landscape including the transformation of place properties in the contact era. The chapters that follow examine a range of Aboriginal people-environment interactions in Northwest Queensland.

In Chapter Five particular places are examined that demonstrate a diversity of knowledge, behavioural and physical properties of place. In this chapter and subsequent chapters the dynamic properties of the Dajarra community’s places and Aboriginal systems of managing these dynamic properties are also examined.

Dajarra people do not experience places in isolation, it is also rare for people to talk about a place without making reference directly or indirectly to some other place. Although Chapter Five illustrates that it is possible to focus attention on particular places it is difficult to separate places from the complex(es) of which they are a part. Places are interrelated through human experience, action and mental operations. Chapters Six to Nine examine the properties of units of interrelated places, these units include place complexes (Chapter Six), lineal place complexes (Chapter Seven), and greater place complexes (Chapter Eight).

The final chapter consists of the thesis conclusions. The significance of the findings from the case studies of the places of the Dajarra community are described and implications for the development of Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation are posited. Cultural heritage legislation must be capable of encompassing a range of Aboriginal place properties and
cultural heritage values including the dynamic properties of place and Aboriginal management of change. Until models of Aboriginal people-environment interactions are incorporated in legislation, then Aboriginal rights in place will continue to be impeded and there will prevail conflict and legal tensions over place.
Chapter 1
CULTURAL HERITAGE LEGISLATION IN QUEENSLAND

Models of Indigenous cultural heritage in Queensland fall within two categories, (i) a physically orientated model of cultural heritage defined by the State through cultural heritage legislation, and (ii) Indigenous models of cultural heritage. Through the actions of the State the first model of cultural heritage predominates and excludes the second. In the last decade Indigenous people and sympathetic non-Indigenous critics pressed for reformations to Queensland’s Indigenous cultural heritage legislation. Of major concern was the failure of legislation to protect places that Indigenous groups aspired to protect. This was a fundamental failure to recognise Indigenous rights to control Indigenous cultural heritage. This chapter examines the restricted nature of cultural heritage legislation in Queensland.

The nature of this legislation can only be comprehended within the context of (i) Queensland’s history of paternalistic government policy and legislation concerned with Indigenous people (and the influence that powerful lobbying groups with interests in resource exploitation have had on such laws (Anderson 1981:55)), (ii) developments in the discipline of archaeology, and (iii) developments in heritage research. These three issues are considered within an overview of the development of Queensland’s Indigenous cultural heritage legislation.

The chapter commences with an account of the early history of non-Indigenous attempts to control Indigenous cultural heritage and a brief description of western heritage traditions. The development of Queensland’s first heritage legislation and the archaeological focus of this legislation is examined. This is followed by a description of the deficient model of cultural heritage of the Cultural Record Act. This model is then compared with other State, Territory and Commonwealth legislations in Australia. Finally, the move by the State towards more effective legislation is examined.

1.1 ENFORCING AND CONTROLLING CHANGE

Non-Indigenous attempts to control Indigenous cultural heritage

The appalling rapidity with which the Queensland aborigines are dying out justifies the publication of these few particulars. Every year the chance of saving their relics and the story they have to tell becomes more and more remote, and indeed it is questionable whether even now it is not too late. There are few localities in Queensland where the influences of civilisation are not apparent, and the native of to-day when speaking of himself and his forbears prefers to draw upon his imagination rather than speak the unsophisticated truth; sometimes he is unable to do so, but be that as it may, the difficulty of sifting the truth from that which is false is becoming increasingly more difficult...Little reliance can now, unfortunately, be placed upon anything a blackfellow tells you except in rare instances.....

I have seen implements and weapons made by aboriginals about which there can be no possible doubt that they are of modern manufacture, with ideas incorporated, which they themselves have acquired within the last decade or so...yet these people will declare most solemnly that they and their forefathers have used such from time immemorial.... (Hamlyn - Harris 1915:3.)
Hamlyn-Harris’s words typify non-Indigenous racist and social evolutionist views of Indigenous Queenslanders. From the time of invasion until the 1960s Indigenous people were considered to be a doomed or dying people, a group of people unable to accommodate change. Such ideologies supported attempts by frontier pastoralists and others to violently dispossess Indigenous Queenslanders of their customary lands (Anderson 1981:56).

Throughout Queensland the Native Mounted Police and armed vigilantes attempted to ‘disperse’ Indigenous groups. The Native Mounted Police were first brought into Queensland in 1848 and were active until the start of the twentieth century. Agents of government and private interests, the Native Mounted Police in their violent attempts to control Indigenous relationships with land were responsible for numerous atrocities. In the late 1870s, in response to interstate and international concern over these atrocities the Queensland government created a number of reserves for Aboriginal people. These reserves were to provide refuge and simultaneously keep Aboriginal people away from townships and pastoral country. (Anderson 1981:55-58; Reynolds 1995:104.)

From the late 1800s a number of protectionist laws, such as the Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act of 1897, were introduced. Under the pretence of protecting Aboriginal people from change, to “smooth the pillow of a dying race”, these laws were a means of controlling and segregating Indigenous people and enforcing change, particularly with regard to Indigenous relationships with land. A significant element of control and segregation was the mission and reserve system which expanded during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Under the protectionist laws large numbers of Aboriginal people were systematically removed from their homelands to distant reserves. This enforced diaspora was “one of the most formidable methods of disintegrating the old cultural order” (Memmott 1991a:185).

Families were split up, children taken from their parents, and leaders separated from their communities. The future of land-based clans was limited, once removed from their territories. Patterns of long-standing reciprocal relations between groups, involving exchanges of ritual work, marriage partners and economic surpluses, quickly broke down. Kin were scattered between distant centres. (Memmott 1991a:186.)

Others were forced onto smaller country reserves under the control of local police. These smaller reserves were established to maintain an Aboriginal labour force close to industries such as pastoralism that depended on this labour. (Anderson 1981:62-65; Memmott 1996.)

From the 1950s the protectionist policies, which enforced segregation, were replaced by an ideology of assimilation. The assimilation ideology was to force Indigenous people to integrate with non-Indigenous society. Assimilation was used to justify further attempts to
diminish Aboriginal relationships with country. Assimilation has influenced legislative matters concerned with Indigenous Queenslanders since this time. (Anderson 1981:56-64.)

From early contact violence and warfare, through the protectionist era and on to assimilation the Queensland government has attempted to enforce and control changes to Queensland Indigenous societies. Indigenous societies have responded to these destructive and disruptive actions in creative and complex ways and have maintained and developed their cultures (see Reynolds 1995).

**Indigenous activism and cultural maintenance**

Throughout Queensland early attempts at dispossession were met by Indigenous resistance which included groups of organised resistance fighters (Anderson 1981:55-56; Reynolds 1995). A number of Aboriginal groups maintained a successful and intense guerrilla warfare employing tactics which included; the use of sorcery, economic warfare, tactics for dealing with guns, the use of guns, massed warriors, revenge parties, the use of escape routes and hiding places, and surveillance (Reynolds 1995:96-109). According to Reynolds (1992:80) the success of the Indigenous resistance Australia wide emphasised the sense of Indigenous land ownership amongst non-Indigenous people. The success of the resistance in Queensland can be gauged from the following editorial from the *Queenslander* newspaper in 1879 (Reynolds 1995:111):

> During the last four or five years the human life and property destroyed by the Aboriginals in the North totals up to a serious amount...settlement on the land, and the development of the mineral and other resources of the country, have been in a great degree prohibited by the hostility of the blacks, which still continues with undiminished spirit. (Queenslander, 15 February 1879 in Reynolds 1995:111.)

The tradition of Aboriginal resistance and activism continues today and is manifested in diverse ways, including Australia wide actions such as mass protests to individual acts of resistance such as ignoring ‘no trespass & no hunting’ signs on cattle properties while hunting on traditional country. A sense of this resistance can be gleaned from Keefe’s analysis of Aboriginality:

> Aboriginality -as- resistance is an active and dynamic concept, emphasising the particular place that Aboriginal people hold in Australian society. From this precise location, those inspired by this ideology are engaged in the conscious production of new cultural forms, drawing creatively from the resources of the dominant society, and from Aboriginal traditions, but not setting out to discover lost objects from the past. It speaks of resistance to white authority, political struggle and collective solidarity, but is constrained by the structures (material, ideological and cultural) of the dominant society. (Keefe 1988:80.)

**Protection- the Western heritage tradition.**

During the 1800s, as Queensland enforced its ‘protectionist’ regime, European countries were introducing a very different type of ‘protectionist’ legislation. In contrast to the Queensland legislation that purported to ‘protect’ the lives of people, the aim of this legislation was to protect ancient monuments. By the end of the 1800s some form of protective legislation
covered most of the ancient monuments of Europe. For example, the United Kingdom passed its first Ancient Monument Protection Act in 1882. The USA enacted its first Federal Antiquities law in 1906. The earliest of this type of legislation concerned with historical objects was a Swedish proclamation of 1666 that declared objects of antiquity to be the property of the crown. This Eurocentric concern with the protection of antiquity has dominated heritage legislation and management throughout the world. (Cleere 1989:1; Lowenthal 1990:302.)

International legislation, conservation agencies, and the art and antiquities markets reinforce the primacy of Western views on artefact protection, architectural preservation, and the worth and function of ancient relics. (Lowenthal 1990:302.)

In Australia, the first of this type of protective measure by law was the 1899 declaration of Captain Cook’s landing place at Kurnell on Botany Bay, New South Wales, as an historic site. However, a more widespread concern with this type of historical protection did not flourish in Australia until almost fifty years later at which time the National Trust movement commenced. (Flood 1989:79; Hall & McArthur 1993:1.)

The first cultural heritage movement in Queensland
In her paper ‘Tread Softly for You Tread on My Bones’, Dr Josephine Flood (1989), traced the development of heritage protection in Australia to that first declaration concerning Kurnell. However, in terms of protective measures, Flood has overlooked a much earlier and more imposing cultural heritage movement in Australia, this being an Indigenous preoccupation with heritage particularly as manifested in the Indigenous resistance.

In their attempts to protect their cultures from change imposed by the non-Indigenous invaders, the resistance and activism of Indigenous people can be viewed as a type of cultural heritage movement in Queensland – the first cultural heritage movement. ‘Cultural heritage’ is used here in a limited sense, meaning the protection of cultural elements from change. The popular or western notion of cultural heritage of protecting historical physical elements, falls within this limited notion of heritage. It is my contention that cultural heritage is a far more complex phenomenon than this, with protection being just one part of it. The traditions of Indigenous resistance and activism, as Indigenous people exercising their rights to control their cultural heritage, continue today in various forms.

In the same way that Flood equates the commencement of the Australian heritage movement with that first formal declaration at Kurnell, Reynolds (1992:81-102) has argued that the first land rights movement in Australia commenced in the 1830s with the efforts of the British and Foreign Aborigines Protection Society and other non-Indigenous people to have Indigenous land rights formally recognised. This is despite Reynolds’ (1992) clear demonstration of the influence that the Indigenous resistance had on what Reynolds nominates as the ‘first land rights movement’. The similarity in the arguments of Reynolds and Flood lies in the fact that
both authors place the commencement of the respective movements within a non-Indigenous framework of ‘formal’ recognition.¹

Queensland’s early history of protectionist legislation is not normally considered within the context of heritage legislation. However, in terms of its purported aim of ‘protecting’ Aboriginal people, and its effect, of oppressing Aboriginal people, it has much to do with cultural heritage and can be viewed as a secondary albeit separate, destructive and oppositional stream of this first cultural heritage movement.

The cultural heritage movement of Aboriginal resistance and the conflicting and parallel Queensland government protectionist policies both differ in a fundamental way to the western heritage tradition. The western heritage tradition established and has maintained a concern with the physical environment and the protection of historical elements of this environment from change. In contrast, this first cultural heritage movement in Queensland was concerned with social change and included a concern with maintaining customary people-environment interactions and the prevention of other types of people-environment interactions.

From this context of early government legislation and policy concerned with enforcing and controlling change amongst Queensland Indigenous societies (and their cultures) we can now turn to consider the introduction of Queensland’s first cultural heritage legislation, the Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1967-1976 (see Ellis 1994:2). Although this heritage legislation is a legacy of earlier government policy and action its introduction can be viewed as the commencement of Queensland’s second cultural heritage movement, a movement heavily influenced by the discipline of archaeology and controlled by the government.

1.2 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ‘RELICS’

Forestry and cultural heritage
Prior to the introduction of the Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1967-1976, The Queensland Forestry Act 1959-78 was the only Queensland legislation that provided some form of protection of Aboriginal cultural elements in the manner of the western heritage tradition (Ward 1983:25). The purpose of this legislation included the preservation and management of forest products in Queensland’s forests, timber reserves and National Parks. According to the Act ‘Forest Products’ include Aboriginal remains, Aboriginal artifacts or Aboriginal handicraft, relics and quarry material. (Forestry Act 1959-1971 s41 page 32; Anderson 1981:73-74.)

¹ In considering the history of heritage movements, others also focus on the history of non-Indigenous heritage preservation measures and ignore or negate Indigenous preoccupations with heritage (See Hall & McArthur (1993:1) and Hunter (1981:23)).
Whilst the Act provided some protection for this cultural material, it did so without regard for continuing Aboriginal interest in these ‘Forest Products’. Furthermore, as with other legislation it regulated and prohibited forms of Indigenous interactions with the environment. For example under this Act: “No person can interfere with any forest product...except under authority” (Forestry Act 1959-1978 s 43).

In order to analyse the Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act it is necessary to commence by returning to the international heritage scene.

**Archaeology and Queensland’s Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act**

On the international heritage scene there has been an archaeological focus to the heritage movement and to heritage legislation since at least the 1940s (Cleere 1989:2). This relationship, between archaeology and heritage, was strengthened in post WWII Europe and into the 1960s and 1970s when development and resource exploitation threatened the archaeological record worldwide and prompted various countries to develop new protective legislation (Cleere 1989:2-4).

In Australia in the 1960s there was a growth in formal archaeological survey work. This growth was a product of the establishment of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies\(^2\) and the commencement of the first university appointments in Australian prehistory (Sullivan 1983:1; Connah 1997:49).

In the 1960s Australian archaeologists successfully lobbied for legislation to protect the objects of their scientific interest, ‘the archaeological resource’. Three agents prompted them to do so: (i) rapid destruction of the archaeological resource by economic development, (ii) depredation of the archaeological resource by amateur archaeologists and collectors, and (iii) the motivation amongst professional archaeologists to ‘discover’ data concerning the human prehistory of Australia. (Robins 1983:1; Flood 1989:80; Ross & McDonald 1996:99; Ellis 1994:11; Murray 1996a:13-15.)

In Queensland the *Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act* was introduced in 1967.\(^3\) The Act was to preserve relics, the remnant material traces of past Aboriginal cultures.

_A Act to provide for the Preservation of Anthropological, Ethnological, Archaeological and Prehistoric Aboriginal Relics. (Relics Act 1967:1.)_

Where ‘Relics’ are defined as:

_Any Aboriginal remains and any trace, remains of handiwork within the State of Aboriginal culture; The Term does not include such handiwork made for the purpose of sale for money. (Relics Act 1967:2.)_

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\(^2\) Now known as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

\(^3\) The *Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1967-1976* is herein referred to as the Relics Act.
New South Wales and South Australia similarly introduced legislation in the late 1960s, with Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania following with legislation in the early 1970s. The Northern Territory had introduced its first heritage legislation in the 1950s. (Ward 1983:19-41.)

The traditional interest of archaeology is the description and explanation of patterns of behaviour and change characteristic of past or extinct cultures. Through the study of relics, archaeologists attempt to understand the adaptive systems of the past. Ideational systems were traditionally of little interest to archaeologists at the time when the Relics Act was introduced. (Ellis 1994:9-17; Keesing 1981:30; Wagstaff 1987:2; Murray 1998:2; Renfrew & Bahn 1997:11.)

Archaeology had been influenced by the natural sciences and a positivist approach. According to this approach, knowledge of the past could not be obtained from living Indigenous people, rather it could only be obtained through the application of scientific methods which could ‘measure’ the characteristics of past cultures (Ellis 1994:14-17). Living Indigenous people were considered outside the scope of archaeological inquiry (Creamer 1983:10), which, at the time of the introduction of the Relics Act, was orientated towards the study of material culture in “isolation from the social and intellectual life which generated [it]” (Trigger 1980:150). In fact Indigenous knowledge systems were considered to be contrary to archaeological knowledge (Creamer 1990:132). For example Aboriginal cosmology was considered contrary to the scientific understanding of human evolution (Creamer 1990:132).

In the 1960s and 1970s, archaeologists believed that a traditional or authentic Indigenous culture was one locked in time and relatively unaffected by cultural change. Perhaps a legacy of assimilation ideologies of the 1950s, archaeologists and others (see the excerpt from Hamlyn-Harris above) viewed the point of contact with Europeans as the end of Indigenous cultures, and the beginning of the recorded historical past. In disregarding the continuity of Indigenous societies, their ability to resist and adapt to the impositions of the invaders and their ability to create new cultural elements, archaeologists essentially subscribed to a static model of culture. Furthermore, in denying the existence of legitimate contemporary Indigenous cultures, archaeologists saw themselves as the custodians and owners of the Indigenous past. (Trigger 1980:153; Ellis 1994:14; Sullivan 1996:2-6; Murray 1996a:13.)

Whilst many critiques of Queensland’s heritage legislation similarly focus on the archaeological focus of the Relics Act, most are silent on the role of the government of the day in passing the legislation and the history of government policy and legislation which the
legislation is a descendant of (as outlined earlier). The nature of the legislation must be understood within these contexts.

1.3 FROM ‘RELICS’ TO ‘LANDSCAPES AND THE ESTATE’

The Cultural Record Act 1987

In 1987 the Relics Act was replaced by the Cultural Record (Landscapes Queensland and Queensland Estate) Act 1987. This Act purported to preserve and manage (i) Landscapes Queensland, defined as areas or features which, were or are used, altered or affected by people, or are significant to people, and (ii) the Queensland Estate, objects or evidence of past human occupation. (Cultural Record Act, ss5.)

Throughout the 1970s and the 1980s there had been pressure to change the Relics Act. This pressure came from a number of sources including Aboriginal activism, criticism of the Relics Act by anthropologists and developments in archaeological research. However, the Cultural Record Bill was introduced to the Queensland Parliament not as a response to these pressures, that is as an improved Indigenous cultural heritage legislation, but as a way of providing legislation for non-Indigenous heritage (historical heritage). Thus, Mr. Katter, who at that time was Minister for Aboriginal and Islander Advancement in the Queensland Government stated:

This Bill will overcome anomalous situations such as we currently face at Somerset at the tip of Cape York, where pre-history is protected but the more recent ruins of Jardine’s fort and the Government residence are not. (Queensland Parliament 1987-88:1669.)

And from Mrs. Harvey of the Queensland Government:

The emphasis in this [Cultural Record] Bill is on consultation and, in particular, the preservation of old buildings. (Queensland Parliament 1987-88:4649.)

In terms of Indigenous cultural heritage, the new legislation maintained much of the intent and powers of the Relics Act (Queensland Parliament 1987-88:4646, 4639). The new Cultural Record Act also maintained the assimilation ideologies of the Relics Act and the government claimed Indigenous cultural heritage for the wider public (see Trigger’s (1980:151) comments on the Relics Act). Reading the Cultural Record Bill to parliament, Mr. Katter of the Government announced:

The Bill achieves the ultimate Queensland Government policy...that we are one land, one people and one heritage. (Queensland Parliament 1987-88:1668.)

The objective of the Bill is to throw a causeway from the culture and heritage of the first Queenslanders to the culture of the successive tribes. (Queensland Parliament 1987-88:4646.)

The artificial distinction between one group of Queenslanders and another will be removed with this legislation. (Queensland Parliament 1987-88:1669.)
The usurping of Indigenous cultural heritage by the Queensland Government was also an attempt to create a time depth and respectability to the history and identity of that State (Robins 1983:9). That is, the State gained an ancient history through its control of Indigenous archaeological heritage. Statements made by Harvey in Parliamentary debate concerning The Cultural Record Bill exemplified this: “At one-time we were like a ship without a rudder- we were without a real history” (Queensland Parliament 1987-88:4645). This correlates with a phenomenon described by Cleere (1989:8) whereby new nations, particularly ex-colonies, rely on archaeological heritage in the creation of national identity. (See also Ritchie 1996:2.)

The Cultural Record Act reflected the interests and positivist approach of archaeology that shaped the earlier Relics legislation. The bias of the Act was towards the protection of the ‘Queensland Estate’, comprising tangible things that can be objectively identified and measured. Non-archaeological Indigenous heritage such as places which have knowledge properties associated with them, but which do not necessarily have the physical remains of past human activity deposited at them, were inadequately provided for under the Act. (AHC 1985:112; Rowland 1992:1-2; Ellis 1994:16, 1995:342; Memmott & Long 1998:9.)

Three of the main faults of the Cultural Record Act were derivative of this idealised view of Aboriginal culture and the archaeological approach: (1) The Act failed to comprehensively recognise the ongoing cultural values associated with Indigenous places including knowledge properties and rights to undertake place specific behaviour and place maintenance activities; (2) Indigenous people were largely excluded from the operation of the Act and heritage management, and instead government agencies and ministers predominantly usurped and possessed control of the Indigenous past; and (3), the remnant material traces of past Indigenous human activity were the property of the crown.

The inadequacies of the archaeological model of heritage represented in the Cultural Record Act are further illuminated by developments in the 1970s and 1980s that the Queensland legislators failed to acknowledge.

**Indigenous activism**

From the time of invasion, Indigenous people have maintained and developed their cultures. However Indigenous cultures have also been and continue to be subject to both directed and non-directed change. Indigenous people continue to adapt to and resist such changes. Since the 1970s, as part of the wider land rights movement, Indigenous people have widely and publicly asserted control of their cultural heritage. Government heritage agencies responded to these assertions by incorporating Indigenous people in various capacities in heritage programs (AHC 1985:109; Dobb 1995:41; McBryde 1995:112). In the last twenty years there has been greater emphasis placed on consultation with Indigenous communities (McBryde 1995:121). But too frequently this becomes a situation whereby the “‘powerful’ consult with the ‘powerless’ and having done so do as they will” (Ellis 1994:18).
Addressing Australian archaeologists at and Australian Archaeology conference in the early 1980s, the Aboriginal activist Langford asserted:

The issue is control. You seek to say that as scientists you have a right to obtain and study information of our culture. You seek to say that because you are Australians you have a right to study and explore our heritage because it is a heritage to be shared by all Australians, white and black. From our point of view we say you have come as invaders, you have tried to destroy our culture, you have built your fortunes upon the lands and bodies of our people and now, having said sorry, want a share in picking out the bones of what you regard as a dead past. We say that it is our past, our culture and heritage, and forms part of our present life. As such it is ours to control and it is ours to share on our terms. That is the Central Issue in this debate. (Langford 1983:2.)

Fourmile (1989:58) and Ellis (1994:2) argue that legislation such as the Cultural Record Act is similar to previous ‘Aboriginal protection Acts’. Rather than being of benefit to Aboriginal people, such Acts are in fact a means of further controlling Aboriginal people. Fundamental to Aboriginal cultural heritage is the issue of control of change. At the centre of this issue, is the difference between culturally defined and controlled change as compared to imposed (directed) change.

**Shifts in Australian archaeology**

In the late 1970s, Australian archaeologists began to make hesitant moves towards consultation with Indigenous people and recognition of Indigenous ownership of cultural heritage. A pertinent example of this hesitancy is to be found in a guide to archaeological field techniques published in the early 1980s. In this guide Creamer (1983:10-12) found it necessary to discern the advantages and disadvantages of incorporating Indigenous people in archaeological research. Thus in the 1980s archaeologists were considering the inclusion of Indigenous people in their research, but the inclusion of Indigenous people in the archaeological research of Indigenous heritage was yet to be an ethical given.

Some archaeologists also began to realise that contemporary Indigenous people held significant knowledge of their archaeological heritage, and that Aboriginal knowledge systems could be incorporated in archaeological research (Creamer 1983; Flood 1989; Head 1998:1). One archaeologist wrote:

> Development of appropriate [heritage] management programs involves setting up structures and mechanisms that successfully integrate Aboriginal knowledge and beliefs with knowledge generated through archaeological research. Sensitivity to both knowledge bases can be of mutual benefit to both archaeologists and Aboriginal people by helping to construct new understandings of the broader significance of Aboriginal sites and places. (McNiven 1994:10.)

In the early 1980s the Australian Archaeological Association formally recognised the Aboriginal ownership of Aboriginal heritage:

> This conference acknowledges Aboriginal ownership of their heritage. Accordingly, this conference calls on all archaeologists to obtain permission from the Aboriginal owners prior to any research or excavation of Aboriginal sites. (Allen in Flood 1989:83.)
Since the 1970s, the work of ethno-archaeologists such as O’Connell (1980, 1987) and Binford (1984, 1986, 1987) in Central Australia, Meehan’s work in Arnhem Land, Gould’s (1969, 1980) in the Western Desert and Rathje’s (1992) in the US has had an impact on archaeological research in Australia. These archaeologists recognise a connection between living people and the material culture of their ancestors (Creamer 1983:12; Connah 1997:50). Thus these archaeologists aspire to learn of the Indigenous archaeological record by studying living people and their material culture (Renfrew & Bahn 1997:12-16).

Archaeology has often followed geography in philosophical shifts. Both disciplines were largely empiricist until the 1960s when such approaches were replaced “with the white heat of positivism coupled with functionalism, in which the notion of geography as spatial science and archaeology as a science of the past was borne” (Tilley 1994:7). In the 1970s and 1980s members of both disciplines reacted against earlier positivist approaches (Wagstaff 1987:26). A re-theorization of geography occurred in the 1970s, however, archaeology did not follow this lead until the 1980s. Central to this reaction and re-theorization were “questions of the subjective individual, mind, meaning and symbolism” (Hodder 1987:135). Yet, these interests remained outside of the legislative model of heritage in Queensland (and elsewhere in Australia).

More recently, in the late 1990s, some Australian archaeologists began to incorporate the notion of the cultural landscape that was first developed in geography in the 1950s (Leighly 1963). These archaeologists have begun to understand that archaeological sites do not exist in isolation; rather they constitute part of a cultural landscape. Consequently some archaeologists are now interested in the relationships between the archaeological sites of a cultural landscape. (See Binford 1982; McDonald 1996).

In the late 1980s when the Cultural Record Act was introduced, other Australian States had amended or replaced their earlier relics legislation or were in the process of doing so. For example, in 1974 the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Act was amended to include the protection of Aboriginal places (NPWS 2000). The Queensland government failed to follow the standards set by some States and Territories that included the acknowledgment of the Indigenous ownership of heritage and improved provisions for the Indigenous control of Indigenous heritage. An example of such legislation is The Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989. (Evatt 1998; Fourmile 1996:510-512.)

The Cultural Record Act represented a restricted and archaeological model of cultural heritage, a model that by the 1990s, at the very least, was outmoded in relation to developments within the discipline that shaped it. According to this model, cultural heritage is about the past, the material traces of past human activity. Furthermore cultural heritage is a
process that is preoccupied with the preservation of this past. This was essentially a static and physical model of cultural heritage. In recognition of Aboriginal assertions for control of their heritage and in terms of developments in the social sciences, by the 1990s reformations to Queensland’s Indigenous cultural heritage legislation were long overdue.

1.4 THE QUEENSLAND HERITAGE ACT 1992

Establishment of the Queensland Heritage Act

In the early 1990s the Queensland Government recognised the inadequacies of the Cultural Record Act and worked towards the development of more effective legislation (Fourmile 1996:507-509). In 1992 the *Queensland Heritage Act* was introduced. This Act is predominantly concerned with non-Indigenous heritage and is only applicable to Indigenous cultural heritage where a place is characterised by an association between Indigenous cultures and European or other cultures (Queensland Heritage Act 1992:s61). Consequently, while non-Indigenous society now had improved legislation to protect its heritage, the ineffective Cultural Record Act remained as the primary Indigenous cultural heritage legislation in Queensland (Fourmile 1996:Queensland Government 1999:6). At the time (early 1990s), the Queensland government recognised the need to review the Cultural Record Act with the intention of improving it, consistent with Indigenous interests, but it failed to commence such a review until 1998, six years after the introduction of the Queensland Heritage Act (Fourmile 1996:509-510). This was despite ongoing calls for the development of more effective Queensland legislation throughout this six-year period:4

What is desperately required is legislation based on a definition which will enable Aboriginal cultural heritage in all its aspects to be protected and fostered (Fourmile 1989:53).

A discriminatory situation

Fourmile (1996:527-529) argues that the introduction of the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* created a discriminatory situation in Queensland’s heritage regime. According to Fourmile (1996:527-529) the level and means by which Indigenous people could enjoy, protect and develop their cultural heritage under the Cultural Record Act was less than that available to non-Indigenous people under the Queensland Heritage Act.

Differences in the two laws included (Fourmile 1996:527-528): (i) a greater clarity of expression in the Queensland Heritage Act; (ii) the Cultural Record Act did not provide responsibility for Indigenous people to manage their cultural heritage in the same manner as that which is available to non-Indigenous people under the Queensland Heritage Act; (iii) the Cultural Record Act enabled the Minister to exercise a wider range of discretionary powers than is available to the Minister under the Queensland Heritage Act; (iv) the penalty system for offences under the Cultural Record Act was inferior to that of the Queensland Heritage

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4 See also Ellis 1994.
Act; and (v) the Queensland Heritage Act is binding on the crown, but the same provisions did not apply to the Cultural Record Act.

The failure of the Queensland government to improve Indigenous cultural heritage while maintaining more effective legislation for non-Indigenous heritage was indicative of that State’s history of policy and legislation concerned with Indigenous relationships with land. A comparison of Queensland legislation to other state legislation and its relationship to Commonwealth legislation further illustrates the pressing need to reform the Queensland heritage regime in the mid1990s.

1.5 STATE AND COMMONWEALTH HERITAGE LEGISLATIONS IN THE 1990s

Other State & Territory models of cultural heritage

There are many differences in the various Australian State and Territory heritage regimes (Evatt 1998:4). However, two broad categories of heritage legislation can be discerned based on the definition of heritage embodied in the legislation (Evatt 1998:4; Ritchie 1996:1). In the 1990s Queensland’s legislation, recognized as one of the most ineffective in Australia, was amongst a number of State heritage regimes which were characterised by a narrow definition of heritage; the New South Wales and Tasmanian legislation were also within this category (Evatt 1998:4; Ritchie 1996:1-2).

The second category of legislation is characterised by a broader definition of heritage, one that:

...explicitly acknowledges the continuing interest of Aboriginal people in places significant according to Aboriginal tradition and grants Aboriginal people rights, with respect to those places, regardless of underlying land tenure. (Ritchie 1996:1.)

Such rights may include a right of access, a right to deny access to others and a right to determine what may or may not happen at the site. (Ritchie 1996:2.)

Amongst this category of legislation are the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989 and the South Australian and Victorian heritage legislations. This body of laws is a product of a shift in recognition of the relationship between Aboriginal cultural beliefs and practices and the land which occurred in the 1970s. This shift is attributed to the recommendations of the Woodward Commission and the development of the Northern Territory’s Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1976 which significantly emphasized this relationship (Ellis 1994:8; Ritchie 1996:1). Woodward in particular “highlighted for the first time the need for legislation to protect places “of contemporary religious importance””(Ritchie 1996:1).

A unique subset of this latter category of laws is the South Australian and Australian Capital Territory legislations that recognise “contemporary traditions which have evolved or developed since colonisation” (Evatt 1998:4). Long and Memmott (1999:1) have argued for
Queensland legislation that is “inclusive of pre-contact and post-contact traditions.” (See also Memmott and Long 2002).

The first category of legislations including the Queensland heritage regime in the mid 1990s, failed to accommodate the shift in recognition of continuing Aboriginal relationships with places. Consequently this group of State laws remained ineffective. The ineffective nature of these laws was reflected in the greater use that Indigenous people of states such as Queensland made of Commonwealth heritage legislation (Evatt 1996; 1998:4; Ritchie 1996:3).

**The Commonwealth Heritage Legislation**

The Commonwealth legislation, the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* was introduced to protect Indigenous places when State or Territory legislation failed to effectively do so. From 1984 until 1996, thirty-three applications for declarations of protection of areas in Queensland were made under this Act. This was the greatest number of applications for any state or territory (the lowest was Victoria with one application). The types of places involved included: mythological sites associated with creation/dreamtime; a spring; middens; burial sites; initiation grounds; fish traps; scarred trees; an occupation site; and rock art sites (Evatt 1996:271). However, no long-term declarations for protection of an area under this Act were made in Queensland. In fact, across Australia there were only four declarations for long term protection under this Act, of which only one remains in force, this being the protection of Junction Waterhole (*Niltye/Tnyere-Akerte*), Alice Springs (Evatt 1996:9-10, 267; Marcus 2004:331).

**The Evatt review and The Commonwealth Heritage Bill**

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protection Act 1984* has generally failed to directly protect Indigenous cultural heritage. Junction Waterhole was a successful utilization of the federal legislation, but it was the only success from ninety-nine applications (Evatt 1996:11; Goldflam 1997:4). According to Evatt (1996:12), the Federal legislation has contributed indirectly to the protection of Indigenous cultural heritage by acting as a restraint on the states and by influencing development outcomes. Despite these minor achievements, Evatt (1996:17) reports:

> ...the Act has lost the confidence of many Aboriginal people, who see it as unable to meet the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people concerning the protection of their cultural heritage in the post-*Mabo* era.

Following a comprehensive review of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protection Act 1984*, Evatt (1996:18-19) detailed the following goals for the reform of the Act.

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5 One declaration was made in Queensland for immediate, 48 hour protection (Evatt 1996:10).
6 Goldflam (1997:4) describes the report as “a comprehensive blueprint for reform which promises to fulfil the Act’s original beneficial purpose, while addressing the myriad of complex difficulties which have plagued its operation.”
To respect and support the living culture, traditions and beliefs of Aboriginal people and to recognise their role and interest in the protection and control of their heritage.

To retain the basic principles of the Act, as an Act of last resort.

...encouraging States and Territories to adopt minimum standards for protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage...

To avoid duplication and overlap with State and Territory jurisdictions by recognition and accreditation of their processes.

To provide access to an effective process for the protection of areas and objects significant to Aboriginal people.

To provide a process which operates in a consistent manner, according to clear procedures...

To ensure that Aboriginal people participate in decisions about the protection of their significant sites and their wishes are taken fully into account.

To ensure that heritage protection laws benefit all Aboriginal people whether or not they live in traditional life style, whether they are urban, rural or remote. The objective should be to protect living culture/tradition laws as Aboriginal people see it now.

All of Evatt’s goals are important. However if State legislations were to only adhere to the final goal, then more effective legislation would result. An assumption that Aboriginal societies are culturally homogeneous may result in failure to protect “places which have intrinsic cultural significance for a particular Aboriginal community” (Dobb 1995:40; see also AHC 1985:97). Aboriginal society in Queensland is not homogeneous. Whilst the cultures of pre-contact Queensland contained commonalities, they were also characterised by diversity on account of the development of distinctive cultural styles within particular regions (Memmott 1991a:176-181). As a consequence of this pre-contact diversity and of different post-contact experiences and history, “there exists significant variation in the cultures of Aboriginal Queensland today” (Memmott 1991a:182). New cultural heritage legislation must adhere to Evatt’s last goal (above) and accommodate cultural diversity. Heritage legislation (both state and federal) must respond to cultural heritage “as Aboriginal people see it now”.

The Howard Government introduced a heritage protection Bill in 1998. This Bill failed to meet the recommendations of the Evatt review. Instead it diminished the level of protection that was available under Commonwealth, State and Territory heritage regimes (Woodley 1999:2). It did so by placing responsibility for the protection of Indigenous cultural heritage with the State and Territory governments without a requirement for them to conform to the minimum standards for accreditation of their heritage regimes prescribed by Evatt (Evatt 1996:76-99; ‘Koori Mail’ 20/5/1998; Windsor & Plane 1998:6; Woodley 1999:2; Culvenor 2000:17).

The federal legislation would only operate as a last resort (i) where State or Territory legislation failed to meet Commonwealth accreditation, or (ii) where it could be shown that operation of the Act was in the ‘national interest’ (Culvenor 2000:17). It could prove difficult
for Indigenous groups to show that the protection of their places is in the national interest (‘Land Rights News’ 1999:28). The Director of the Central Land Council, Tracker Tilmouth warns:

   It’s a trick because for every important sacred site, how can the owners show that looking after it is in the national interest?...Probably only Uluru would fit the criteria for protection. That would leave everything else at risk. (Tilmouth in Land Rights News 1998.)

The threat of the Commonwealth removing or diminishing the role of Commonwealth heritage legislation as a safeguard left Queensland Indigenous communities relying on State legislation. Given the nature of Queensland’s heritage laws and the reliance of Queensland’s Indigenous groups on the Commonwealth legislation in the 1990s, prospects for the protection of Indigenous cultural heritage in that State appeared bleak.

In 1998, during the course of this research, the Queensland Government announced its intention to review Queensland’s Indigenous cultural heritage legislation and to develop new legislation “which is responsive to the specific nature of Indigenous cultural heritage” (Native Title Services 1999:1). This was an exciting opportunity for Queensland to develop new and effective legislation. At the very least it was an opportunity to develop legislation commensurate with exemplary models of State and Territory legislation such as the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989.

1.6 THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT REVIEW OF INDIGENOUS CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Queensland Government’s attempt to produce more effective legislation

This review was prompted by (i) a Commonwealth requirement that the State provide effective protection for Indigenous cultural heritage (under the amended Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993); (ii) the report of the Evatt enquiry, and the introduction of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Bill 1998 (discussed above); and (iii) community and land-user dissatisfaction with the Cultural Record Act. (Native Title Services 1999:1.)

In an overview of Aboriginal heritage legislation Elizabeth Evatt states:

   Ideally, State and Territory Laws should provide an effective process for the protection of areas and objects significant to Aboriginal people when they are threatened by development. (Evatt 1998:4.)

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7 Marcus (2004:331) argues that since 1996 the Federal cultural heritage legislation has been effectively unusable. She also argues (2004:340) that the diminishing role of Federal heritage protection is an “important step in a determined series of moves by the Howard Government to wind back all forms of Indigenous rights to land and to remove of the mechanisms of self-determination.”

8 The Queensland Government had first announced its intention to undertake such a review in 1991.
Queensland’s Cultural Record Act was amongst the most ineffective heritage legislation in Australia. This was clearly recognised by the Queensland Government (Native Title Services 1999:2). The major inadequacy of the legislation lay in its narrow definition of heritage which focused on objects and areas of archaeological significance (Evatt 1998:4; Ellis 1994). Given the Queensland Government’s intention at the time of the review of providing more effective and appropriate protection of Indigenous heritage, there was hope that Evatt’s recommendations would be met in that State (Native Title Services 1999:1). But were Evatt’s principles for State legislation (that is, a definition of heritage as areas and objects, and the role of legislation as one of protection) as broad or inclusive as they should be? They were good, but were they good enough?

The Queensland Government released a Discussion Paper in 1999 that called for public submissions to the review. This discussion paper briefly outlined the two concerns of the government; these being (1) satisfying Indigenous cultural heritage interests, and (2) implementing methods to expedite changes in land use. These concerns are not necessarily mutually exclusive or in conflict. However, unless legislation adequately provides for Indigenous interests then there will always be a potential conflict between (1) and (2). (Native Title Services 1999.)

A submission to the review by Long and Memmott (1999) examined core inadequacies of the Cultural Record Act and key principles for more effective legislation. These included the need for heritage legislation based on Indigenous definitions of cultural heritage, provision for Indigenous control and ownership of Indigenous cultural heritage, provision for confidentiality and the maintenance of Indigenous Intellectual property rights, Indigenous controlled methods for determining cultural heritage and Indigenous controlled processes for managing changes in land use. This submission (1999:3) defined a primary principle for cultural heritage legislation:

Indigenous cultural heritage legislation must provide a legal framework for Indigenous people to:
(i) protect their cultural heritage from unwanted change, including disruption, damage or destruction to physical, behavioural and knowledge properties; (ii) maintain and develop cultural heritage, this includes rights to access, and rights to undertake behaviour associated with particular places, for example resource exploitation; and (iii) restrict or prohibit the activities of others in relation to their cultural heritage. (Long and Memmott 1999:3.)

The submission of the Queensland Indigenous Working Group (QIWG) to the review outlined a similar principle:

Effective protection, enhancement and transmission of cultural heritage is fundamental to indigenous people. It is a basic tool for maintaining a living culture in the face of rapid economic development. (QIWG 1999:1.)

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9 This included the development of adequate definitions, provision for the protection of areas, Indigenous involvement in cultural protection, and Indigenous ownership and access rights.

10 Members of QIWG include Queensland’s Native Title Representative Bodies.
The QIWG submission outlined the following principles for the new legislation (1999:1-2):
1. A mechanism for developers and Indigenous people to negotiate work area clearances.
2. The role of legislation is to protect and promote the maintenance of law and culture.
3. Indigenous resources, beliefs, cultural knowledge and artefacts remain the property of Indigenous people.
4. Recognition of the living, dynamic and evolving nature of Indigenous societies and their cultures.
5. Adequate funding for the system of protecting heritage including the funding of key regional, community controlled indigenous organisations.
6. The establishment of an independent Aboriginal-controlled specialist heritage agency.
7. Recognition of the value of the protection of Indigenous heritage to all of humanity
8. Legislation to comply with international covenants and conventions for the protection and enhancement of Indigenous rights.

A draft model for new heritage legislation in Queensland

The Queensland Government released a ‘draft model for new legislation’ in December 1999. This draft model was supposed to be informed by “the comments and recommendations made in submissions and through consultation with key Indigenous and stakeholder groups” but the nature of the draft model and response to the model from Indigenous organisations suggests otherwise (Queensland Government 1999:8). For example, the draft model clearly failed to fully satisfy the principles put forward by the Queensland Indigenous Working Group in their alternative model (see ‘Land Rights Queensland’ 2000b:3).

For Indigenous people, there are two key requirements for legislation on cultural heritage. The first is that their ownership of Indigenous cultural heritage must be recognised. The second is that the legislation must put them in a position where they can do whatever is necessary to protect their cultural heritage. (Land Rights Queensland 2000b:3.)

The draft model failed to satisfactorily recognise Indigenous rights of ownership of Indigenous cultural heritage. Although there was provision for greater Indigenous involvement in the operation of the legislation the model also failed to recognise Indigenous rights to control Indigenous cultural heritage, instead control of Indigenous heritage ultimately remained with the State. Indigenous organisations (see ‘Land Rights Queensland’ 2000a:2; 2000b:1-3), academics and heritage professionals including archaeologists (see Ross 2000), shared the view that these constituted serious flaws in the draft model.

The review provided an opportunity for Queensland to establish itself as the leader in cultural heritage legislation and management in Australia and the best practice model for the protection and maintenance of Indigenous cultural heritage (Long and Memmott 1999:1). Instead, the draft model represented a serious failure to improve upon the existing legislation, including a failure to respond to continuing Indigenous assertions of control and ownership of
Indigenous cultural heritage and a failure to respond to developments in cultural heritage research (including archaeology) more broadly. Consequently claims by QWIG (ʻLand Rights Queensland’ 2000b:1) and by Ross (2000:21) that the draft model was driven only by an interest in the expeditious approval of changes in land use, must be taken seriously.

‘The Ithaca Statement’

In April 2000 three Queensland Indigenous organisations; the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Board, the Queensland Indigenous Working Group and FAIRA Aboriginal Corporation held a cultural heritage forum to discuss and assess the Government’s draft model for new legislation. The forum participants developed a statement of strategies known as ‘the Ithaca Statement’ that detailed a response to the draft model. This statement was later presented as a bark painting to the Queensland Premier. (Johnson 2000:8.)

The Ithaca Statement rejected the Queensland Government’s draft model of cultural heritage legislation, and demanded the review process be abandoned and the government taskforce be dismantled. The Statement demanded recognition of Indigenous rights of ownership and control of Indigenous cultural heritage. It demanded that the Queensland Government honour its duty to protect these rights and called for cultural heritage legislation that embodied these rights. The principles of the Ithaca statement and the QWIG alternative model are consistent with Evatt’s recommendations. (ʻLand Rights Queensland’ 2000c:10.)

1.7 NEW LEGISLATION

In April of 2004 (as this thesis was being completed) the Cultural Record Act was replaced by two new Queensland cultural heritage Acts, the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 and the equivalent Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003. This legislation maintains a narrow, physically orientated, definition of cultural heritage that reflects a failure to address the criticisms made of the inadequacies of the draft model and earlier legislation:

“Aboriginal cultural heritage” is anything that is—

(a) a significant Aboriginal area in Queensland; or

(b) a significant Aboriginal object; or

(c) evidence, of archaeological or historical significance, of Aboriginal occupation of an area of Queensland. (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003:s8.)

Under the Act areas or objects are significant to Aboriginal people due to either tradition, or to the history, including contemporary history, of an Aboriginal party with that area or object. In addition to this recognition of contemporary history a positive attribute of the Act is that it does not require physical evidence of the significance of an area for that area to be protected. (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003:s9, s10; Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003:s28.)

12 The remainder of this critique is concerned with the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003.
The base definition of cultural heritage is an extension of the models that lay at the foundation of the earlier cultural heritage Acts, it reduces cultural heritage to physical properties in the environment and fails to fully recognise ongoing Aboriginal interactions with those environments other than for the purpose of protecting those environments. This constitutes a major deficiency in the model and from herein it is flawed. What becomes protected is the physical condition of an area or object, the Act is triggered by proposed or real threats to the physical condition of areas or objects, the Act does not consider the ongoing interactions of Indigenous people with areas or objects. This is despite the fact that the Government exhibited a more comprehensive understanding of Indigenous cultural heritage in the preamble to the earlier draft model:

From an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective, cultural heritage is also about the fundamental link between people, their environment, health, wellbeing and their cultural identity. In this respect, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people often talk about their cultural heritage in an holistic sense; and accountability and responsibility to country, and as something inseparable from their identity as a people. (Queensland Government 1999:5.)

As with the earlier Acts, in the new Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003, the State retained its claim to ownership of Aboriginal cultural heritage and maintained control of the processes associated with the Act under the discretionary powers of the Minister and Chief Executive. Aboriginal ownership of cultural heritage is restricted to human remains, secret or sacred objects, and Aboriginal cultural heritage lawfully taken away from an area, such ownership is based on tradition or familial links to the objects. (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003:s14, s20.)

Under the Act the assessment of cultural heritage values and negotiations with the State and proponents of development is to be carried out by an Aboriginal Party comprised of either a Native Title Party (native title claimants or native title holders), or where there is no Native Title Party for an area an Aboriginal party is comprised of an Aboriginal person who is a knowledge holder for that area, or the person has responsibility for that area under Aboriginal tradition, or a member of a family or clan group that holds responsibility for an area. Although this places the control of cultural heritage assessment in the hands of Aboriginal parties it does so with a limited view of what constitutes an Aboriginal party with cultural heritage interests over an area. (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003:s 34, s 35.)

A positive attribute of this Act is its supposed ‘blanket’ protection of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. The Act purports to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage by enforcing a “cultural heritage duty of care” on those intending to modify the physical properties of areas or objects:

A person who carries out an activity must take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure the activity does not harm Aboriginal cultural heritage. (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003:s23.)
This “Cultural Heritage Duty of Care” places a responsibility on a person intending to undertake any activity that may harm an area or objects to take reasonable precautions before doing so. The Australian Heritage Commission (2002) has produced a useful set of guidelines that are intended to assist proponents of change to take such precautions. Unfortunately the Queensland Government has limited the types of situation to which the Act provides protection and thus to which the Duty of Care applies, these limitations (described below) can be viewed as ensuring the interests of others to carry out activities with respect to an area prevail over the cultural heritage rights of Aboriginal people. (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003:s23(2) a; Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003:s28, 4.0, 5.0.)

The Act defines five types of activity/modification to the physical environment. Category 1, are those activities that are deemed to involve no surface disturbance. The Act views such activities as unlikely to harm Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and thus does not require such activities to be assessed (consultation with an Aboriginal Party is not required). The following activities are listed within this category: (a) walking, (b) driving along existing roads and tracks, (c) aerial surveys, (d) navigating through water, (e) …surveys using methods which do not cause surface disturbance, (f) photography. (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003:s28, 4.1-4.3.)

Many if not all of these activities have the potential to harm the place specific access and behavioural rules that many Aboriginal groups maintain. Memmott for example documented access and behavioural rules for Lardil places:

[Initiation] grounds are sacred places, particularly because penis blood has been spilt on them. For this reason, they are normally out of bounds to women and children who must observe avoidance rules. The general restriction to access for women is lifted for certain parts of the circumcision ceremony, except in the case of pregnant women. (Memmott 1979:118.)

The Lardil observed (and still observe) certain behavioural codes at story places. Although women and children can go near these places, everybody must keep quiet, talk softly, and act reverently. The men may instruct everybody not to look directly at the place and on some occasions…to shield one’s vision with a bunch of leaves. Whistling, shouting, singing and laughing are forbidden. (Memmott 1979:124.)

The potential harm of the activities listed above on cultural heritage is clearly acknowledged by the Act’s duty of care guidelines and yet paradoxically it does not respond to such circumstances due to the narrow definition of cultural heritage that it employs- cultural heritage is only harmed by physical changes to the environment:

Although activities such as walking through a culturally significant place are permitted under this guideline, it is important to be aware that merely being present in a culturally significant place may cause offence to Aboriginal people and, where this is known, due respect should be paid to these cultural sensitivities. (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003:s28, 6.)

Paradoxically those people defined as principal Aboriginal parties for the purposes of the Act, that is native title holders and claimants, are required to display the maintenance of such
place-specific behavioural rules in order to have their connection to country recognized under Native Title legislation.

The second category covers activities that involve no additional surface disturbance. The maintenance of existing activities that disturb physical properties of place is guaranteed by the Act. These activities include: (a) cultivation, (b) grazing cattle, (c) use and maintenance of existing roads, (d) use, maintenance and protection of services and facilities, (e) use, maintenance and protection of services and facilities on areas immediately adjacent to the area where activity currently occurs, (f) tourism and visitation. In supporting the maintenance of these activities without any requirement for assessment the Act neglects to consider the harm that such activities may have already caused and the harm they may continue to cause to Aboriginal cultural heritage. (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003A:s28, 4.4-4.6.)

Category 3, developed areas and Category 4, areas previously subject to significant ground disturbance are deemed by the Act as areas where proposed activities are unlikely to harm cultural heritage. Thus the Act assumes that significant disturbance of the physical environment erodes or neutralizes the cultural heritage values of those areas and no further cultural heritage assessment of those areas is required (although the Act does acknowledge the existence of what it terms “residual cultural heritage significance”). (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003A:s28, 5.1-5.12.)

Lastly, Category 5 activities are those that cause significant ground disturbance. The Act deems such activities to be at high risk of harming cultural heritage and recommends cultural heritage assessment in such circumstances. Thus, the Act is predominantly concerned with protecting areas subject to new activities that cause significant ground disturbance. (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003A:s28. 5.13-5.16.)

Those with interests in the use of areas have welcomed the introduction of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 and have even boasted of their role in shaping the Act to minimize its impact on their industry (see for example QTIC 2004; see also QRC 2004). However, while the new legislation may offer some increased protection to the physical aspects of Aboriginal cultural heritage the full relevance of the legislation as a response to the cultural heritage interests of the Aboriginal people of Queensland remains questionable. (See Watson & Black 2001:11; QIWG nd.; Allens, Arthur, Robinson 2004.)

I return to The Queenslander (1879):

During the last four or five years the human life and property destroyed by the Aboriginals in the North totals up to a serious amount...settlement on the land, and the development of the mineral

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13 It is noteworthy and ironic that responsibility for Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation has been transferred from the Environment Protection Agency to the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy. NRM now has the dual role of promoting the development of natural resources (Aboriginal places) and protecting them (see www.nrm.qld.gov.au).
and other resources of the country, have been in a great degree prohibited by the hostility of the blacks, which still continues with undiminished spirit. (Queenslander, 15 February 1879 in Reynolds 1995:111.)

The destruction of Indigenous cultural heritage across Queensland totals up to a serious amount. Successive Queensland Governments were complicit in this destruction. Development of mineral and other resources of the country have in a great degree prohibited the enjoyment by Indigenous people of their cultural heritage rights. Yet Indigenous Queenslanders continue to fight for their rights (the ‘first cultural heritage movement’) with undiminished spirit. It still remains for the Queensland Government to respond to this movement’s clearly articulated demands for effective State heritage legislation.

The need to explore the relationship between cultural heritage and native title

Although for Indigenous people, areas and objects of cultural heritage significance are often important manifestations of their native title rights and interests, native title and cultural heritage are not the same and are protected by separate pieces of legislation. (Queensland Government 1999:5.)

Aboriginal cultural heritage values should not be confused with native title. As with non-Aboriginal heritage values, Aboriginal cultural heritage can exist on an area regardless of the nature of land tenure. The existence of Aboriginal cultural heritage in an area does not mean that native title exists over that area. (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003:s28, 1.3.)

The Queensland Government has correctly acknowledged that cultural heritage exists irrespective of tenure. The Queensland Government is also correct in recognising that native title and cultural heritage are not the same, but this does not mean that they are not intertwined and it does not mean that questions of native title rights can be excluded from cultural heritage legislation.

Where cultural heritage legislation is inadequate, such as in Queensland at present, Indigenous groups across Australia have viewed and used native title as a way of protecting their cultural heritage. However those groups unable to have their native title rights recognized are left with cultural heritage legislation as their primary legal instrument with which they can pursue and manage cultural heritage issues. Lane (2000:12) argues:

The role of native title becomes more important as existing heritage legislation may not be able to deal with the conflict between the preservation of spiritual or cultural relationships with water and pressures for development, particularly where a large area possesses special significance. (Lane 2000:12.)

Memmott and Long (2002:53) argue:

The advent of Native Title ‘rights and interests’ provided Indigenous groups with a hope, a trust, and an apparent means to access, use and protect their places and cultural landscapes. This has been manifested in Native Title Claims as Rights to access and use resources at particular places, to protect sites of cultural significance and to carry out environmental management. The Right of environmental management is premised on the mutually inclusive nature of people-environment transactions and the recognition that natural and cultural properties are intertwined. A parallel
development is the widespread emergence of Cultural Rangers appointed from within their own Aboriginal groups whose duties are to protect and maintain places and landscapes of cultural importance.

Ross (2000:17) maintains, “native title rights extend to claims of ownership of indigenous cultural heritage items or places within the State of Queensland.” Similarly the Queensland Government (1999:5) recognises cultural heritage may exist as a manifestation of native title rights and interests. But is it that cultural heritage rights are a subset of native title rights? Clearly this is not always the case as people may hold cultural heritage rights in places for which they do not hold native title interests. A more significant question is; are native title rights a subset of cultural heritage rights? That is, are native title rights a particular manifestation of cultural heritage rights? This is a very significant question, one which is unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis. Investigation/exploration of this question is dependant on a suitable definition of ‘cultural heritage’, one which reflects the particular nature of Indigenous cultural heritage as it is lived and experienced by Indigenous people and herein lies the usefulness of this thesis to this important question.

CONCLUSION

There are two cultural heritage movements in Queensland, the first is an Indigenous cultural heritage movement and the second a parallel government-controlled movement. From the time of invasion, the Queensland Government has attempted to usurp control of Indigenous cultural heritage. Successive Queensland Governments have imposed changes on Queensland Indigenous societies with sometimes devastating consequences. Despite the destruction brought about by these changes, Indigenous groups have challenged and resisted such changes and fought to maintain the control of their cultural heritage. The current Queensland cultural heritage regime fails to recognise the first cultural heritage movement and consequently continues to impose change on Indigenous societies in that State.14

Since the 1970s, definitions of cultural heritage have diversified. Cultural heritage is no longer considered simply as the distant past, rather it is increasingly seen to include as well, the recent past and the present. These developments are yet to be fully recognised in Australia, particularly in relation to Indigenous cultural heritage legislation. Queensland cultural heritage legislation maintains the legacy of a narrow archaeological definition of cultural heritage. This definition is the nexus of the ineffective nature of the legislation that fails to fully include the interactions of contemporary Indigenous people with their cultural heritage.

Under (the threat of) proposed changes to Commonwealth heritage legislation, the need to develop more effective State legislation has intensified. Cultural heritage legislation will only

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14 Goldflam (1997) has a similar argument concerning the Commonwealth legislation.
be effective for the Indigenous population when it incorporates Indigenous definitions of heritage. Since at least the mid 1970s there has been compelling evidence to do this, yet the Queensland government has failed to do so. The question remains: What is the ‘specific nature of Indigenous cultural heritage’? This thesis contributes to what appears to be an emerging and wider exploration of this critical question.

Investigation of this question is dependant on a theoretical and philosophical approach that is capable of encompassing a diverse range of Indigenous values and cultural elements, one that is inclusive of Indigenous knowledge systems. Broad definitions of culture, place theory and phenomenology offer theoretical vehicles for such an approach. These are explored in the following chapters.
In the previous chapter it was shown that an archaeological model of cultural heritage failed as it excluded contemporary Indigenous society and a corresponding multiplicity of heritage types and values. In order to investigate Indigenous concepts of cultural heritage a suitable cross-cultural theoretical approach is required that is capable of encompassing a diversity of heritage types and values. The constructs of ‘culture’ and ‘place’ offer such a theoretical approach. Rather than defining what Indigenous cultural heritage is, as the archaeological model did, these concepts provide a framework for a comprehensive investigation of the nature of Indigenous cultural heritage. These concepts are already implicitly and explicitly present in the western scientific literature and legislation concerned with cultural heritage. For example, there is an increasingly popular usage of the term ‘place’ in cultural heritage discourse. The aim of this chapter is to establish definitions of ‘culture’ and ‘place’ that are useful to investigations of Indigenous cultural heritage.

The chapter commences with an examination of relevant anthropological constructs of ‘culture’. In contrast to the static and physical definition of culture embodied in existing legislation, this chapter searches for a broader and more dynamic definition of culture. The relationship of ‘place’ and ‘cultural heritage’ is then described and a definition of ‘place’ established. The nature of Indigenous place properties is discussed and a brief overview of significant studies of Aboriginal places provided. The inherently dynamic nature of place as a product of people-environment interactions is described. The interrelationship of places to form complex units of people-environment interactions is also considered.

2.1 TOWARDS A BROAD DEFINITION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

A useful definition of culture
Basic to a theoretical examination of cultural heritage is the concept of ‘culture’. How culture is defined informs considerations of cultural heritage. The numerous anthropological definitions of culture can be categorized as (i) those which define culture as an adaptive system, and (ii) those which define culture as an ideational system. (Goodenough 1961:521; Rapoport 1980:9; Keesing 1981:68-69.)

Culture as an adaptive system consists of “patterns of behaviour” characteristic of a group of people within an ecosystem. It is the “realm of observable phenomena”, the things that people do and make (Keesing 1974:74-75; 1981:68). On the other hand, culture as an ideational system also consists of “patterns for behaviour”, but confined to the “realm of ideas”. It comprises a system of shared ideas, concepts, rules and meanings, characteristic of a group of people. According to such a definition, the things that people do and make are
products of these systems (Goodenough 1961:522; Keesing 1981:68). In this sense the two definitions are complementary.

The anthropologist Chase has argued that the latter, ideational definition of culture, should inform cultural heritage legislation in Australia. In contrast to an archaeological model of heritage, Chase argued that knowledge systems should take precedence in legislation (Chase in Queensland Parliament 1987:4643). To some extent Chase is correct, knowledge systems have to be incorporated into models of cultural heritage, yet just as the archaeological model led to a neglect of knowledge systems, a model that is biased towards knowledge systems may neglect the ‘products of these systems’. Such products include behavioural expressions, activities, and material culture.

It has proven advantageous to apply narrow ideational concepts of culture to particular types of anthropological research. For example, significant advances have been made in linguistics “by distinguishing language, as a conceptual code, from speech, the overt behaviour based on that code” (Keesing 1981:69). However, for the purposes of research concerned with Indigenous cultural heritage, a definition of culture in its broadest sense is required. In such a conception, the above definitions of culture, as adaptive system, and as ideational system, are seen as complementary rather than in conflict (Rapoport 1980:9).

Defining culture as either the realm of observable phenomena or the realm of ideas (but not both), limits the possibilities for understanding the cultural heritage of Indigenous societies (or any society). It does so by placing bias on either the observable phenomena (such as archaeological resources) or the knowledge properties. A definition of culture which refers to both the realm of observable phenomena and the realm of ideas, provides a more comprehensive approach to understanding (and subsequently legislating for) the cultural heritage of Indigenous societies (or any society) as it is open to both observable phenomena and knowledge properties. (Rapoport 1980:9; Memmott 1991a:175.)

Culture then in its broadest definition consists of both (a) patterns for behaviour, the realm of ideas, and (b) patterns of behaviour, the realm of observable phenomena, characteristic of a group of people. It includes both the rules for and the patterns of culture. Thus ‘culture’ according to this definition consists of three principal aspects: cognitive, behavioural, and material (the physical environment that people interact with and from which they make things) (Howard 1989:5). The role and interaction of these three properties will emerge more powerfully through the application of the definition of place described later in the analysis.

A further four important considerations for cultural heritage are derived from anthropological definitions of culture, these being (1) that culture is learnt, (2) that culture is shared, (3) that culture is dynamic, and (4) that culture is transmitted.
Cultural dynamics

Humans have learnt how to live in particular social and physical environments in characteristic ways that differentiate them into social groups of various sorts (Howard 1989:5). The process by which culture is learnt and transmitted is known as ‘socialisation’ or ‘enculturation’ (Haviland 1990:35). Through enculturation, cultural knowledge and behaviour is shared amongst members of a society. A significant question is: How does cultural heritage legislation facilitate, promote or inhibit enculturation?

A fundamental premise of all theories of culture is that culture is shared amongst members of a society. However beyond this theorists are at variance concerning the nature of this sharing. Some such as Goodenough (1961:524) have argued the individual holds ideational systems; there is a shared culture to the extent that these individually conceived cultures are in agreement. Thus conceived, a shared culture is a composite of individual systems of knowledge. In contrast, others argue that culture transcends and is external to the individual. Such a position holds that culture exists prior to the individual, in the same sense that language exists prior to one learning it. (Keesing 1981:71.)

It is useful to think of the shared nature of culture as a structure of commonality and difference whereby cultural attributes are distributed amongst a society (Schwartz 1978:423, 439). Thus a society may include cultural diversity related to gender, occupation, age, subgroup membership and life experience. A society may also display cultural commonalities, cultural elements which are shared and are common to its members (Schwartz 1978:423, 439; Keesing 1981:71-72). Investigations of cultural heritage must include those cultural elements common to many members of a society and those cultural elements that are specific to sub-groups within a society. Therefore, when examining Indigenous cultural heritage one must be aware of the potential of diversity between Indigenous groups (as discussed in Chapter 1) as well as the potential for diversity within Indigenous groups and the contrasts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups.

Culture is essentially dynamic; it involves interactions between people and interactions between people and their environment(s). In addition, all societies undergo processes of cultural change (Haviland 1990:412; Memmott 1991a:181-184; Macdonald 1998:9-11). Cultural change occurs (i) where the members of a society respond to a perceived misfit between the model of culture they conceive and their social reality, (ii) in response to environmental change (or crisis), and (iii) as a result of contact with other societies (Haviland 1990:411-418; Memmott 1991a:181-184).

Mechanisms of cultural change include (i) innovation, the creation of new cultural elements, (ii) diffusion, the borrowing and spread of cultural elements from another society or group, (iii) cultural loss, the loss of cultural elements, and (iv) externally directed change, where two
societies come into first hand contact with subsequent radical and often enforced changes to the culture of one or both groups, and (v) syncretism, a tendency to combine teachings, beliefs or practices (Haviland 1990:412-419; Wilkes & Kreb 1991:1563).

Culture acts as a resource by which people can adapt to changed circumstances. The ideational systems of culture provide the basis for implementing planned change and modifying cultural elements (Goodenough 1961:524). However persistent and or radical changes may also produce change in the ideational aspect of culture (Goodenough 1961:525; Memmott 1991a:183). Useful models of cultural heritage must be capable of accommodating the dynamic nature of cultural systems and elements.

The above definition of ‘culture’ suggests that investigations of cultural heritage must consider the following: (i) the cognitive, behavioural and material properties of cultural heritage of a particular society or subject social group; (ii) the distributive structure whereby cultural elements and values are distributed within a society; and (iii) cultural dynamics; the interactions of people, people-environment interactions and the processes of conceiving, transmitting, learning and modifying cultural elements, which in turn underlie changes in the properties of cultural heritage.

2.2 PLACE

A concern with place

In general, the concept of ‘place’ is concerned with people-environment interactions, and the particular nature or properties of such interactions at a given location. A premise of place theory is that these people-environment interactions constitute an important basis of human existence. And further, that all societies maintain a preoccupation with ‘place’. (Relph 1976:1; see also Malpas 1999:1-16.)

A variety of disciplines and philosophies underpin works that discuss the notion of place, including human geography, environmental psychology, anthropology, philosophy, architecture and landscape architecture. Whilst some disciplines have held a long-established concern with place, in the 1970s there occurred a significant multi-disciplinary resurgence in research concerned with place. This was particularly so amongst human geographers who attempted to re-establish ‘place’ within their discipline. This renewed concern with place emerged as a reaction to the positivist approaches in the social sciences of the 1960s and 1970s, and in response to rapid and radical change to what were seemingly stable environments (environments undergoing regular and expected patterns of change). (Jencks 1973:301-315; Relph 1976:1; Cosgrave 1978:66; Casey 1993:xv; Malpas 1999.)

Researchers concerned with place endeavoured to understand the role of people-environment interactions in individual and social life, how environments are important to people, the
affective ties that people develop with environments, the relationship between human identity and environments, and the way people create and maintain place. A number also investigated how changes to the physical environment affected people. (Relph 1976:1, 1993:33; Cosgrave 1978:66-67; Ellis 1994:23; see also Malpas 1999.)

In the Australian heritage literature the concept of place first strongly emerged in the 1970s. Two events at this time contributed significantly to the use of place in Australian heritage discourse. The first was the establishment of the Australian Heritage Commission and the Register of the National Estate in 1976, both of which grew from the Australian National Trust movement (Yencken 1981:12). The second was the creation of the ‘Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance’, otherwise known as the ‘Burra Charter’ which was established in 1977 (Australia ICOMOS 1988).1

One of the major roles of the Australian Heritage Commission has been to compile a Register:

....of those places, being components of the natural environment of Australia or the cultural environment of Australia, that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance or other special value for future generations as well as for the present community (AHC 1990: I).

The Register of the National Estate (RNE) aims to inform and educate the public and those responsible for the development and management of places, about places of ‘national significance’ (AHC 1990:i). This Register inherited a large number of places from the National Trust’s register of historical buildings, which is reflected in the high representation of such places on the RNE. By 1989, 6768 historic places had been registered whereas only 644 Aboriginal places had been registered (Jonas 1991:2). Of the Aboriginal places registered, archaeological places predominated (Mulvaney 1981:52). Jonas (1991:3-6) identified a number of reasons for the low representation of Aboriginal places on the register. These included (i) a reluctance by Aboriginal people to disclose information concerning places of a secret-sacred nature; (b) a difficult and complex registration process; (c) a history of State and Territory governments, such as the Queensland government, objecting to all nominations of Aboriginal places to the register; (d) a desire to register places only when they were threatened; and (e) a resistance to the historic and archaeological heritage models by many Aboriginal people who continued to interact with places in their contemporary lives. (See also AHC1985.)

A further problem with the Australian Heritage Commission, the Register of the National Estate and the National Estate Grants Program (see AHC 1998), has been the principle of ‘national significance’ that this regime holds (and promotes).

1 Australia ICOMOS is the Australian chapter of the International Council on Monuments and Sites.
Places of national significance are those places of the highest comparative level of significance which are worth keeping for the whole nation. (AHC 1998:2.)

Although archaeologists and other heritage professionals may be comfortable with arguments concerning national significance, it may be difficult and foreign for Indigenous groups to prove the ‘national’ significance of local places in their country (AHC1985:106; and see Tilmouth’s comments in the previous chapter). In fact the Australian Heritage Commission recognises that it is impossible to establish a register of Indigenous places of ‘national significance’, nonetheless it maintains that a register such as the RNE assists in the recognition and hence protection of Indigenous places (AHC 1985:106). A further problem with a register of places of ‘national significance’ is that Indigenous heritage is claimed by the nation (see Cleere 1989 and comments in previous chapter). For example, in discussing the National Estate, the esteemed archaeologist Mulvaney argues:

> It is anticipated that future Aboriginal generations will appreciate...that they should assist in their [places] preservation for the benefit of all Australians and not only for their own people. (Mulvaney 1981:52.)

The Australian Heritage Commission has contributed to the education of the wider public concerning the significance of Indigenous places to local Indigenous groups, particularly through the popular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Art Award (Jonas 1994:5; Sullivan 1995:2). However, this program is paradoxical in that places of local significance are promoted nationally. Furthermore, although some Indigenous places have significance across the continent, many places are of local significance or at the most, of regional significance. Thus, the notion of a place of national significance is anomalous to many Indigenous groups.

The ‘Burra Charter’ has similarly promoted the concept of place in heritage discourse. The ‘Burra Charter’ was developed from an earlier international document, the ICOMOS Venice Charter, which is concerned with the preservation and restoration of historic monuments. The Burra Charter was initially established as a guide to the conservation of places for heritage practitioners such as archaeologists and architects. (Marquis-Kyle & Walker 1988:7-8.)

There has been a recent trend in the heritage literature, towards employing ‘place’ in discussions of Indigenous cultural heritage issues. Within this body of literature there has been little discourse concerned with the definition of ‘place’. In the mid-1990s the anthropologist Ellis tentatively suggested ‘place’ be employed to supersede the archaeological model of Indigenous cultural heritage in Queensland legislation (Ellis 1994:23).

Place is already employed in the Queensland Heritage Act 1992. According to this Act (Queensland Heritage Act 1992, s4).

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2 Although some places significant to clan groups have been listed (AHC 1985: 106).
“place” means a defined or readily identifiable area of land...and includes-
(a) a building and such of its immediate surrounds as may be required for its conservation;
(b) a natural feature of historical significance and such of its immediate surrounds as may be
required for its conservation.

A similar definition is found in the ‘Burra Charter’ (Australia ICOMOS 1988:1.1).

Place means site, area, building or other work, group of buildings or other works together with
associated contents and surrounds.

Both definitions emphasize the physical properties of place. They make negligible reference
to human properties of place and even less to dynamic properties of place. These definitions
reflect the traditional interests of the disciplines of architecture and archaeology and of the
National Trust.³ Although Australia ICOMOS and the Australian Heritage Commission both
acknowledge the values embodied in a place, they do not include these values in a definition
of place (see for example AHC 1998:4). Similarly, both organisations recognise ongoing
human interactions with the physical properties of places (see below) but fail to explicitly
acknowledge such interactions in a definition of place (above). (See for example Mulvaney
1981:52; Jonas 1991:8.)

The cultural significance of a place is embodied in its fabric, its setting and its contents; in the
associated documents; in its use; and in people’s memory and association with the place.
(Marquis-Kyle & Walker 1988:15.)

The definition of cultural heritage in Queensland’s new Aboriginal cultural heritage
legislation is similarly biased towards physical properties of place.

Outside of the heritage literature a number of significant studies of Indigenous place
properties have been undertaken including Memmott’s (1979) study ‘Lardil Properties of
Place’ and Myers³ (1991) study ‘Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self: Sentiment, Place, and Politics
among Western Desert Aborigines’. Both of these studies find places to involve interactions
between people and the environment. There is a need for a definition of place that moves
beyond the limited historical and physically orientated definitions of place to one which,
informed by studies such as those of Memmott and Myers, reflects Indigenous properties of
place.

A useful definition of place

Upon close examination, it is activity that creates places, giving significance to impervious matter.
(Myers 1991:54.)

If place is to be used as a model to shape heritage legislation or to understand heritage, what
is the appropriate model of place to be used? Can concepts or definitions of place be used

cross-culturally? If they can, do such models inhibit a broad understanding of cultural heritage properties in the same way that the archaeological model inhibited an understanding of other important aspects of Indigenous heritage?

Amongst the numerous definitions of place⁴, many of which are based on the nature of Western places, the geographer Relph appears to provide a comprehensive definition:

A place is a whole phenomenon, consisting of the three intertwined elements of a specific landscape with both built and natural elements, a pattern of social activities that [are] adapted to the advantages or virtues of a particular location, and a set of personal and shared meanings...A place is above all a territory of meanings. These meanings are created both by what one receives from and by what one gives to a particular environmental context... (Relph 1995:34- 36.)

The anthropologist Memmott (in Memmott & Stacy 1997:7) provides a similar yet even more encompassing definition; he describes places as “physical-psychological complexes of multiple inter-related properties”. According to Memmott places may be partly, or wholly, created by one or a combination of: (a) alterations to the natural or human-made physical characteristics of a piece of environment, (b) the enactment of special types of behaviour at a particular piece of environment, and (c) by the association of knowledge properties such as, concepts, legends, names, and memories with a particular piece of environment (Memmott & Stacy 1997:7).

There is a subtle yet significant difference between Memmott’s definition and that of Relph. Relph states that places possess the intertwined elements of physical environment, behaviour and meanings, thus suggesting that a place only exists where these three properties occur in combination. Whereas, Memmott states that places may be made, in whole, or in part by the physical environment, behaviours and meanings. Consequently, according to Memmott’s definition, a place may exist where a person, or a group of people, associate knowledge properties with an environment that may not necessarily be physically altered by humans or may not have associated behavioural properties. Furthermore, according to this definition “some places can originate in the mind, as distinct from places of the ‘outside’ world.” (Memmott & Stacy 1997:7.)

Part of the usefulness of this definition is its ability to cover a wide range of types and examples of Indigenous people-environment interactions. These include complex situations such as the maintenance of place properties by a group forcibly removed from their places. It is also capable of accommodating situations of place renewal (this includes the processes of succession where one land owning group takes responsibility for the places of another land owning group (see Langton 1998:20)).

⁴ Malpas (1999:21-22) describes place as “an awkward term to clarify” because it is used in a wide range of senses.
Memmott’s definition of place is derived from the fundamental understanding that places are created and maintained through mutual interaction between people and the environment (Memmott 1979:494). This important principle is shared by numerous researchers concerned with place (see for example Canter 1988:1; Taylor et al 1990:362; Malpas 1999:1-2) and is in contrast to much Western thought that separates humans from nature.\(^5\) In one of the earliest papers from the field of people-environment studies concerned with Aboriginal properties of place Rapoport (1977) recognized the role of the interactions of Ancestral Beings and humans with the environment in the definition of place; he argued that Aboriginal people interacted with a humanized landscape:

In general terms it appears that aborigines define place through sacred directions, routes of the Dreamtime ancestors and their stopping places which become sacred sites...Thus an apparently featureless landscape may become full of meaning and significance, legends and happenings- that is full of places. The harsh environment is personalized through ritual and myth bringing its natural features into the realm of the familiar and friendly. Aborigines do not move just in landscape but in a humanised realm saturated with significations. (Rapoport 1977:45.)

Morphy (1993; 1995) has also illustrated the need to approach Aboriginal place and landscape from an interactive perspective:

…interaction with the landscape is part of the process whereby the Dreaming as a component of the cultural structure of Aboriginal society is reproduced. (Morphy 1995:187.)

People learn about the land by travelling through it and being introduced to it by members of their individual kindreds- who constitute their ‘permission’ to be in particular places. Their view of the land becomes enriched with the experiences and associations of their lives. Yet this individual passage is made through a pre-existing grid of named places- coming into being is through ‘thinking of a named place’. The ancestral past is learned about during these individual journeys and through participating in ceremonial performances. In some of those performances the presentation of the ancestral past echoes those individual journeys. (Morphy 1995:204.)

In the heritage literature, Indigenous cultural heritage and natural heritage continue to be inadequately identified as mutually exclusive or distinct dimensions (see for example IUCN 1996:3). In Australian Indigenous studies such distinctions have been strongly criticised for their denial of Indigenous interactions with the environment. For example, Langton (1996 & 1998) and others have criticised the way the concept of ‘wilderness’ in Western science operates to diminish and deny Indigenous relationships with the environment including the transformation and maintenance of the environment by Indigenous people. (See Baker 1999b:31; Head 2000:9-10).\(^6\)

Just as terra nullius was a lie, so was this European fantasy of wilderness. There is no wilderness, but there are cultural landscapes, those of the environmentalists who depict a theological version of nature in posters, and those of Aboriginal people, present and past, whose relationships with the environment shaped even the reproductive mechanisms of forests. (Langton 1996:24.)

\(^5\) Canter (1988) and Cosgrave (1978) maintain that the relationship of people and the environment is a dialectical process.  
\(^6\) Head (2000:226) argues that the distinction made by the IUCN between natural and cultural heritage “ignores the extent to which concepts such as biodiversity and conservation are themselves culturally shaped.”
In his study of the properties of place of the Lardil people of the Wellesley Islands in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Memmott (1979) found that Lardil places are generated and maintained through such interactional processes. At that time, Memmott was concerned whether such a model of place could be applied cross-culturally to studies of other Aboriginal environments (Memmott 1979:501-503). Later, in a study of the Indigenous cultural heritage values of Cape York Peninsula, Memmott argued that such a model of place could be used cross-culturally (in Memmott & Stacy 1997:7). This definition of place is useful cross-culturally primarily because it is capable of encompassing a diversity of people-environment interactions. Furthermore, this model of place can be applied in order to move towards emic perspectives (Memmott & Stacy 1997:7; Stea 1997:21). Memmott and Long (2002:39) more recently have argued, “any scientific, political or professional analysis of the cultural heritage values of places or sites should be firmly founded in such a theory of place.”

The remainder of this thesis applies Memmott’s definition of place (above) as a guide to the study of Aboriginal people-environment interactions. Knowledge and behavioural properties of place are further examined but at this point it is useful to introduce significant studies of Indigenous properties of place.

**Indigenous properties of place**

Most anthropological studies of Australian Indigenous societies are concerned in some way with the people-environment interactions of place. There has been an ongoing interest in Aboriginal land-tenure systems and the mapping of Aboriginal places and landscapes. Since the 1970s and the advent of land rights, the study of Indigenous properties of place has intensified. Investigations of Indigenous properties of place form the basis of many contemporary applied anthropological research projects. For example, native title claims (land and sea) as well as land claims require evidence concerning the ‘connection’ between people and particular parts of the environment.

Two anthropological monographs published in the 1990s have contributed significantly to the emerging anthropological literature specifically concerned with the construct of place (and cultural landscape), these being Myers’ (1991) study *Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self; Sentiment, Place, and Politics among Western Desert Aborigines* and Merlan’s (1998) study *Caging the Rainbow; Places, Politics, and Aborigines in a North Australian Town*.

Myers’ (1991) work emphasises the need to explore the dialectic of individuality and collectivity (including social structures) in the creation and maintenance of place. At a simple level, Myers’ examination of this tension, and the mediation of the tension between autonomy and social control in Pintupi life, illustrates an important dimension of change in

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7 In the following chapter I return to the tensions between the individual and the social in an analysis of the usefulness of phenomenology.
Pintupi properties of place. Consideration of the interactions between people must accompany investigations of the properties of place (the intra group politics of place).

Merlan’s (1998) study is concerned with understanding change in Aboriginal place properties within the context of the history of Aboriginal relations with others (intercultural relations-the inter group politics of place). Using case studies drawn from Aboriginal experiences and relationships to place that are centred on the township of Katherine (Northern Territory), Merlan illustrates the need to understand place as a process. Thus, there does not exist a simple dichotomy of persistence and change (traditional/ non-traditional), rather, properties of place are open to transformation and revision. Merlan’s findings contrast prevalent ‘heritage perspectives’ which view properties of place as fixed (an issue covered in the previous chapter) (Merlan 1998:212, 239).

During the 1970s the cross-disciplinary research area of behaviour-environment studies (or people-environment studies) emerged in Australia. Simultaneous with the upsurge of literature concerned with the nature of place and loss of place (for example Tuan 1974, 1977; Relph 1976) was the development, within this research area, of a small group of researchers concerned with Indigenous properties of place in Australia.⁸

One of the first papers in this body of literature was Rapoport’s (1977), Australian Aborigines and the Definition of Place.⁹ This literature-based study attempted to establish a general argument concerning the role of architecture in the definition of Aboriginal place. Rapoport concluded that Aboriginal architecture was insignificant in the definition of place. In contrast, Keys’ recent research with the Warlpiri shows that domestic architecture is in fact significant in the definition and maintenance of Aboriginal place (Keys 1999; 2000:55-56; Memmott 2000:88).

The most significant study of Aboriginal place to emerge from the people-environment research area is Memmott’s (1979) doctoral thesis Lardil Properties of Place. This work remains as one of the most comprehensive investigations of Aboriginal place as a form of people-environment interaction and it was recognised by anthropologists for its detailed mapping of Lardil place properties (see for example Sutton 1995:8-9). Memmott had earlier trained in architecture but this research marked the start of his career in anthropology. Whilst clearly influenced by the field of people-environment studies, this thesis can now be viewed as one of the early Australian anthropological works specifically concerned with Indigenous constructs of place. This work shares Myers’ concern with the interactions of people in the making of place as well as Merlan’s concern with new and revised properties of place. For example, Memmott (1979:128-130; 435-444) documented social interactions that influenced

⁹ First published in 1972.
the structure of camps and he documented contemporary (at the time of his investigation) and distinct Mornington Islander place properties in Mt Isa, a mainland regional centre.

The geographer Baker’s (1999) study, *Land is Life: From Bush to Town, The Story of the Yanyuwa People*, shares Merlan’s concern with the dynamic nature of Indigenous relationships with the environment particularly changes to the cultural landscape. Baker maintains that investigations of contact history are best understood within the context of the dynamic cultural landscape (Baker 1999:226). He is particularly interested in the landscape as cultural construct and thus the differences and commonalities in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural landscapes. This is also the subject of Strang’s (1997) work *Uncommon Ground: Cultural Landscapes and Environmental Values*.

**Transformations- the dynamic properties of place**

...a place, despite its frequently settled appearance, is an essay in experimental living within a changing culture... (Casey 1993:31.)

Implacement is an ongoing cultural process with an experimental edge. (Casey 1993:31.)

The idea of a place immune to change, immune to decay and disintegration, is the idea of a ‘place’ in which nothing at all can appear – neither self nor others, neither the things of the world nor even the place itself. (Malpas 1999:192.)

Studies of Indigenous place, as well as other studies of non-Indigenous place, illustrate that properties of place are essentially dynamic. Place must be understood as process, not as static phenomenon (Canter and Stea 1988:x; Hirsch 1995:5; Merlan 1998:211). Places involve processes of people-environment interactions, a result of which is continual processes of change. Such change can be instigated by human or natural agents, or both. Where place properties are perceived to be characteristically stable, such stability is a product of consistent, and culturally anticipated, processes of change (Brown & Perkins 1992:282). For example, there is associated with places a continual process of encoding and decoding of knowledge properties (Norberg-Schulz 1980:18; Canter 1988:2-7; Memmott & Stacy 1997:7). Within the dynamic framework of people-environment interactions, properties of place may remain relatively constant over generations. Enculturation can contribute to this consistency. For example, a particular type of behaviour associated with a piece of environment may be transmitted to other members of a society (children may be taken fishing at a particular waterhole where generations before them have fished and shown the properties of the place as their parents were shown when they were children).

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10 An intriguing and pertinent aspect of Baker’s study is the way his experiences with the Yanyuwa transformed his disciplinary interest from archaeology to geography. Baker argues that geography’s value to studies of contact history lies in (1) geography’s interest in people-environment interactions, (2) the use of the geographic tool of mapping to understand contact history, and (3) the shared interest of Aboriginal people and geographers in the importance of place and particularly the ‘personality of place’ or ‘sense of place’ (Baker 1999:4-6). Baker’s disciplinary shift is perhaps a radical example of the influence that geography had on some archaeologists in the 1980s.

11 Merlan argues that with the decline of structuralist approaches in anthropology, place is increasingly seen as a dimension of social process, rather than stable phenomenon which contains social structure or against which action occurs.
Canter (1988:11) argues that whilst research has shown that there are periods or plateaus of consistency or stability in people-environment interactions, there is a need to understand the processes of change which are embodied in these consistencies. Furthermore, he argues that studies of people-environment interactions have been “stubbornly stable” (Canter 1988:3). According to Canter “the results to date that have characterised person/environment transactions are only a reflection of dynamic processes at a particular stage in their evolution.”

Memmott (1979) distinguished four levels of change in the people-environment interactions of the Lardil. The first of these consisted of the articulation of place with activity (Memmott 1979:485). Thus a place is transformed when people visit that place and perform activities there. For example, a waterhole is transformed when people visit it to fish. The second category of change is the mental focusing on a place and its properties (Memmott 1979:485). This is a passive rather than physical interaction with place and includes activities such as thinking about a place, remembering events associated with a place and referring to a place in conversation. For example, a waterhole might be remembered whilst visiting another fishing place. This category of change is as relevant to the maintenance of Indigenous place as the enactment of activity in place\(^{12}\) (Memmott and Long 2002:47-48). The third category of change is the internal transformations at a place (such as a waterhole) while it is being used (Memmott 1979:485). Internal transformations consist of complex interactions between behaviour patterns, the physical environment and cognitive properties (fishing at the waterhole). There may be a consistency to such internal transformations that can contribute to a sense of stability in place. (Memmott 1979:485-487.)

Memmott found that there were a number of controlling forces which manage transformations in Lardil places, and in doing so, contribute to the stability of place and contribute to the boundary properties of place (Memmott 1979:486, 498). Such regulating forces can also be found in the ethnographies of other Australian Indigenous groups. The first of these regulating forces is the ongoing fulfilment of place control roles (Memmott 1979:498). For example, Myers (1991:141-142) describes an event involving Pintupi people where the “number one boss” for a yellow ochre Dreaming place threatened to spear a man who took ochre from this place without first seeking his permission as required.\(^{13}\) Another regulating force is Aboriginal conservatism concerning correct behaviour and knowledge associated with place; related to this are “educational processes that teach correct place behaviour and knowledge” (Memmott 1979:498). Education, conservatism and authority contribute to a consistency of style of place usage. An example of these processes can be found in the sea turtle and dugong hunting traditions of the Yanyuwa (Gulf of Carpentaria).

\(^{12}\) This form of place maintenance is yet to be recognised in current Australian legal processes such as native title (Memmott and Long 2002:53-54).

\(^{13}\) See Williams (1986) paper concerning ‘boundaries’ and permission to use places. And see Cooper’s (2004:35-36, 67, 88.) findings in the Wellesley Sea Claim regarding rights to control access to country and the activities performed.
Bradley (1991) has described how the failure to follow correct behavioural rules when hunting and butchering can lead to unsuccessful hunting:

From the moment a dugong is speared until it is drowned no talking takes place. It is believed that talking while the dugong is dying is a sign of great disrespect, and if someone does talk while the dugong is being pulled alongside the boat, the spirits who guard the dugong will come and remove the harpoon points. (Bradley 1991:96.)

Bradley also describes processes for correcting those who fail to follow the correct behaviour when hunting:

Any person who disregards the Law of the dugong have the following phrase directed at them - wardiwiji angkawangu (‘you are filled with badness, you are a mainland dweller’). This is an insulting remark to people who class themselves as sea people and the hunters of marine animals. (Bradley 1991:94.)

The perceived permanency of support structures, artefacts and of important natural properties can also contribute to the control of change. Another type of regulating force is comprised of signs that indicate the location, time and type of normal place activity (Memmott 1979:498). For example, the Yanyuwa hunted dugong throughout the year but most of their hunting occurred in the mid-dry season (ngardara) (Bradley 1991:93-94). This is the time when dugongs are most plentiful, it is also the time when strong southeasterly winds (rra-mardu) have ceased and the sea is calm (Bradley 1991:93-94).

A fourth category of change of the people-environment properties of places, is self-directed and/ or externally directed change which is characterised by the modification or loss of existing properties of place (diffusion, trade) or the addition of new properties of place and the emergence of new places (innovation, acculturation). Such mechanisms of change can be triggered by natural catastrophe and by contact with other cultural groups. This level of change can severely disrupt the other more stable types of change discussed above (Memmott 1979:486-487). Current Queensland cultural heritage legislation is concerned with this last category of change, but only with respect to the way that external forces affect the physical properties of places.

It should also be noted that there are many combinations of the above types of changes. For example, people may talk about a place while visiting and doing things at another place. Furthermore, there are many instances when all of the above levels of change can be simultaneously identified at a place.

These levels of change identified by Memmott (1979:486-487) relate to the times when humans are mentally or physically occupying places. However there are changes that occur at Indigenous places that do not directly involve people. There are changes in environmental conditions of a place, for example a waterhole may be restocked with fish during a flood.
There are also contemporary transformations in place involving the actions of Ancestral Beings (explored later in the thesis). Many Indigenous groups maintain the ability to influence and interact with both of these later dimensions of change.

There is yet another type of change that has been overlooked - the movement of people between places, or changing places. Casey (1993:xii) argues that humans are constantly in between places; we are constantly on the move from one place to another. Thus, it is important to recognise that movement between places is as significant a dimension of change as the interactions within a place. Movement (physical or mental) between places contributes to the interrelationship of places (Tilley 1994:28; Malpas 1999:165-166). How people move between places contributes to the nature of these interrelationships. For example, Merlan found that people who had experienced places by moving in close relationship to them, by walking or riding on horseback, conceptualised the relationships between places differently to those who had not. The first category of people expressed a sequential account of moving from place to place, a narrative of place experience that emphasises the interrelationship of places. Whereas others focused less on their own movement and identified discrete places. Different experiences of movement between places contribute to different types of knowledge of place (Merlan 1998:92, 102-6).14

New places

Does sociohistorical process tend only in the direction of places having the duality of temporary camp and enduring country…through which places are made Dreaming story? (Merlan 1998:209.)

The addition of new properties to existing places, and the creation of new places, is as critical to a study of place (and cultural heritage) as are the existing properties of a place or the stability of existing places (see Myers 1991:64; Merlan 1998:210-228). Native title and cultural heritage laws in particular perpetuate a dualistic model of “a static, traditional Aboriginal life and changing non-traditional life” (Baker 1999:226). This type of dualistic model denies the ability of Indigenous peoples to create and maintain new places or the ability to maintain existing places in new ways. In their studies of transformations in the cultural landscape, Merlan (1998) and Baker (1999) both provide evidence of the development of new Indigenous properties of place.

A simple example of change to existing properties of place is the change that has occurred in Yanyuwa dugong hunting in the McArthur River and Edward Pellew Islands, through the incorporation of outboard motors and aluminium dinghies. When dugongs were hunted in bark canoes, they were drowned away from the canoe for fear of damage to the vessel. Now that robust aluminium dinghies are used, dugongs are drowned alongside the boat (Bradley

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14 If people move between places, this inherently means that places are bounded in some way. A discussion of place boundaries follows later in this chapter.
1991:96). Similarly in Northwest Queensland methods of kangaroo hunting have been modified with the introduction of motor vehicles. Whereas kangaroos were hunted on foot they are now hunted from vehicles and carcasses are transported to butchering sites and domiciliary environments by vehicle.

In the ethnographic literature there are examples of modifications to the existing properties of Dreaming places. Myers (1991) provides an example of modifications to the knowledge properties of a Pintupi Dreaming:

Until 1975 I had been told that one of the main Pintupi Dreaming tracks ended at a place called Pinari near Lake Mackay. However, after Pintupi from my community visited their long-separated relatives at Balgo, they returned to tell me that “we thought that story ended, went into the ground, at Pinari. But we found that it goes underground all the way to Balgo.” Apparently, this revelation was discovered in a vision by a man from Balgo. The example shows that historical change can be integrated, but that it is assimilated to the preexisting forms: The foundation had always been there, but people had not known it before. (Myers 1991:53.)

This example also demonstrates that a valid way to retrieve religious knowledge about places amongst Aboriginal people is through the receipt of gifts of such knowledge in dreams.15 (Memmott 1979:483; Keys 1997:22-23.)

There are also to be found examples of the emergence (or finding) of new Dreaming places. Myers (1991:64-65) and Merlan (1998:216-218) both provide examples of people finding such places. Both authors report that the places were considered to be pre-existing and yet new to the extent that they were previously unknown. In both examples the Indigenous people involved searched for the connection of the found place to surrounding places and events (Dreamings). Thus Myers (1991:53) maintains:

The Pintupi understanding of the historical process are not totally static either, but the concept of The Dreaming organizes experience so that it appears to be continuous and permanent. For the Pintupi, the dynamic, processual aspect of history seems to exist as one of discovering, uncovering, or even reenacting elements of the Dreaming.

These examples conform to what Ortner (1999:9) (following Geertz) describes as ‘meaning-making,’ an ongoing process of constructing and transforming meaning. Ortner (1999:9) maintains that in thinking about culture the issue of ‘meaning-making’ must be emphasised. A similar concept is Casey’s ‘implacement’ (1993:3-20; 31), the ongoing process of being in place.16 In terms of Indigenous properties of place, it is an ongoing interaction with the Dreaming that is enduring and embodied in the environment (Myers 1991:55-61; Hirsch 1995:18).

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15 Keys (1997:22-23) found that amongst the Warlpiri the maintenance of correct sleeping orientation (feet to the west, head to the east) was fundamental to people’s ability to receive such dreams and therefore of maintaining relationships with this religious dimension. The converse orientation rendered one susceptible to bad dreams and spirits.

16 “Implacement is an ongoing cultural process with an experimental edge.” (Casey 1993: 31.)
Although Merlan provides a useful study of the transformation of Indigenous place properties about an Australian regional town there is yet to be a comprehensive study of Indigenous properties of place in the metropolitan environments of major Australian cities, the places of the most radical change derived from ‘intercultural’ experience. However, there are ongoing studies that are documenting Indigenous places in urban contexts. For example, the Musgrave Park Cultural Centre is documenting Indigenous oral histories associated with the inner city area of South Brisbane including Musgrave Park (see Aird 2001).

**Displacement and loss of place**

By late modern times, this world had become increasingly placeless, a matter of mere sites instead of lived places, of sudden displacements rather than of perduring implacements. (Casey 1993:x.)

One of the most profound changes to properties of place is coercive displacement (Casey 1993:35). Displacement may take the form of severe disruptions to various people-environment interactions, or in its most extreme, the forced removal of people from their places to some other place (Tuan 1977:154). Malpas (1999:184) argues that due to the strong relationship between place and self-identity (discussed below), “...separation from places and possessions may be almost literally a separation from parts of oneself.” It is possible to be an exile in one’s homeland, particularly where existing properties of place are forcibly transformed and or oppressed and new properties of place imposed (Lavie 1996:61). Displacement (or exile) has been one of the most devastating tools employed in the European attempt to destroy Aboriginal societies and cultures (Memmott 1991a:185).

In response to the international scale of displacements (Casey 1993:31), Lavie and Swedenburg (1996:2-3) assert that the world can no longer be thought of as being comprised of a homology between a culture and its terrain (places); it can no longer be assumed that culture is fixed in particular places. Lavie and Swedenburg (1996:14) argue that there are now other ways by which the relationship between culture and place, and between people and place, must be understood such as ‘diaspora’ and ‘borderzones’. Diaspora refers to a double relationship, a relationship that people have to places currently occupied and to the places of their ‘homeland’ (Lavie and Swedenburg 1996:14; Smith 2000; see also Read 1996:25-51). For example, despite living both inland on cattle stations and in the township of Borroloola, the Yanyuwa people have maintained a strong orientation toward their saltwater country to the north (Bradley 1998:125, 131). The term ‘borderzones’ refers to an ‘in-between’ situation where place properties emerge from (often violent) intercultural relations (Lavie and Swedenburg 1996:15).

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17 This lack of interest amongst scholars in urban Indigenous environments perhaps reflects the false and dichotomous view of unchanging, traditional, Indigenous and changing, non-traditional, non-Indigenous.

18 Also see Taylor’s (1998) discussion of cross-cultural place properties in Perth, Western Australia.
Although authors such as Lavie and Swedenburg call for a reconsideration of the relationship between culture and environment, they do not deny the ability of people to maintain and create relationships with place, as some scholars do. For example:

Unfortunately, the skills and social contexts for making places no longer exist. Indeed, in a world of multi-national corporations, universal planning practices and instantaneous global communications, we have to take seriously the argument that sense of place is just another form of nostalgia and that places are obsolete. (Relph 1993:25.)

Some studies of place have contributed to overly nostalgic and romantic approaches to studies of people-environment interactions (Hodder 1987:140; Mugerauer 1989). Central to this position is the notion that people are no longer capable of creating and maintaining place, and hence Relph’s (1976) ‘placelessness’, Norberg-Schulz’s (1980:180) ‘alienation’ and the belief of some that developments in communication systems have reduced the specific nature of place; they have introduced a shift from ‘place’ to ‘non-place’ (see Meyrowitz 1985; Augé 1997). Implicit to such arguments is the notion that places and place properties are static and enduring and therefore always corrupted by change.19

In the current author’s view, the notions of ‘non-place’ and a ‘placeless world’ are erroneous. No matter what the perceived quality of a particular environment, for example good/ bad, frequented/ avoided (physically or mentally), people still develop place properties for it. These studies fail to acknowledge the way that people adapt to changed circumstances. We live in a world of places; we are constantly in place (Relph 1976:1; see Casey below). When people are displaced they continue to rely on places; both present places, past places and future places (Casey 1993:iix). Furthermore, should a particular property of place be drastically changed, it does not follow that a place is lost. This sentiment is shared by Hayden in her investigation Power of Place: Urban Landscape as Public History in which she argues:

....speaking critically of bad places is more effective than dismissing them as places. The process that transforms places demands analysis. (Hayden 1995:18.)

It is also shared by Casey (1993):

Moreover, once bodies are found or even merely posited, they require places in which to exist. There are not “actual occasions” (in Whitehead’s composite term for objects as well as events) without places for these occasions. Although there may be displaced occasions, there are no nonplaced occasions, i.e., occasions without any form of implacement whatsoever. To exist at all as a (material or mental) object or as (an experienced or observed) event is to have a place- to beimplaced, however minimally or imperfectly or temporarily. For this to be so, the object or event need not be well formed, regular or predictable. Even Chaos has a shape and a place into which that shape fits.... (Casey 1993:13.)

In arguing for a world of change, and people’s ability to adapt to change, it is dangerous to underestimate the effects that imposed or radical and externally directed changes to place can have on people. The displacement of people can contribute to loss of place properties and loss

19 An interesting parallel is Marcia Langton’s (1981) argument that there is no such thing as people without culture – all people have culture. This was a response to the argument that urban Aboriginal people have lost their culture.
of aspects of culture (Casey 1993:37). According to Fried (1963:157-158) disruptions to place severely impact on individual and cultural identity. Those affected by disruptions to place often experience grief, anxiety and emotional disorders (Marris 1974:10; Hummon 1992:260; Read 1996).20 Whereas directed changes may be sudden, the process of reconciling these changes or adapting to these changes is lengthy (Brown & Perkins 1992:284-285). People also attempt to maintain places that are radically disrupted. For example some people maintain places that no longer physically exist (Hayden 1995:16).

It is easy for critics such as Lavie and Swedenburg (1996:1-23) to promote a world of displacements in the name of contemporary, dynamic and increasingly complex relationships between people and their environments, and to promote enduring attachment to particular places as some kind of anthropological fabrication. The complexity of contemporary people-environment interactions is not fully understood if the traumatic experience of such displacements is underestimated; particularly for people who do maintain a homology between culture and place, and who regard place as ancestor (see Narayan 1996:210-211). People mourn lost places (Marris 1974).

Australian society is slowly, albeit perhaps begrudgingly, coming to an understanding of the traumatic experience of displacement that most Indigenous people have encountered. There has been negligible study of the psychological and physiological effects of this displacement and loss of place.21 However, some evidence of such impacts is to be found in the Reports into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and the Stolen Generations. (See Atkinson 2001; Malpas 1999:3.)

Knowledge properties of place

All around were named places replete with memories and significances: births, names, fights, white inflicted punishments, elopements, flight, revenge, Aboriginal spearing of an early white traveller. Willeroo country was still vital in the way that all these episodes and memories were thoroughly integrated into a landscape crisscrossed by King Brown, Taipan, Pheasant Coucal, and other buwaraja ("Dreamings," or creator beings); significances were inscribed in places in both personal and Dreaming terms. (Merlan 1998:18.)

The archaeological model of cultural heritage discussed earlier, largely excluded the realm of ideas, that is, ideational and cognitive aspects of place and culture. Yet it is the ongoing maintenance, construction and transformation of meaning that is one of the key elements of place. Therefore, it is imperative that this dimension of place be brought into focus in discourse concerned with Aboriginal cultural heritage.

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20 For example, following the destruction of Darwin by Cyclone Tracy, of those who were forced to evacuate and who did not or could not later return to Darwin, 31% suffered psychosomatic disorders (Read 1996:156, 165).

21 An exception is the environmental psychologist Reser’s (1979) publication, “A Matter of Control: Aboriginal Housing Circumstances in Remote Communities and Settlements.” Reser (1979) argues that Aboriginal people who are forced to adapt to settlements and housing types that are incongruent with traditional socio-spatial patterns and patterns of domiciliary behaviour, experience stress as a result of a loss of environmental control.
The above extract from Merlan (1998) illustrates the intersecting and interrelated dimensions of meaning created by human action and of meaning created by the actions of Ancestral Beings (see also Tilley 1994:18). Myers describes this for the Pintupi:

...The dual meaning of *ngurra*. This word has two distinct references to socialized space, in referring both to a temporary camp in which people live and also to an enduring “country” or named place. *Ngurra* is not only the human creation of “camp” but also the Dreaming creation of “country”. Thus, as the concept by which the Pintupi most frequently appropriate space, *ngurra* always relates demarcated places to activity that gives them meaning. (Myers 1991:55.)

Human and Dreaming action each contribute to the definition of landscape, although their constructions have differing properties. In relation to human action, one is historical while the other might be termed transhistorical. (Myers 1991:55.)

Part of the processual nature of place is the ongoing process of meaning-making described earlier and illustrated by the examples above. Taylor (1998:268) almost gets it right when she says “all places are continually reinscribed with cultural meaning.” But she makes the mistake of adhering to the post-colonial discourse of Ashcroft et al (1995:392) who oversimplify this meaning-making process by arguing that place is a type of palimpsest. Thus Taylor (1998:268) argues: “Place is a kind of...cultural manuscript on which meanings are encoded, erased and over-written.” Certainly these are properties of the meaning-making process, but it is more than this; place meanings are also revised, corrected, revitalised, found, discarded, maintained, decoded, negotiated and contested. And, perhaps it is more a process of investment than inscription; meaning is imbued rather than inscribed in place. A place may contain multiple, layered, diverse and conflicting meanings. New meanings, or introduced meanings do not necessarily overwrite other meanings in place (although they may potentially disrupt them) (see Strang 1997).

Tilley maintains that places must be named to be culturally significant. He argues that unnamed places exist as “raw void, a natural environment” (Tilley 1994:18-19). He is wrong. Just as there is no such thing as non place or no place, there is no such thing as place without meaning, there is no place without a story (see Tawa 2002). Unnamed places can be invested with meaning, and unknown places are invested with meaning through the very nature of being unknown. (Casey 1993:3-21.)

There is a strong link between movement (experience), narrative and memory in the construction, maintenance and sharing of knowledge properties of place (Munn 1973; Memmott 1979:175-178; Potteiger & Purinton 1998:ix; Tilley 1994:32-33; Malpas 1999:181-182; Tawa 2002). It has been observed that cartography may not have a significant role in this process of knowing (Memmott 1979:178; Potteiger & Purinton 1998:ix). Tilley (1994:33) argues there is a strong, dialectical, relationship between narrative and place (see also

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22 In a study of the representation of dwelling in bark paintings, Reser (1977:211) found that Yolngu people understood a multiplicity of meanings attached to the artwork. They also recognised that there were levels of informed awareness, and a range of acceptable interpretations. Myer’s (1991) work suggests that the same applies to place meanings.
Hayden 1995:46). Potteiger & Purinton (1998:7) maintain: “We come to know a place because we know its stories”. Places configure narratives and they stimulate the recall of narratives (experiences and events) associated with them. Conversely places are made and maintained by the (re)telling of these stories (Potteiger & Purinton 1998:5-6; Tilley 1994:33).

Thus Myers says of his experience with the Pintupi:

> It is impossible to listen to any narrative, whether historical, mythological, or contemporary, without constant reference to where events happened. In this sense place provides the framework around which events, coalesce, and places serve as mnemonics for significant events. Travel through the country evokes memories about a fight that occurred at a nearby water hole or a death in the hills beyond. Not temporal relation but geography is the great punctuator of Pintupi storytelling. (Myers 1991:54.)

Fox (1997:8) refers to this association of social knowledge with a sequence of places, the association of narrative and place as ‘topogeny’ (see also Malpas 1999:187; Ewins 1999). He argues:

> In so far as a sequence of names can be attached to specific locations in an inhabited landscape, a topogeny represents a projected externalization of memories that can be lived in as well as thought about. (Fox 1997:8.)

Malpas (1999:186) observes:

> …we understand a place and a landscape through the historical and personal narratives that are marked out within it and that give that place a particular unity and establish a particular set or possibilities within it.

How have anthropologists and geographers successfully learnt about Indigenous properties of place? They have often sought personal and social histories - place based narratives (see Myers 1991:18; Baker 1999:27-29). How have anthropologists stimulated the retelling of these stories? They have visited places with people (see next chapter). Somewhere in Australia an anthropologist is asking ‘what is the story for that place?’ or, ‘does this place have a story?’

**Place and memory**

> We often remember ourselves as having been in a given place; but how often do we remember ourselves as having been at a given date? (Casey 1987:214.)

> …a landscape of places forms a complex structure of social memory. (Fox 1997:7.)

The relationship between memory and place is strong. Memories are most often of some place, of some event in place, or of some person or people in place (Casey 1987:183). Casey (1987:186-187) proposes that “memory is naturally place-orientated or at least place-supported”. Hayden (1995:16) argues that it is a place’s “assault on all ways of knowing (sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste) that makes it powerful as a source of memory”. Particular experiences of individuals and groups, past events and actions are associated with
specific places (Casey 1987:189). Through enculturation, particularly through narrative, individual and group memories are shared. Through the transmittal of memories between people and from one generation to the next, repertoires of memories become associated with places. Narrative is the mode of sharing memories. Places are the trigger for remembering. (Hayden 1995:46.)

Casey (1987:186, 213) maintains that, as much as body and mind, places act as a container, keeper and preserver of memory. This view is shared by Hayden (1995:xii) who asserts: “Memory endures in certain places”. In reflecting on Proust’s work Malpas (1999:176) observes “…the recovery of self can only take the form of a recovery of place – both a recovery of specific places as well as the recovery of an encompassing ‘place’ within which [ones] life can be grasped as a whole.” Various authors have attempted to describe this ‘keeper of memory’ role of places. For example, Hayden (1995:9) describes places as storehouses of social memories. Memmott (1997) has described places as libraries of knowledge. Tuan (1977:154) describes place as an archive of memory and others have described the sedimentation of memory in places (see for example Hirsch 1995:31-32 and Morphy 1995:187). (See also Lowenthal 1985:193-210.)

Identity is intimately tied to memory: both our personal memories (where we have come from and where we have dwelt) and the collective or social memories interconnected with the histories of our families, neighbours, fellow workers, and ethnic communities. Urban landscapes are storehouses for these social memories, because natural features…and human made features] frame the lives of many people and often outlast many lifetimes. (Hayden 1995:9.)

Just like a storehouse, library, or archive, places allow the retrieval of memories; they also allow the addition of new memories. But unlike these metaphoric systems of storage, different memories from different times can coexist and can be ‘re-experienced’ or ‘retold’ simultaneously. Temporal distance between events can be collapsed (see Munn 1992:114; Memmott 2004:11).

**Place and identity**

Despite the costly character of an accelerated life, it remains the case that where we are- the place we occupy, however briefly- has everything to do with what and who we are...(Casey 1993:xiii.)

Individual and group identities develop in relation to place. Self-identity is created and maintained through “active engagement” with place(s) (Malpas 1999:178). This is a process of mutual and inter-dependant interaction whereby places are attributed with identity related to people and people express identity related to place. According to Memmott (Memmott & Stacy 1997:7) “in some circumstances person and place identities seem to merge”. Malpas (1999:177) observes, “[people’s] identities are, one can say, intricately and essentially place-bound.” (Also see Relph 1976:30, 45; Proshansky et al.1983:60; Malpas 1999:2-14.)

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23 Perhaps a younger person might suggest that place is like a computer hard-drive or the internet.
Aboriginal groups express numerous forms of identity with place. For example, Memmott (1979:488) observed Lardil persons to identify as a member of a range of groups in the following ways:

- (a) Mornington Islander; (b) Lardil (as opposed to kaiadilt or mainland); (c) windward or leeward; (d) as a member of a patriclan expressed by the locale name of that particular patriclan’s country; (e) as larumpenta, lilimpenta, or whatever one’s sociogeographic group by direction; (f) by family groups; or (g) by a group totem linking the members of the group to a story place, or a number of story places each with the same occupant species.

Memmott found that the particular identification which a person chooses to express depends on the social situation or context (Memmott 1979:488). For example, whilst on Mornington Island the Lardil chose one of the above forms of identity, whereas whilst in the regional centre of Mt Isa (on the mainland) they collectively identified as Mornington Islanders together with visiting Kaiadilt and others from Mornington (Memmott 1979:488). There are other examples of Aboriginal people identifying with place in a broad way; for example the Yanyuwa identify and are recognised as ‘saltwater people’ whereas co-residents at Borroloola identify as ‘freshwater people’ (Baker 1999:59).

There are also other forms of people-place identification to be found in Aboriginal Australia. For example, many Aboriginal groups, including the Yanyuwa (Baker 1999:59, 138), Jawoyn (Merlan 1998:97-99) and Pintupi identify (and are identified) with their place of conception and birth. Myers (1991:141) observes that through “such an incarnation, an individual is considered to be identified substantially with a place, as a mutual transformation of the same creative activity of The Dreaming”. The Pintupi are also identified with their place of death (Myers 1991:134, 138) and place of initiation (Myers 1991:131). Having an experience in place, to have lived in a place and to know a place are also important modes for Aboriginal identification with places. For example, people may be identified with a particular camp, cattle station, or town where they once lived (Baker 1999:181, 217-221; Merlan 1998:99; Myers 1991:137). Therefore there is an historical dimension to the process of person-place identification.

The identification of a person with a place is also a social process; other members of a social group must accept a person’s identity (Myers 1991:141). A person’s (or a group’s) claim of identity with a place can be contested and negotiated (Merlan 1998:142; Myers 1991:140). People can develop new identifications with place. For example, there are cases of naturalization or adoption whereby people are attributed with identification as a descendant of places outside of their country (Myers 1991:138; Merlan 1998:127-129). Just as other

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24 Myers also observed flexibility or choice in the way the Pintupi identified with places (Myers 1991: 138).
25 Bradley (1998:131) details the Yanyuwa identification with the sea: “It is the sea more than any other geographical feature which the Yanyuwa use as a metaphor for their existence and their identity...”
26 A shift from bush births to hospital births has transformed the way Jawoyn identify with places. For example, people are no longer named after their place of birth (Merlan 1998:97-99).
dimensions of place are subject to transformation, so too place identity, the identity of a place and the identity of people with a place can change (Myers 1991:138; Merlan 1998:119-146).

People-place identification is a socio-historical process. This is exemplified by the ways in which the Pintupi can claim identification with particular places in Arrernte country that lies well to the east of their own language group territory:

1. a lot of our old people died here [in the area];
2. we grew up around here;
3. our children were “born” [born and conceived] here and it is their dreaming;
4. it is a Pintupi Dreaming that comes through here from the west...;
5. we gave a lot of women [the Pintupi bestowed many women as wives to Aranda and Loritja men who, consequently, have obligations to the Pintupi as affines]. (Myers 1991:136.)

**Behaviour patterns and place**

Places can be created and maintained by the enactment of certain types of behaviour at a particular piece of the environment. In some instances a specific pattern of behaviour is regularly performed at a place and is strongly associated with that place. Of these types of places, some conform to the concept of ‘behaviour setting’. Memmott found this to be the case for some Lardil places such as dance places (Memmott 1979:106-117). Barker and Wright defined a ‘behaviour setting’ as:

... a standing behaviour pattern together with the context of this behaviour, including the part of the milieu to which the behaviour is attached and with which it has synomorphic relationship.

(Barker and Wright in Memmott 1979:17.)

Standing patterns of behaviour are patterns of behaviour which regularly occur within a setting (place). The groups who use that particular setting know such patterns of behaviour. They are extra-individual; they persist irrespective of which members of the group are occupying the setting. When occupying a setting, group members adjust their behaviour to conform to the standing pattern of behaviour of that setting (Schoggen 1989:14, 18-20, 42-45.)

Memmott observed the following characteristics of Lardil dance events:

The roles people play, and the typical sequences of behaviour enacted by the participants and the audience occur regularly at all dances, irrespective of who attends or who dances or who is the leading song man. When a dance occurred, all the people in the vicinity would normally attend...There was seldom any outside event to disrupt the unity of the setting...(Memmott 1979:116.)

The milieu is the non-behavioural attributes of the behaviour setting, that is, physical things (human-made and natural) and time (Schoggen 1989:31). The milieu is circumjacent to the standing patterns of behaviour. That is, it surrounds or encompasses the patterns of behaviour. The milieu may contribute to the boundary of the behaviour setting. Such boundaries are also defined by the behaviour. (Schoggen 1989:33.)

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27 Sometimes people enter environments where they are unfamiliar with the standing patterns of behaviour and therefore are unsure of what behaviour is appropriate for that place.
...the Lardil dance event has its specific setting- the dance ground and its specific time of enactment- from late afternoon to the middle of the night. These things comprise parts of the milieu as do fires and dancing poles...(Memmott 1979:116).

The boundary of a behaviour setting is generated by the behaviour and is circumjacent to the behaviour. Repetitive use of a dancing ground results in it being free of flora or groundcover...the type of surrounding groundcover will dictate whether people sit on it, or inside it on the cleared sand or soil. The spatial structure of the audience’s sitting position generates a physical and behavioural boundary. This definition is reinforced by the interior focus of firelight and dancing action in the middle of the setting. (Memmott 1979:116.)

The milieu and the behaviour pattern have a synomorphic relationship. This means that the physical and time attributes of a setting and the behaviour pattern are similar in shape form or structure, they are interdependent. Behaviour shapes or defines the milieu and the milieu supports and shapes behaviour. In other words there is an essential fit or congruence between the milieu and the behaviour pattern. (Memmott 1979:18; Schoggen 1989:33-34.)

Memmott observes of Lardil dance:

The behaviour setting puts people in the situation of contributing their personal behaviour to setting maintenance. At the same time their individual life styles and life spaces are shaped by the setting. This is what comprises the synomorphy...(Memmott 1979:116.)

An instance of congruence between a behaviour pattern and parts of the milieu is a synomorph (Schoggen 1989:34). Behaviour settings usually consist of a number of such synomorphs (Schoggen 1989:34). Where synomorphs are interdependent then they form a behaviour setting, if synomorphs are independent then they do not (Schoggen 1989:34-38).28

One can distinguish sub-units of the setting e.g. an individual dance performed with special artefacts. Although such a sub-unit can be isolated as a separate synomorph to the total setting it is still interdependent with it... (Memmott 1979:16.)

....although dance grounds have minimal articulation with physical objects, they nevertheless have a complex sociospatial structure which conforms to the concept of the behaviour setting.... (Memmott 1979:117.)

The importance of behaviour setting theory is that it stresses the interdependent relationship between physical things and behaviour patterns (Schoggen 1989:33). Prior to Barker and Wright’s work, researchers tended to focus on either the physical things in the environment or behaviour, that is, they saw them as separate discrete phenomena. Therefore the concept of behaviour setting is useful to investigations of cultural heritage which have to date tended to exclude such interdependent relationships.

At a Lardil dance deviant behaviour is corrected by the persuasive heckling of the audience or by the authority of the song man. (Memmott 1979:116-117.)

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28 Synomorphs do not necessarily have to be geographically or physically proximate to constitute a behaviour setting, i.e. two synomorphs which are at some distance from one another may form a behaviour setting if they are interdependent (Schoggen 1989:37-38).
Behaviour settings coerce behaviour that occurs within them (Schoggen 1989:20). The mechanisms that coerce behaviour are also sources of the synomorphic relationship between the milieu and the standing patterns of behaviour (Schoggen 1989:20, 43). Sources of coercion and synomorphy include (i) physical forces; the physical arrangement and properties of things can enforce or stimulate certain patterns of behaviour, they can also prevent others. (ii) Social forces; people in positions of ‘power’ can enforce a particular pattern of behaviour. The standing pattern of behaviour also produces social forces that elicit certain behaviour and exclude other types of behaviour. (iii) Physiological forces; there are behaviour mechanisms that respond compulsively to features of the geographical-physical milieu. (iv) Perception of milieu features; physical-geographical features of a behaviour setting are in some instances perceived to demand a particular kind of behaviour. (v) Learning; people learn the behaviour suitable to a particular setting. People learn through observing the behaviour of others and through instruction. (vi) Selection of setting by self; if a behaviour setting fits in with one’s repertoire of behaviour then one will enter it; if it does not one will avoid it. (vii) Selection of persons by the behaviour setting; some behaviour settings exclude people whose behaviour does not conform to the standing pattern of behaviour. (viii) Influence of behaviour on the milieu; particular behaviour will demand particular milieu. If such milieu does not exist, people will set about creating them. (Schoggen 1989:43-45.)

**Boundaries to place**

The discussion of behaviour settings has introduced the notion of place boundaries. The nature of Aboriginal socio-territorial relations has been the subject of much anthropological inquiry and debate in which boundaries have been investigated in terms of tenure (See Sutton 1995). All cultural heritage legislation is premised on the notion that it is possible to determine a precise boundary to a place. However, various works warn of the danger of making this assumption:

Boundedness has an aesthetic and analytic appeal, because by creating a finite universe it allows for the total exhaustion of a topic in the course of analysis and makes for ease in comparison. It is this intellectual appeal that transforms what are often really gradients, clines, areas of intergradation or zonation into discontinuous or bounded units. (Peterson 1976:6.)

Definition of Aboriginal territoriality according to non-Aboriginal concepts of boundaries (precise lines on the ground/maps) is fraught with danger. (Young 1995:88.)

…the bounding of place is not the bounding associated with any simple spatial demarcation. (Malpas 1999:171.)

It seems that most considerations of Aboriginal boundaries focus on how territoriality or ownership is manifested in the environment (Sutton 1995). What is the extent of a land owning group? In considering boundaries to place there are two questions that seem more productive: (1) how is it that people know they are in a particular place and not some other

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3 For example: “‘place’ means a defined or readily identifiable area of land...” (Queensland Heritage Act 1992, s4).
place? And, (2) when are people in-between places? Rose (in Sutton 1995:112) provides an indication of the need for such an approach to place boundaries:

In [the VRD] area, boundaries almost invariably follow Dreaming tracks. There are specific boundary points where the Dreaming changed over from one language to another; many of these sites are marked in song. Ownership of such sites is complex because two sets of people, defined as different by the fact that the Dreaming changed over, come together because they share responsibilities for the land. Such a site is almost invariably a site of convergence, as well as a site of differentiation. One can connect a number of sites, like drawing lines between the dots as we used to do in kindergarten, but this is done on paper with a pen; there is no way to transfer it to the ground. Both around specific sites and away from such sites ‘boundaries’ are experiential; one knows them through moving through the country. The moment at which differentiation occurs may be different depending on whether one travels from east to west, south to north. (Rose in Sutton 1995:112.)

The literature concerned with Aboriginal boundaries indicates that there are numerous ways that place boundaries are created. In fact the creation and maintenance of a place inherently distinguishes it in some way from other places. Physical, behavioural and knowledge properties individually or in combination contribute to the boundary or boundaries of a place. A boundary to place may be created by these properties or a transformation in these properties.

In some cases there are clear boundary distinctions between one place and another. For example, Memmott found the Lardil coastal geography to consist of contiguous places with clear boundaries (which the Lardil referred to as ‘cut-off places’) at approximately right angles to the coast (Memmott 1979:76, 85). These boundaries usually (but not always) consist of environmental features such as a creek bank, an abrupt flora change, or a cliff face (Memmott 1979:85). Similarly Williams (1986:141-142) observed Yolngu boundaries to always be marked by natural features. However, she also warns that boundaries are only as precise as they need to be (Williams 1986:146).

Some places are characterised by having imprecise or blurred boundaries. For example, Memmott (1979:86) found the inland and offshore boundaries of the coastal places mentioned above to be indistinct. Sutton describes a similar phenomenon:

It is quite typical for there to be fine and clear demarcation of the edge of an estate at points along a beach or river frontage, where one creek entering the water body is in one estate, and a creek a few score metres away is in the next estate; or where mangrove stands, for example, mark the point where the beachfront sector of an estate comes to an end...

The very same estates, however, may have their hinterland stretching back into a set of watercourses arising in hills or in relatively monotonous sclerophyll forest uplands, where the watercourses are the bones or structural definers of the insides of estates, but where the edges of estates are heavily blurred. Between these smallish drainage systems...are the intermediate zones usually defined as ‘company’ land held by those who hold the adjacent drainage system. (Sutton 1995:51.)
An adaptation of the ‘heartland’ concept developed by Peterson and others (1978) is perhaps useful to considerations of places with indistinct boundaries (see Young 1995:88). It is possible that some places have a clearly articulated ‘heart’, an agreed-upon sense of knowing when one is in the middle of a particular place, whereas the edges are simultaneously indistinct and the start of one place and the beginning of the next is unclear, or where the properties of one place and that of another overlap. Perhaps supportive of this idea is Myers’ observation that Pintupi place names refer to specific features rather than to an area enclosed within spatial boundaries (Myers 1991:59). Williams (1986:145) observes that Yolngu place names “apply in a manner that may be thought of as “nesting” in terms of the objects and features and areas to which they refer.” That is, in naming a place a set of smaller places that lie within it is formed.

It was earlier argued that people continually move between places. Consequently people continually experience place boundaries, an experience characterised by difference between one place and the next, different activities, different physical properties, different knowledge properties (for example a different name). For example, Memmott (1979:84) provides an account of travelling along the coast with Lardil men who informed him when one place ‘cut out’ and another began. The title of Williams’ (1986) paper A Boundary is to Cross: Observations on Yolngu Boundaries and Permission is suggestive of this type of movement. Williams was concerned with the relationship of boundaries, land ownership and access to places (1986:131). She observed that Yolngu boundaries do not demarcate exclusive rights of possession instead they express the obligation of users to request permission to use and enjoy a place and the rights (and obligation) of owners to allocate rights of enjoyment to users (Williams 1986:151). The exercising of traditional rights to control access to country (in some cases excluding people) and the types of activities carried out there, and the seeking of permission by non-country persons to access country and engage in particular activities constitute significant Aboriginal boundary properties (Cooper 2004:35-36, 67, 88). Such boundaries are complex because different people may hold different rights. For example, in the Wellesley Sea Claim, Cooper (2004:67) found “there existed traditional rules and customs by which persons who did not belong to a particular Country could acquire differing rights in terms of content, entitlement and duration which enabled non-Country persons to be on, or to engage in activity on, a particular Country.”

The adventures of Ancestral Beings have created the boundary properties of many places (Williams 1986:141; Merlan 1998:153; Myers 1991). The interactions of people can also contribute to the definition of place. For example, the socio-spatial arrangements of camps (and settlements) contribute to the definition of places. Myers observed spatially distinct camps at Yayayi of “old Pintupi” people and “new Pintupi” people. This social and spatial

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31 This concept is potentially more usefully applied to small-scale places than it is to areas of land ownership.
distinction reflected different times of migration to Yayayi and different geographic origins; the “new Pintupi” came in later and from further to the west. (Myers 1991:42-43.)

...it is wrong to assume that local groups have constant, impermeable boundaries. (Myers 1991:19).

Various authors have called into question the permanence and rigidity that has been ascribed to Aboriginal place boundaries (Sutton 1995:1-65; Myers 1991:60; Merlan 1998). Place boundaries change and are subject to negotiation, interaction, interpretation and conflict (See for example Myers 1991:60, 91 and Merlan 1998:129-141). Furthermore, the physical expression of place boundaries can also change. For example, Merlan observed the use of physical elements created in the contact era as distinguishing socio-territorial areas; the Victoria Highway is pointed to as the boundary between Dagoman and Wardaman (Merlan 1998:123-124). There are of course a variety of Western boundary properties, e.g. fence lines, drains, house yards, football fields, etc that have been incorporated into Aboriginal repertoires of place.

Knowledge of boundaries to places may not always be shared. Therefore a number of sub-groups may hold different boundaries to the same place. Myers made the following observation of Pintupi definition of country:

Sociocentric boundaries are difficult to draw; one cannot say that an area X, made up of such-and-such places, constitutes a “country.” When individuals describe their “own country,” their lists of places are likely to overlap without being identical. (Myers 1991:60.)

Pintupi maintain that society, as they see it, is potentially boundary-less, that individual networks and ritual links extend beyond any definable group. No one, they say, lived entirely in one place, with a single set of people, at one waterhole, as if in “a paddock.” (Myers 1991:79.)

Discussion of the bounded nature of places leads us into the nature of the interrelationships between places. Places are experienced and known in combination. Attempts to classify places are often attempts to separate places in time and space, from places with which they are co-dependant or inextricably intertwined.

2.3 CULTURAL LANDSCAPES AND PLACE

The interrelationship of places

…places are juxtaposed and intersect with one another; places also contain places so that one can move inwards to find other places nested within a place as well as move outwards to a more encompassing locale. (Malpas 1999:34.)

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32 Malpas (1999:170) argues that places are bounded yet open: “The concept of place is essentially the concept of a bounded, but open region within which a set of interconnected elements can be located.
Whilst places are complexes of multiple inter-related properties, there are also complex inter-relationships between places (Malpas 1999:39). A number of inter-related places form a ‘place complex,’ or place cluster (Myers 1991:58), or place network, or fabric (Sullivan c1996:2). This inter-relationship may involve one or a combination of behavioural, physical or knowledge properties. Such a complex is not necessarily bounded by physical proximity, and it is essentially dynamic (Sutton 1995:51-52). Places and place complexes in turn, in combination, form an over-arching ‘cultural place complex’ or cultural landscape. A cultural landscape consists of the multiple inter-related places and place complexes of a society. It includes those places and place complexes which are common to members of a society and those which are specific to subgroups and individuals within a society. (Morphy 1995; see also Rapoport 1990.)

The geographer Sauer (1925) can be attributed with providing one of the earliest definitions of the ‘cultural landscape’:

> The cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape is the result. Under the influence of a given culture, itself changing through time, the landscape undergoes development, passing through phases, and probably reaching ultimately the end of its cycle of development. With the introduction of a different that is, an alien-culture, a rejuvenation of the cultural landscape sets in, or a new landscape is superimposed on remnants of an older one. The natural landscape is of course of fundamental importance, for it supplies the materials out of which the cultural landscape is formed. The shaping force, however lies in the culture itself. (Sauer 1925:343.)

The major downfall of Sauer’s definition for describing Indigenous cultural landscapes is that he considers people and the environment to be mutually exclusive.33 Furthermore, Sauer and others (for example Fowler 1987:174; Mark 1993:53) treat the cultural landscape as an historic dimension. Such a definitional framework tends to exclude considerations of contemporary, continuing and future people-environment interactions. Sauer’s focus was on the physical expression of culture; he was not interested in ideational properties of place: “…we are not concerned in geography with the energy, customs, or beliefs of man, but with man’s record upon the landscape” (Sauer 1925:342).34 (Baker 1999:34-35; Memmott & Long 2002:44-46.)

Baker (1999) has shown the concept of the cultural landscape to be useful in studies of Australian contact history. Baker proposes a modified version of Sauer’s model to represent the interaction between two cultural groups in the formation of cultural landscapes.

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33 Sauer’s definition assumes the existence of natural physical environments, which in Australian literature are sometimes referred to as ‘wilderness’ or ‘virgin’ landscapes. A number of authors (see for example Ross 1994 and Langton 1996) argue that wilderness landscapes do not exist; rather there are only indigenous landscapes. Such arguments are largely based on the facts of indigenous occupation and use of Australian environments. However, in addition to such arguments, the recognition of indigenous cosmogony /cosmology further negates the concept of the natural landscape.

34 It seems that the Cultural Record Act was influenced by Sauer and his interest with “man’s record upon the landscape” (1925:342), yet I did not encounter any literature that also made this connection.
Baker recognizes in his study, the dynamic and processual nature of the cultural landscape. However, his interactional model of the cultural landscape (above) assumes that it is possible to discern ‘an existing cultural landscape’, that is, a cultural landscape at a certain point in time. Given the dynamic nature of culture and the dynamic nature of people-environment interactions, it may be impossible and misrepresentative to argue that one can distinguish in a moment, an existing Aboriginal cultural landscape. This over-simplistic model makes the Aboriginal cultural landscape appear static and only subject to change as a result of outside influence. Myers has warned of the danger of treating what is essentially dynamic as something enduring through time (see also Canter 1988):

At the heart of the anthropological enterprise lies the idea that what is learned in fieldwork at a particular time and place has meaning that transcends the immediate moment. This notion, after all, is what underlay the Boasian concept of culture........For better or worse, the current situation in Aboriginal Australia makes this impossible. The moment of observation cannot be simply generalized into a description of a set of social arrangements enduring through time (Myers 1991:12).

Baker’s model misrepresents his study which is in fact a significant contribution to an emerging literature concerned with the dynamic properties of Indigenous place. Furthermore, Baker (1999:204-227) illustrates the need to recognise that amongst members of a social group there may exist a diversity of knowledge and perception of the cultural landscape. However, a stronger and more dynamic theoretical model of the cultural landscape is required.

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35 Yet those mounting a land claim/native title claim are faced with the task of doing just this. They must assemble a cultural landscape that is reproducible in court.
Cultural landscapes as a category of people-environment interactions

The term “cultural landscape” embraces a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment. (UNESCO 1998 paragraph 37.)

Cultural landscapes are another category of people-environment interactions. The same interactional processes that create and maintain places also create and maintain cultural landscapes, hence the terms ‘cultural landscape’ and ‘place’ can be used synonymously. The difference between local places and cultural landscapes is perhaps, one of scale. A cultural landscape may incorporate a larger area than a local place, for example the area of a cultural landscape may extend beyond the visual field (or beyond the horizon line). Cultural landscapes may consist of one large-scale place, or on the other hand they may consist of a hierarchy of place types (multiple places or complexes of places). UNESCO identified cultural landscapes as a World Heritage category in 1992 after its classificatory division of cultural heritage and natural heritage places was realized to be too simplistic a dichotomy (Titchen 1996). (Memmott & Long 2002:44-46.)

A common type of cultural landscape in Indigenous Australia is a tract of country for which there is a high density of Indigenous place properties involving not just large numbers of places, but a wide range of the place types and properties in accordance with the ethno-geography of a local tribal or language group. Indigenous Australia can be considered as comprising numerous cultural landscapes, corresponding with different Aboriginal cultural groups or cultural blocs. But there are also interrelationships between the cultural landscape of one group and that of another. Such interrelationships occur through (i) the actions of Ancestral Beings, (ii) travel and exchange relationships, (iii) shared contact histories, and hence (iv) shared experiences at place and shared knowledge of place. (Memmott & Long 2000:44-46.)

Negligible research has been undertaken which investigates (i) the interrelationship of places and their densities within an Aboriginal cultural landscape, (ii) the commonalities and differences of place properties within a cultural landscape, (iii) the extent of cultural landscapes (if cultural landscapes have boundaries, how are they defined and maintained?), (iv) the interrelationship of cultural landscapes, and (v) cultural change and cultural landscapes. A unified and agreed-upon cross-cultural theory of cultural landscapes is still in the making. (Memmott & Long 2000:44-46.)

A World Heritage cultural landscape- Uluru Kata Tjuta

In 1994 the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in central Australia was included on the World Heritage List as a World Heritage cultural landscape (Titchen 1996:44). This listing recognised past and continuing mutual interactions between the Anangu and their

environments. This recognition challenged existing notions of world heritage which were based on dichotomous models of people-environment relationships (Titchen 1996:47-48). Furthermore, this listing did not rely on the archaeological record as an argument for World Heritage listing; rather it relied on behavioural and knowledge properties (Titchen 1996:47). This is an excellent example of the usefulness of models of people-environment interaction to Indigenous heritage issues. It is also an excellent example of a heritage organisation’s ability to redefine and broaden its criteria to meet Indigenous worldviews (Titchen 1996:47).

Australia has eleven World Heritage areas, yet Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is the only one that has been assessed as a cultural landscape (Titchen 1996:49). One challenge is for the remaining world heritage areas to be re-assessed as cultural landscapes. In doing so, the relationships that Indigenous people have with these areas may be recognised (Titchen 1996:49).

**Linear cultural landscapes**

A special category of cultural landscapes, also described within the recent UNESCO literature, comprises long linear areas that represent culturally significant travel and communication networks marking the cultural interchange of objects, resources and ideas (sometimes referred to as ‘cultural itineraries’) (UNESCO 1999). (Memmott & Long 2002:46; see also Blair 2003.)

The Australian continent was and in many cases still is criss-crossed by such lineal landscapes, these being traditional exchange and travel routes (of humans and Ancestral Beings). For example, many of the river systems, apart from providing local economic resources and residential sites, were utilized by wider Aboriginal groups as transport corridors, these being significant trade routes (Roth 1897, McCarthy 1939). In many cases the trade and travel routes were believed to have been created by the Ancestral Beings, and as a result there are to be found ‘Story Places’ or ‘Dreaming places’ along such routes where Ancestral Beings have interacted with each other and with the environment, and left behind sacred energies. Thus the Ancestral Beings are believed to have originally created such routes. Indigenous travel and exchange corridors are lineal cultural landscapes containing concentrations of places along such routes. (Memmott & Long 2002:46.)

Although linear cultural landscapes are a relatively new category of place in cultural heritage research and protection regimes in Australia there is a history of research of such places. For example archaeologists have studied the movement of Aboriginal artefacts and technology across Australia and anthropologists have long been interested in the travels and adventures of Ancestral Beings or Dreaming stories. Generally though the movements and lineal places
of living people are overlooked. The type of evidence required under cultural heritage and native title legislation contributes to this neglect. Others have investigated lineal place complexes, most notably Rapoport (1990) who envisages these complexes or ‘systems of settings’ as beads on a string:

Settings are linked by the way people use them, through activity systems ...People’s activities take them from setting to setting which they organize sequentially like beads on a string. Our area of concern is not the single bead, but the string, the patterns of activities rather than single activities. (Rapoport 1990:14.)

Rapoport’s model is useful yet it is limited to the single string of beads. Furthermore, beads are too neat a metaphor for places. In contrast, a recent paper by Reser et al (2000) concerned with ‘roads’ is suggestive of numerous interrelated strings:

Clearly the cosmology of most Aboriginal groups is one in which passage through country by ancestral beings created the topography and landscape as well as the track. These tracks are simultaneously tracks, texts, and sacred links, between creation beings, totemic species, past and present. It might be thought of as an ancient string theory by which everything is connected and interdependent. If we think of the track as the outward manifestation of a parallel skein of underground passages and waterways, with ‘underground’ itself being metaphor for a co-terminous creative past which touches the profane and present ‘surface’ at many points, with these intersections being particularly powerful, numinous, and salient to those who have walked these paths for tens of thousands of years, and sung seasons, species and life itself though the earth’s veins - then we get a feel for the meanings of ‘tracks’. (Reser et al 2000:44.)

Reser et al (2000) also describe the importance role of movement and experience along linear cultural landscapes in the maintenance of Aboriginal place properties:

...from an indigenous perspective roads and tracks are the maps, they are the interface with ‘country’, they are human passage, journeys- intimate conversations with landscape, with ‘country’, with self. In many cultures it is the relationship, the space between that matters...in indigenous Australia connections between people and people, people and place are primary. Roads express, become, such connections, lifelines, storylines. Part of it is speed...with the traditional movement through country being the pace of life itself, the cadence of walking through, with all becoming a part of the other. From an indigenous perspective, a critical component is being there, looking after by passing through, touching the earth, mutually sustaining, co-dependance. (Reser et al 2000:42.)

Studies of cultural landscapes and linear cultural landscapes have highlighted the interactive nature of Aboriginal relationships with the environment. These studies also illustrate the need to explore the interrelationships that exist between places that are lines of movement and experience and cultural landscapes more broadly.

CONCLUSION

This chapter commenced with an exploration of anthropological definitions of ‘culture’ that are useful to investigations of cultural heritage. In its broadest theoretical conception, culture

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7 If the Anangu cultural landscape is recognised as being of world heritage value, should not the cultural landscapes of other Australian Aboriginal groups who maintain similar people-environment interactions meet the criteria to be ‘recognised’ as world heritage value? This, of course, remains to be answered.
includes ideational, behavioural and physical properties. Anthropological literature also informs us that culture is essentially dynamic. These theoretical orientations highlight the inadequate nature of a static and physical definition of cultural heritage and make an archaeological or physically orientated basis to cultural heritage difficult to sustain.

The proposed definition of place in this thesis emphasizes mutual interaction between people and the environment. Places are characterised by continual processes of change including the addition of new properties of place and the creation of new places. Displacement and forced changes to place can be a traumatic and damaging experience.

In terms of the broad working definition of culture established earlier in this chapter and the definition of place employed, the concept of place and the concept of culture are quite similar. Both concepts, as defined in this chapter, include the realm of observable phenomena and the realm of ideas. Many of the place theorists would agree with this position, that is, that place is a part of culture, and culture is a part of place. This is why separation from place and enforced changes to place can be culturally destructive. An important difference between the concepts of place and culture employed in this dissertation is that the concept of place is more explicit about the relationship between patterns of behaviour and the environment, people-environment interactions.

Whereas the archaeological model of cultural heritage was limited to physical traces of the past, the concept of place provides an approach to the study of Indigenous cultural heritage (and an opportunity to develop a model of cultural heritage) that is holistic, one that relates to all aspects of culture, including cognitive, behavioural, sensory and physical dimensions. Interactive models of people-environment relations have already been employed by international heritage agencies as a way of more successfully dealing with Indigenous cultural heritage. The challenge is for interactive models of people-environment relations to be embraced by heritage organisations, agencies and practitioners in Queensland (and across Australia) as a way of incorporating Indigenous worldviews in heritage practice, policy and legislation.

The concepts of place and culture discussed in this chapter highlight the relationship between knowledge properties and the physical environment- the realm of ideas. There is a significant relationship between narrative and place – places can be investigated by listening to narratives and by experiencing place narratives. This chapter has illustrated the need to gain an understanding of the ongoing process of meaning-making in Indigenous people-environment interactions including the role that such interactions have in the formation and maintenance of identity and memory.
All definitions of culture hold that culture is shared amongst members of a group or society. The study of a society’s behaviour settings provides one method of investigating the shared nature of culture in terms of people-environment interactions. Cultural heritage legislation currently focuses on the physical things and past behaviour associated with them. Behaviour settings suggest that cultural heritage investigations should consider standing patterns of behaviour and the milieu with which they have an interdependent relationship. That is, cultural heritage may consist of phenomena that contain both physical and behavioural attributes. Behaviour settings suggest that the maintenance of culture can be negatively affected in two ways: (i) through the disruption or destruction of the physical/ geographical attributes of the setting (the milieu), and (ii) by the prohibition or restriction of behaviour patterns. To date cultural heritage investigations and legislation have been solely concerned with the first process.

A premise of behaviour setting theory is that all behaviour tied to an environment takes place within that environment, that is, behaviour takes place in a bounded setting. Behaviour setting theory does not accommodate cases where standing patterns of behaviour occur around the ‘outside’ of a setting, i.e. no behaviour occurs within the place. Another category/model of people-environment interaction is needed for such situations.

People are constantly moving (physically and mentally) between places. Places do not exist and are not experienced in isolation; they exist and are experienced in combination. The broad place units of cultural landscape and linear cultural landscape have been employed internationally and to some degree within Australia as a basis to investigations of such interrelationships. In considering Indigenous cultural heritage these broader place units and the interrelationships between places within them are as important as the nature of individual places.

The remainder of this thesis is concerned with exploring and analyzing examples of Aboriginal people-environment interactions.
In the previous chapter the reader was reminded that places fill people’s everyday experience. People are not only always in a place, they are also continually moving between places and they are continually changing places. This suggests that cultural heritage similarly is an everyday experience characterised by change, a ‘living cultural heritage’. This is in strong contrast with the existing cultural heritage paradigms of the Queensland and other Australian governments in which Indigenous cultural heritage is an extraordinary phenomenon, something distinct from or outside of the everyday.

There is a paucity of heritage literature that explores Aboriginal concepts of place and heritage outside of the dominant model of heritage. The remainder of this thesis is concerned with the author’s exploration of the nature of Aboriginal people-environment interactions. If cultural heritage is encountered in everyday people-environment interactions, what methods are appropriate to investigate such interactions? This chapter considers approaches and techniques suitable to this type of investigation.

The chapter begins with a description of research questions that initially framed the work. A case study approach is introduced and the limits of a literature-based study discussed. The Aboriginal people and the physical environment of the case study is introduced and described. The value of a phenomenological approach to investigations of cultural heritage and people-environment interactions is examined. The constructs of ‘culture’ and ‘place’ (as defined in this dissertation), combined with phenomenology provide an approach that facilitates investigations of Indigenous cultural heritage as it is experienced and perceived by Indigenous people. The application of a phenomenological approach in field work is then described and discussed.

**3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

A number of research questions were developed during an early period of literature analysis conducted prior to field work. These questions are reproduced here as a means for the reader to assess how the transformation in my understanding of Indigenous cultural heritage proceeded.

(a) What is the significance of places to Aboriginal people?
(b) What are the aspirations of Aboriginal people to protect places?
(c) What types of places do Aboriginal people aspire to protect?
(d) What is the level of control that Aboriginal people hold in relation to their cultural heritage and the level of control that Aboriginal people aspire to?
(e) What are Aboriginal concepts of heritage?
(f) In relation to the aforementioned, are there cross-cultural differences that exist within an Aboriginal cultural region and between Aboriginal cultural regions?

These early questions can be sorted into two categories (albeit ones which are not mutually exclusive). The first category consisting of questions (a), (b), (c), (d), and to some degree (f), are
concerned with assessing inadequacies in the existing legislation centered on the issues of protection, significance and control. These questions are derived from, and are an extension of, the existing government model of cultural heritage. Therefore, investigating such questions may highlight improvements that should be made to the existing model of cultural heritage without necessarily challenging its foundations. The second category consists of questions, (a) and (e), challenge the existing model of cultural heritage and its foundations by searching for a new or alternative foundation, one that is derived from Indigenous experiences of place and heritage. An investigation of this category of questions has the potential to fundamentally change Indigenous cultural heritage legislation.

Preliminary field work and further literature analysis guided the project towards the second category of questions. Indigenous concepts of cultural heritage are fundamental to reforming cultural heritage legislation. Rather than investigating how existing legislation can be improved, there is a need to commence by asking: What is the specific nature of Indigenous Cultural Heritage? By doing this, we can define the Indigenous constructs and values involved and compare these with the models of cultural heritage embedded in current legislation. The concept of place, as discussed in the previous chapter, provides a suitable cross-cultural theoretical framework for such an investigation.

3.2 A CASE STUDY APPROACH

The Indigenous societies of Queensland are not culturally homogeneous. There exist commonality and diversity between the Indigenous societies of Queensland. For example, Memmott has suggested that in the 1980s there existed at least fourteen Indigenous cultural regions, with varying degrees of cultural difference between regions (Memmott 1991a:196-202). Thus, there are likely to be commonalities and diversity in the people-environment-interactions of different Queensland Indigenous societies.

In recognition of this diversity, early in the project I considered undertaking a cross-cultural comparison of the people-environment interactions of a number of Indigenous groups. However, there was insufficient literature to make such a comparison and such a comparison based on field work was not possible within the time and resource constraints of the thesis research. An investigation of the nature of Indigenous people-environment interactions is most manageable at the scale of a particular Indigenous group. Working with one group over a number of years facilitates a detailed understanding of people-environment interactions. The material from such a case study can then be compared to the model of cultural heritage embedded in legislation. Implications for Indigenous cultural heritage legislation and models of cultural heritage can be drawn from a case study approach as long as such findings are tempered by knowledge of this cultural diversity.

Introductions and community support

When I considered working with an Indigenous group to create a case study, my thesis advisor Dr Paul Memmott suggested that I work with the Dajarra Aboriginal community in Northwest Queensland. Memmott introduced me, and the research, to the then President of the Jimberella Co-operative, Keith Marshall (over the phone). I wrote to the Jimberella Co-operative firstly offering to assist in an ongoing community program that was concerned with documenting the relationship between people and places and secondly, asking for their support for my field work. The Jimberella committee accepted my proposal and requested that I meet and collaborate with Feral Arts, a Brisbane-based community cultural development organisation that had at that stage been working closely with Jimberella for five years (this work is discussed shortly).

Memmott had known Keith Marshall and other members of the Dajarra community for over 25 years. In the early 1970s, Memmott visited a number of townships in Northwest Queensland including Dajarra. In 1974 he lived at one of the Dajarra town camps for three months during which time he made some observations and photographs of camp architecture and domiciliary lifestyles (Memmott 1996:1). With subsequent visits to Dajarra and Northwest Queensland in the 1980s and 1990s, Memmott maintained relationships with numerous Dajarra people. He undertook a number of trips in the 1980s for the Wakaya/Alyawarr land claim further to the west in the Northern Territory. Some of the claimants lived in Dajarra and Mt Isa. In 1996, when considering my field work options, Memmott was once again working in Northwest Queensland. At this time he was working with Aboriginal organisations and individuals in Mt Isa, Dajarra and Boulia on the cultural heritage and social impact assessment of the Ballera (Coopers Creek) to Mt Isa gas pipeline.

The significance of Dajarra as a case study emerged in the early stages of my work based on the following attributes. (i) For the majority of the Dajarra Aboriginal population, Dajarra lay outside of their traditional country. However, many people simultaneously held strong attachment and identification with Dajarra, the surrounding area and their ‘country’. (ii) Dajarra people had experienced a contact history of displacement and disruptions to place. (iii) Dajarra people had maintained association with places in their traditional country. (iv) Dajarra people had developed new properties of place. In some instances there was a simultaneous overlay of contemporary and existing place properties. (v) Empirical anthropological studies of Aboriginal people-environment relations in Queensland had largely been concerned with reserve communities (Von Sturmer (1978), Sutton (1978), Memmott (1979), Chase (1980), Taylor (1984), Anderson (1984), Trigger (1985), Martin (1993)) where there were groups who were regarded as retaining their culture and identity in certain robust ways. Only Eckermann (1977; 1988) had broken this pattern with a study of an urban rural group in a country town. The challenge was to study a community in a remote town that served the pastoral industry and

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2 Jimberella is the main Aboriginal organisation in Dajarra.
3 The Feral Arts group and I did not meet until my second trip to Dajarra. In the following years I collaborated with Feral Arts in various ways.
following Eckermann, to examine what they do, what they believe in, what they act upon “and accept these as valid expressions of adaption to their environments, as valid expressions of their own present, functioning cultural traditions” (Eckermann1988:32). (vi) The Dajarra community had aspirations to protect and formally manage (control) certain places and country. (vii) The Dajarra community had aspirations to document the relationship of people with places. (viii) The Dajarra community had aspirations to source archives including photographs that documented the relationship of people and places. (ix) There were ongoing threats of imposed change to places from various quarters. (x) Members of the Dajarra community had had recent involvement with cultural heritage programs. These issues are likely to apply to numerous Aboriginal communities in rural Queensland. Some of the unique characteristics of the case study follow.

**An introduction to Northwest Queensland and Dajarra**

Dajarra is a town that lies within what Memmott (1991a) has described as the ‘Northwest Cultural Region’. The town is located on Carbine Creek, 150 kilometres (by road) south of the regional centre of Mt Isa. The Carbine flows south out of a small range of north-south orientated hills itself part of the Northwest Highlands. From 1917 the township grew as a railhead to the Great Western Railway and a cattle-trucking centre. (See Figures 3.1, 3.9, 3.10 & 8.10.)

The majority of the Dajarra Aboriginal population identifies strongly with the Georgina River and identifies as Warluwarra people or Georgina River people (this includes a number of sub-groups). There is a minority of Eastern Arrerntic people whose country lies to the west and southwest of the Warluwarra. There are small numbers of people who identify with or have links with other language groups including Wakaya, Alyawarr, Garawa, Waanyi, Kalkadoon, and from places further afield including the west coast, the east coast, and the Torres Strait. Some of the people who come from distant countries and have lived in Dajarra for many years are recognised and respected as Dajarra elders. Through intermarriage, some members of the community can trace descent to several country affiliations. (Long in Memmott et al 1997:25, 93.)

According to limited literature sources, Dajarra lies in either Yalanga or Kalkadoon country (although the evidence is not totally clear). At the time of writing, the tribal identification of country around Dajarra was the subject of political negotiation between Aboriginal groups and the subject of a major anthropological study on native title. It is therefore useful to describe Dajarra as located near the intersection of Kalkadoon, Yalanga, Pitta-Pitta and Warluwarra country, or lying at or near the eastern edge of Warluwarra country.

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4 Orthography after Breen 2004.  
5 The Carpentaria Land Council’s ‘Greater Mt Isa Anthropological Research Project’ conducted by Paul Memmott, Lee Sackett & Stephen Long between 2003 and 2005. This project was triggered by the difficulties and complexities of numerous overlapping native title claims in the region. The aim of the project was to identify traditional owners and the spatial extent of their country.
During the 1990s and early 2000s Dajarra had an Indigenous population of between 200-300 people.\(^6\) There was fluctuation in the population as people moved to other regional centres and others returned to Dajarra.\(^7\) There were many people who regularly visited Dajarra and there were many people who strongly identified with Dajarra although they resided elsewhere.\(^8\) There was therefore a difference between the resident population and the population who identified with and visited Dajarra. The size of this latter population is likely to be in the vicinity of one thousand people.

A unique characteristic of Dajarra is the high proportion of the Indigenous population compared to the non-Indigenous population. In 1991 Indigenous people comprised 72% of the Dajarra population (ABS 1994) and 84% in 1996 (ABS 1997).\(^9\) In Queensland, a similar proportion of Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal residents is only to be found amongst discrete, self-governed Indigenous settlements that are on community title land. In this region (see table below) Dajarra has a similar Indigenous population by proportion as Mornington Island, Doomadgee, Marmany and Alpurrurulam (Lake Nash, N.T.).\(^10\) But unlike these places, Dajarra is a town, the only town in Queensland in fact, with such a dominant Aboriginal population. The development of this unique demographic characteristic is discussed in the following chapter.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Indigenous Population</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Indig. Pop. Proportion</th>
<th>Settlement Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dajarra</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulia</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urandangi &amp; Marmany</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Town &amp; outstation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Isa</td>
<td>2,853</td>
<td>21,860</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>Regional city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camooweal</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpurrurulam, (Lake Nash, N.T.)</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>Discrete Settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloncurry</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>2,450</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burketown</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doomadgee</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>753</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>Discrete Settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normanton</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>1,327</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mornington and Uninc. Islands</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>1,111</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>Discrete Settlement &amp; Outstation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^6\) The ABS data indicates 154 Aboriginal people in Dajarra in 1991 and 168 in 1996. Local estimates place the average population in the vicinity of 200-300 people. The local estimates may reflect what could be termed an ‘identifying population’ (or de jure population) of people who identify as Dajarra people and regularly visit or reside in Dajarra, whereas the ABS estimates reflect an ‘in residence population’, i.e. the number of people in town at any one time. (See Young & Doohan 1989:19.)

\(^7\) One group of people to leave Dajarra is teenagers who must move to Mt Isa or Charters Towers for High School.

\(^8\) Most of these people live in Mt Isa and other regional centres including Cloncurry and Boulia. Others live in more distant places such as Brisbane and Townsville.

\(^9\) More accurate population data is likely to indicate a proportion of 95%.

\(^10\) The family outstation of Uralame, south of Tobermorey cattle station is another Northern Territory community with close ties to Dajarra. Up to 20 people live at Uralame.
The Northwest Queensland literature and archives

There is a small body of literature that relates to the Warluwarra and their places, to the Dajarra Aboriginal community, to Dajarra and surrounds. This includes ethnographic and anthropological studies, the most notable being Roth (1897); linguistic studies, for example Breen (1971); historical and contact history studies, for example Rosser (1987); and technical cultural heritage and social impact reports, for example Memmott et al (1997). The current author’s research contributes to and expands upon this material.

Dr Walter Roth’s 1897 publication, *Ethnological Studies Among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines*, provides significant descriptions of people-environment interactions in the region in the early and mid 1890s.\(^{11}\) Despite some methodological inconsistencies and weaknesses in the work, it remains as the most significant ethnographic document for the study region. Roth, a trained English anthropologist, held the position of surgeon to the Boulia, Cloncurry and Normanton hospitals from 1894 until 1897. During this time, he developed a strong interest in the ethnology of the Aboriginal groups of Northwest Queensland, aspects of which he studied and documented. (Roth 1897; Pope & Moore 1967:273; Memmott 1995:108.)

In 1898 Roth was appointed as the Northern Protector of Aboriginals, a position he held until 1905. During this time, he authored annual reports for the Queensland Parliament in which he detailed such things as Aboriginal removals, employment of Aboriginal people and their exploitation, crimes against Aboriginal people, crimes committed by Aboriginal people and data associated with relief centres. These reports have a small amount of specific information concerning the study area and group in question (1900:583,589; 1901a:3; 1902:10; 1903:3, 14; 1904:3, 7, 8, 13, 14, 18, 25, 26; 1905:1, 2, 8, 11; 1906:8). Whereas crimes against Aboriginal people were recorded in other areas of Queensland, few were recorded on the Georgina River. This was probably a result of geographic isolation.

Roth’s interest lay in the cross-cultural attributes of groups in the region including language, artefact manufacture, food collection and preparation techniques and ceremonial activity. Roth was not interested in, or failed to investigate (and, or perhaps document), place-specific information, including Aboriginal geography and place-specific ceremonial activity. It may be that Roth did not have access to this type of information. (See Figure 3.11.)

Although Roth did travel in the region, it would appear that his data came from two major sources, (i) interviews with Aboriginal people at town camps at Boulia and Cloncurry, and probably at cattle station camps, and (ii) station managers and others in the region, for example Craigie at Roxborough. (Memmott 1995:108.)

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\(^{11}\) Sections of Roth’s 1897 publication were later reproduced by the Australian Museum in Sydney, with little or no change, in his *North Queensland Ethnography Bulletins* (1901-1910).
A glaring data gap in Roth’s 1897 work is his omission of the language groups occupying the Georgina and its eastern tributaries such as Moonah Creek, including the Warluwarra, Kapula, Pankara, Bularnu, Dhidani, and Indjiladji. He identified a group called Walookera in this area. In contrast a cattle station manager in the area reported large numbers of the ‘Wallawarra’ (Warluwarra) in the vicinity of Carandotta and Moonah Ck in the 1880s and smaller numbers in the 1890s (Edge 1899: 69). According to Breen (1971:17) Walookera is a version of Walukana, which is a term neighbouring groups used when referring to the Warluwarra. There is also a paucity of material on the Walookera contained in Roth’s work. In fact the group is rarely mentioned in comparison to the information provided concerning neighbouring groups such as the Yarowinga. This suggests that Roth had very little contact with the Warluwarra and that any information concerning the Warluwarra was obtained from their neighbours (Memmott 1995:123).

The linguist Breen conducted a field study of the Warluwarra language between 1967 and 1970. During this time he recorded six Warluwarra speakers, the most competent being the siblings Fred Age, George Age, Ida Toby and Lily Clayton. The other speakers recorded were Billy Major and Smallie Kitchener (Kachinda). In 1971 Breen predicted that the Warluwarra language would shortly become extinct. This has not exactly been the case. Nonetheless, Breen’s data and subsequent analysis form the most significant work on Warluwarra language. The audio recordings Breen made in western Queensland are highly valued by Warluwarra people, particularly the descendants of those recorded. However Breen’s work, like that of other linguists, does not give us any systematic place specific and territorial data concerning the Warluwarra. (Breen 1971:4-7.)

Memmott’s observations of the Dajarra town camps (discussed above) are briefly documented in his 1996, paper ‘From the Curry to the Weal’. The photographs Memmott took in the 1970s are historically significant and are valued by members of the Dajarra community. Memmott made photographs of Dajarra people, the self-built architecture of the town camps, the built environment of the town, and panoramic shots showing the relationship of the town camp and town. The architectural student John Mainwaring accompanied Memmott on his initial trip to Dajarra in 1972 and made a Cine film (super 8) of the town camp. Memmott has recently co-authored a number of anthropological reports concerning Dajarra, the Warluwarra and the study region, which include material for the Warluwarra/ Georgina River Native Title Claim (see Memmott & Mainwaring 1973; Memmott, Kelleher, Stacy & Long 1997; Memmott, Stacy & Long 1997).

12 In 2004 Breen’s orthography for Walukera was Walugarra (p.c. P. Memmott 25/2/05).
13 In 2004 Breen’s orthography for Yarowinga was Ayerrerenge (p.c. P. Memmott 25/2/05).
14 A contributor to ‘The Queenslander’ in 1897, under the pseudonym of ‘Aboriginal’, strongly criticised the accuracy of Roth’s 1897 work. The writer questioned the ability of any ethnographer to gain accurate data in a short period of time, 2-3 years, in relation to the extensive geographic area that the research endeavoured to cover. The writer provided examples where they believed Roth’s work was inaccurate, including some of Roth’s recording of Pitta-Pitta language. The writer also questioned Roth’s ability to gain the confidence of various groups, such confidence being necessary in order to gain access to data. (‘Aboriginal’ 1897: 1170.)
Overall though, it appears as if western Queensland and the eastern Northern Territory are voids in the anthropological archive. Why is it that there is a history of anthropological research in some parts of Aboriginal Australia and not in others? Perhaps there is a correlation between areas of anthropological research and the existence of missions, reserves or discrete settlements that provide a relatively high number and density of possible informants. In contrast, western Queensland is characterised by small and geographically distant populations. Until the 1960s/1970s much of the Aboriginal population was dispersed on cattle stations in the region. The Georgina River groups were violently decimated by ‘dispersions’, reprisals, introduced diseases and conflict over water sources particularly during harsh droughts at the turn of the 19th century. Perhaps there has also been a tradition of anthropologists avoiding areas of significant cultural change and displacement.

There are a number of relevant historical studies concerned with the study area. For example in the 1980s Rosser (1987) documented the oral histories of a number of Dajarra people in *Dreamtime Nightmares*. During the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, Henry Lamond wrote a number of novels based on the Georgina and a number of articles for popular magazines. Lamond was born in Northwest Queensland and worked on a number of the Georgina River cattle stations. The subject matter of these articles includes station life on the Georgina, the local landscape, geography of the Georgina River waterholes and drainage system, Aboriginal biographies and contact history. It appears that Lamond had significant contact with Aboriginal people in the Georgina River area, particularly around Roxborough, Carandotta and Headingly stations. (Lamond 1948; 1950; 1953; 1964; 1968.)

Station managers (for example Edge at Carandotta and Coghlan at Glenormiston), policemen (for example Deakin and Fox) and teachers and others have documented aspects of Aboriginal lifestyles in Northwest Queensland. This documentation includes audio recordings, photographs and film. Some of this information is held at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. There is likely to be much more held in private collections. It is envisaged that police officers, teachers, cattle station managers and others who worked in the area would have taken photographs of people and places. For example, a series of photographs of the Dajarra town camp taken by the architect Lindsay Bond in the early 1980s were recently copied by the current author and sent back to Dajarra. There are likely to be other archival materials held in various private collections such as reports, letters and government documentation. Whilst there remains a strong community interest in accessing this material, accessing this material has not been the focus of my work.

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15 For example Stirling and Annette Minniecon made numerous photographs and super 8 films of Dajarra people during their many years working in Dajarra.
16 Bond designed a number of small dwellings that replaced the self-built architecture of the camps.
Perhaps the most significant documentation related to this case study is a video archive made by Dajarra people in collaboration with Feral Arts. The subjects of the videos include (i) communally important events, (ii) interviews and oral histories, and (iii) visits to places. This material was produced by the community for future use by family members. This material is highly significant, however I have not referred to it in the course of this thesis because I was interested in observing people-environment interactions as much as listening to people’s accounts of those interactions.

Items of traditional material culture have been collected and removed from Northwest Queensland to various museums. For example the Queensland Museum and the University of Queensland Anthropology Museum hold a number of these items. The Australian Museum contains many items collected by Roth.

A related body of research is the ongoing work of Dajarra’s historians (or ‘ethno-historians’). There are a number of people in Dajarra (and the wider Aboriginal community of Northwest Queensland) who collect archival information; they also actively seek oral histories concerning people and place. These people aspire to establish a centre for the maintenance and development of this material including the safe storage and production of videos.

‘That Old Georgina’\textsuperscript{17} - an introduction to the Georgina River

The Warluwarra identify with the Georgina River from Headingly Station located at a place called Butharrawaliy, and the Templeton River in the north, to Roxborough Station located at a place that the Warluwarra call Kuthawarra, in the south. The Warluwarra identify with the eastern tributaries of the Georgina River. They identify with plains country as far east as ceremonial places they maintain in the western hills of the Northwest Highlands. The Warluwarra also identify with country to the west of the Georgina. At the time of writing, the Warluwarra/ Georgina River people were involved in native title claim processes in which they were required to fix precise boundaries to their country. (See Figure 4.24.)

Many Dajarra people, who do not identify as Warluwarra, also identify with this country. Some of these people were born on, and/or grew up on Warluwarra country, for example some were born at Urandangi. Others (or their parents) have worked on Warluwarra country, mainly in the pastoral industry. Places within Warluwarra country including places on the Georgina are part of the cultural landscape of these people. This includes places they continue to visit with Warluwarra friends and relatives with whom they have ‘grown up’.

A consequence of the majority Warluwarra study population and the location of Dajarra is that the geographic focus of the case study was on places in Warluwarra country and on places around Dajarra. However other places were also investigated.

\textsuperscript{17} Title borrowed from the song ‘DJ Rockers’ by George Dempsey, Lloyd Singh, Raymond Major, Bruce Bookie and Ray Bismark (Dempsey et al 1995).
The Georgina River referred to by Dajarra people as ‘the River’\textsuperscript{18}, and the Georgina River Basin form part of the Lake Eyre drainage system, the most extensive inland water system of the Australian continent. The Georgina drainage system itself covers 240,000 km\textsuperscript{2}, including areas of the Wakaya desert to the west, the Barkly Tableland to the north, ‘black soil’ plains and the western watershed of the ranges of the Northwest Highlands\textsuperscript{19} to the east. The Ranken and Herbert Rivers form the headwaters of the Georgina to the north. The western-most tributary of the Georgina is the Sandover River that flows in an easterly direction from near Utopia\textsuperscript{20} to where it narrows and becomes Milne River, then Bybby Ck and finally meets the Georgina below Lake Nash, a distance of over 400km. Two significant eastern tributaries of the Georgina in the study region are the Templeton River and Moonah Creek. These both flow in a southwesterly direction from the western hills of the highlands to meet the Georgina near Headingly Station and Carandotta Station respectively.\textsuperscript{21} (See Figures 3.2, 3.3, 3.9, 3.10.)

The Georgina is usually a dry river, consisting of a series of intermittent and perennial waterholes that form natural reservoirs of up to 30km in length (AWRC 1976:144). Surface waters are mostly seasonal with significant rainfall usually received from the southern-most influence of the summer monsoons (CSIRO 1952:37). The variable summer rains fill dry waterholes and replenish others, causing local creeks to run for short distances. In the seasons of heavy rainfall, the ‘ribbon-like’ waterholes link up, all of the creeks flow and the river itself flows or ‘runs’. The Georgina is most likely to flow between January and May although there is extreme seasonal variation in the nature of the stream flow. (AWRC 1976:144; Lamond 1948; 1950; 1953a; Kotwicki 1986:9, 34.)

Floodwaters usually travel slowly down the Georgina. For example, in March of 2000, the north of Australia received heavy rainfall as a result of ‘Cyclone Steve’ and the Georgina River system flooded.\textsuperscript{22} At the beginning of March the main floodwaters were in the Urandangi area; the floodwaters peaked at Marion Downs Station (approximately 260km downstream) on the 12th of March and at Glengyle Station (a further 175km downstream) on the 22nd of March (BOM 2001b). In contrast, small creeks often ‘come up’ quickly, some notoriously so – “it doesn’t take much for that creek to run”. The water levels of these same creeks drop just as quickly.

\textsuperscript{18} Capitalisation is used throughout the thesis for ‘the River’ to reflect the significance of the Georgina River and the common usage of the term ‘the River’ to represent the Georgina River.
\textsuperscript{19} Also known as the Cloncurry- Mt Isa Massif (Stevens 1972:3), the North-western Uplands (Stevens 1972:48) and the Mt Isa Inlier (Dept. of National Development 1966:11).
\textsuperscript{20} An Aboriginal community close to the Sandover and over 200km by road from Alice Springs.
\textsuperscript{21} Warluwarra people and other Aboriginal people in Northwest Queensland regularly discuss the drainage systems of the region, in fact the creeks, rivers and watershed divides are the dominant geographic features of many parts of Northwest Queensland.
\textsuperscript{22} This cyclone travelled west from the Coral Sea crossing the east coast near Cairns. It continued in a westerly direction travelling across the Gulf of Carpentaria and on to the Kimberley. (BOM 2001b; 2002.)
When the river runs it is difficult to cross, for example people have been stuck on the ‘other side’ of the river, the western side, for months. On other occasions people have travelled upstream to cross the river at a place where the water level has already dropped (or the flood peak has passed). A number of floods have been recorded on the Georgina including: 1894 (large flood), 1904, 1932, 1933, 1974 (large flood) and 1977 (Kotwicki 1986:61,89).

During the dry season and at times of low summer rainfall, the perennial waterholes on the Georgina form the only reliable source of surface water in the region. A number of these waterholes are replenished by subterranean springs that ‘break out’ (start) at the end of the dry winter and the onset of summer (between September and October) and during drought. (Lamond 1948; 1950:40.)

The shallow Georgina River Basin is covered by limestone and dolomite, as well as shale, siltstone and sandstone (Stevens 1972:8, 13; East 1993:60; Dept. of National Development 1966; Division of National Mapping 1980). There are also deposits of phosphate within this basin one of which is currently mined by the Western Mining Company (WMC) at ‘Phosphate Hill’, locally known as ‘The Monument’, and located southeast of Dajarra (Shergold and Southgate 1986).

There are numerous limestone (karst) features along the Georgina including, outcrops, caves, and sinkholes (dolines) (Grimes 1978; Beeston & Wade 1993:60). The most widely known of these are the caves and sinkholes of the Camooowal area (see Grimes 1978). These limestone features also form an underground water system, with surface waters, including floodwaters of the Georgina, flowing into some of the sinkholes. The geologist and speleologist Grimes (1978) suggested that the underground waters of the Camooowal area flowed south to break out as springs lower down the Georgina. However as Grimes did not have knowledge of springs in the south (such as those mentioned by Lamond) that would support his theory he was not totally confident in his theory. (Grimes 1978.)

In the Aboriginal belief system, these caves and sinkholes, or ‘karst’ features are places created by the actions of Ancestral Beings. Some are places where Ancestral Beings interacted with each other, and some are inhabited by Ancestral Beings; in many cases they are powerful ‘story places’. In contrast Western science ascribes the origins of these features as ‘natural’ geomorphic events (Grimes 1978). For example, Grimes (1978:21) argues that the slow

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23 According to Western science this geology is the result of marine deposits in the Tertiary and Cambrian periods, which are 65 and 610 million years old respectively (Beeston & Wade 1993:59).
24 In the early 1960s, the Federal Government encouraged mining companies to prospect for phosphate. The first major deposits of phosphate in Australia were those found in the Georgina basin between 1966-1968. Additional phosphate deposits close to Dajarra include one at Ardmore and one at Quita Creek. (Cook & Shergold 1986:62.)
25 In one of his articles for a popular magazine, Lamond (1950) describes the underground waters of the Barkly Tableland as the ‘modern Styx’, the Styx being “the principal river of the underworld in Greek mythology” (Webster’s Dictionary 1984:1172). Lamond describes the underground stream as “a black stream, hundreds of yards wide, rolling sullenly along.”
development of karst features in the Camooweal area is the result of low rainfall and the impermeable black soils that cover the limestone and protect it from erosion.

In the broader landscape, the Georgina River and its tributaries, such as Moonah Ck, form veins or corridors of vegetation. Woodlands of predominantly two species known as ‘Georgina gidyea’ and ‘gidyea’ respectively are prominent in this corridor as well as stands of coolibah and river red gum which fringe the streamlines. Whitewood, carbeen gum, western bloodwood and other trees are also to be found. Other vegetation within these stream corridors includes: ‘mungaroo’, bush banana, Mitchell grasses, buffel grass. (CSIRO 1952:37; Queensland Government 1980:44; Border and Rowland 1990:32.)

Various plants are found along the banks of the river such as lignum. Cattle accessing water and the rooting of feral pigs damage this bank vegetation. There are swamps and gilgai in the vicinity of the Georgina. Bluebush is also to be found in these areas. (Milson 1995:vi.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Warluwarra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgina gidyea</td>
<td>Acacia georginae (Milson 2000:122)</td>
<td>Kalilpi which grow on creeks and kijalpari which grow away from creeks (Breen 1970:295)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbeen gum</td>
<td>Corymbia aparrerinia</td>
<td>Pitupuna (Breen 1970:297), Birghiburna (Nancarrow 2002:17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western bloodwood</td>
<td>Corymbia terminalis (Milson 2000:210)</td>
<td>Kutipiri (Breen 1970:298)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffel grass</td>
<td>Cenchrus ciliaris (Milson 2000b:214)</td>
<td>(introduced species)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinifex</td>
<td>Triodia species (Milson 2000b:299)</td>
<td>Patandi (Breen 1970:301)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conkerberry</td>
<td>Carissa lanceolata (Milson 2000:2)</td>
<td>Jilaryala (Breen 1970:296)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerosense grass</td>
<td>Aristida contorta (Milson 2000b:197)</td>
<td>Yilarrgharla (Nancarrow 2002:17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush Orange</td>
<td>Capparis Mitchellii</td>
<td>Bandarnmani (Nancarrow 2002:17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey box</td>
<td>Eucalyptus argilaceae (AUSLIG 1990:33, 62)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassia</td>
<td>Senna spp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluebush</td>
<td>Chenopodium auricomum (Milson 2000b:35)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26 Border and Rowland (1990: 32) refer to these as alluvial plains/woodlands.

27 Georgina gidyea and gidyea are similar in appearance and people commonly refer to Georgina gidyea simply as ‘gidyea’. Although there are differences in the flowers, pods and seeds of the trees, the most obvious difference is the size, with Georgina gidyea being generally smaller, more gnarled and multi-stemmed (Milson 2000:122).
Between the creeks and streams, a large portion of the study area is covered by the ‘black soil plains country’ of the Barkly Tableland, dominated by Mitchell grasses (Astrebla spp.) which grow in summer and after flood (CSIRO 1952:27). Although people refer to the soils on the plains as ‘black soils’\(^{28}\), they are actually grey in colour (grey clays), the surface of the soil is ‘frangible’; it dries, cracks and quickly turns to dust (Isabel et al 1993:67).\(^{29}\) Conversely these clays quickly become boggy and sticky when wet. These vast, undulating and mostly treeless plains are sometimes referred to as ‘downs’. There are stands of gidyea woodlands within this plains country, and at the edge of the plains country where the plains country ranges into the woodlands of the stream systems, including the Georgina. For example, as you travel along the Dajarra-Urandangi road, the dark greens and greys of gidyea woodlands to the south of the road follow the path of Split Creek, whilst to the north of the road Kallala station, bores (windmills), and cattle sit out on the open plain which in the dry time takes on a washed-out, straw-yellow colour. Within these ‘open’ plains are places with signs of the actions of Ancestral Beings, that is, places created by Ancestral Beings. (Border & Rowland 1990:4; CSIRO 1952:15, 26.) (See Figure 3.4.)

To the east of the plains country is the rugged ‘hills country’ of the Northwest Highlands that is characterised by a jumble of low north-south oriented ranges extending several hundreds of kilometers to the north of Dajarra (Queensland Government 1980; Stevens 1972:11). These hills consist of igneous and metamorphic rocks such as basalt, granite, porphry and quartz with the streams occupying belts of shale and slate and they are rich in metals including copper, lead, zinc, and silver (Stevens 1972:11; Dept. National Development 1966; Brooks 1973:1). A number of mining companies are active in the area, the most widely known being Mount Isa Mines (MIM). In the past, a number of Dajarra men worked their own small mines and some continue to search the hills for metals. In contrast to the grey colour of the plains soil, the hills country is characterised by red earths (Queensland Government 1980). (See Figures 3.5 & 3.6.)

The vegetation of the hilly country is dominated by spinifex with scattered snappy gum and western bloodwood forming low open woodlands. Shrubby acacias such as turpentine are common and sometimes form dense stands that can make cross-country vehicle travel slow and difficult.\(^{30}\) Stands of gidyea are found in the valleys and at the base of some hills. Other vegetation includes bush orange, caustic bush, conkerberry, and kerosene grass. (Queensland Government 1980; AUSLIG 1990:11,32; Bullen 1993:78; Milson 2000:118-119.)

Between the plains country and hilly country, particularly north of Moonah Ck is an area of low open woodland of northern grey box, western bloodwood and low shrubs. Shrubs include a variety of cassia, conkerberry, and Queensland bluebush in the low-lying areas. As one moves

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\(^{28}\) Vertosols (Isabel et al 1993:67).

\(^{29}\) The Dajarra primary school has used these local clays for pottery.

\(^{30}\) *Acacia chisholmi* or chisholm’s wattle, turpentine is common in the Mt Isa-Cloncurry area (Milson 2000:118-119). According to Breen the Warluwarra word for the grub found in the roots of this shrub is *jindirkiri*. Another type of *turpentine* to be found is *Acacia lysiphlora*. 

77
east from these woodlands into the low hills of the ranges the vegetation gives way to snappy gum and spinifex country. (CSIRO 1952:54-55; AUSLIG 1990:33.)

To the west of the Georgina and to the south of Split Creek are areas dominated by low, open gidyea woodlands and bloodwood woodlands with Mitchell grasses, or with wire grass, kerosene grass and ‘bottlewashers’ and shrubs such as silver cassia. (CSIRO 1952:54-55; AUSLIG 1990:33, 62.)

The study region is characterised by a hot, dry climate, consisting of low annual rainfall and high evaporation rates. Most rainfall occurs in the hottest period of the year from October through to March. For example, during this period Urandangi experiences mean maximum temperatures of 35-39°C and receives 81% of its annual rainfall. Within this period heavier rainfall is received between December and March. During the October-March period good ‘soaking’ rains are experienced and plants flourish, the bush fruits and wild flowers ‘come out’ and the grasses and country in general ‘green up’. (CSIRO 1952:20, 26; BOM 1992:1; 2001.)

Table 3.3 Mean Daily Maximum and Minimum Temperatures for Selected Locations in the Study Region. (BOM 2001.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>39</th>
<th>37</th>
<th>36</th>
<th>32</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>31</th>
<th>35</th>
<th>37</th>
<th>39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Min</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Min</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Min</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4 Mean Rainfall (in mm) for Selected Locations in the Study Region. (BOM 2001; Border & Rowland 1990:23.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>J</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Summer % of yearly rainfall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urandangi</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenormiston</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Isa</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duchess</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulia</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camooweal</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The region is characterised by usually light or negligible rainfall during the cooler months, when cold southerly winds are experienced. During this cooler period Urandangi experiences mean maximum temperatures ranging from 32°C (in April) to 24°C (in July) and mean minimum temperatures ranging from 17°C (in April) to 7.0°C (in July). (CSIRO 1952:20, 26; Bureau of Meteorology 1992:1; 2001.)

Rainfall is highly variable and highly unreliable (Bureau of Meteorology 1992:6). The region also experiences high evaporation rates with some areas experiencing evaporation of 3000-3600mm per year (Border & Rowland 1990:22, 38; Pullar 1993:71; WRG 1994:9). These high evaporation rates combined with low rainfall mean that surface water rarely persists (AWRC
Any surface waters that do persist, particularly the perennial waterholes, are extremely important regional resources.


Rainfall varies across the study region. Generally the further one travels down the Georgina, the lower the annual rainfall (Auliciems & Stone 1993:74; BOM 2001). This is dramatically illustrated by the extraordinary rainfall data for March 1901 (during the drought period of 1898-1903).\(^33\) Travelling up the Georgina in a northerly direction, the falls were: Boulia 75mm, Glenormiston 51mm, Roxborough 71mm, Carandotta 99mm, Urandangi 251mm, Lake Nash 443mm, Camooweal 250mm (Queensland Treasury 1909:380-559). The figures for Urandangi and Lake Nash also illustrate the patchy or scattered distribution of rainfall that is experienced in the region. (See Figure 3.7.)

There are a number of families associated with Rain Dreaming places along the Georgina River and elsewhere in Northwest Queensland and eastern Northern Territory. These people are associated with various Rain phenomena. The ‘bosses’ for these Rain places, or the ‘rain makers’, have the ability to interact with and influence rain.

Rain, strong wind, and violent storms are environmental events that are often associated with human fortunes and behaviour, including death, funerals and mourning. For example, a group of people was travelling along Moonah Ck searching for a massacre site in good weather when they encountered strong wind and rain. This was a sign that they were close to the place and a sign that they should turn back. As they returned along their tracks the rain stopped again.\(^34\)

**‘Walookera’, ‘Wallawarra’, ‘Waluwara’**\(^{35}\) - descriptions of Warluwarra country

Aboriginal people in Northwest Queensland regularly use cattle station geography when describing country- from Heайдingly to Roxborough (as above). For Dajarra people, cattle station geography is not distinct from an Aboriginal geography; rather it is to some degree embedded in Aboriginal geography.

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\(^{31}\) A correspondent to ‘The Queenslander’ recorded this period of drought ending with rain in January 1889 (‘The Queenslander’1889:438)

\(^{32}\) ‘The Queenslander’ in 1892 (1892:810) reported that no rain had fallen at Lake Idamea on the Georgina in two years and that the lake was drying up.

\(^{33}\) There are anomalies to this drought period, for example the ‘Western Protector for Aborigines’ reported floods in 1900 (Gordon 8/2/1900).

\(^{34}\) Morphy (1995:196) has described the powerful nature of Yolngu places where massacres or epidemics have occurred.

Various authors have also employed the geography of cattle stations in their attempts to describe the country of Aboriginal groups of Northwest Queensland. However, whilst these latter descriptions provide some indication of country, it is difficult to gauge the ‘accuracy’ of these descriptions in relation to the spiritual and economic geography of country. For example when an ethnographer such as Roth used a station name to describe a group’s ‘territory’ or ‘country’, one may ask was he (i) referring to the homestead (and an associated Aboriginal ‘station camp’), (ii) referring to another place on the station (possibly a camp), (iii) inferring that a group’s country coincides with station boundaries, (iv) providing an inaccurate description which describes part of a group’s country, but with other parts of it exceeding station ‘boundaries’, or (v) simply recording the Aboriginal groups who were on the station at the time? Roth was aware of the limits of his knowledge of Aboriginal geography:

...difficulty is here and there experienced in locating their chief home or head-encampment owing to there being perhaps no station homestead marked near enough on the maps to indicate accurately its geographical position... (Roth 1897:134.)

An early description of the Warluwarra on the Georgina is provided by Edge, a manager on Carandotta Station in the late 1880’s:

The Wallawarra tribe’s country extends from Roxborough to here, and 70 miles N.E. up Moonah Creek...They are on the whole a very poor specimen of the dark race, having no knowledge of the sea and very few traditions, and the rites they practise are-making young men (circumcising) and whistle cocking. They are also cannibals to some extent, such as eating piccaninies, &c. They are also disappearing fast, disease (venereal) and consumption being the chief causes. When I first came out here in 1885 there were large numbers, and it was not an uncommon thing to see camps of 70 and 80 full-grown men with twice as many women and children, but now 10 or 12 is a big camp. (Edge 1899:69.)

Edge’s description of the northern ‘limits’ of Warluwarra (Wallawarra) country suggests there may have been a sign of Warluwarra occupation at his specified location 70 miles up Moonah Ck, possibly a Warluwarra camp. The location of Old Rochedale Station in this area, between Woolshed bore and Yappo Ck, suggests a reliable source of surface water in the vicinity. However, there are no large waterholes in this area, instead some people believe ‘the old people’ would have maintained waterholes along this part of Moonah Ck by clearing them of silt and debris, in similar fashion to digging and maintaining a soak. As a result of disruptions in the contact era, these water sources were no longer maintained and have silted up. At the time of writing, the native title claims of the Warluwarra and their eastern neighbours, the Kalkadoon, overlapped in this area.

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36 The cattle stations of Northwest Queensland cover large areas; the name of a station does not simply refer to the station homestead. Perhaps for the early writers the homestead buildings were the only familiar markers in an unknown geography.

37 Edge (1899) also provided a short list of Warluwarra vocabulary.

38 There is a ruin marked at this location on current topographical maps, 1:250 000 series, Urandangi sheet.

39 One man compared this process to his cattle station experience of cleaning out waterholes with machinery. Others recall travelling along Moonah Creek in the 1950s digging soaks for their horses.
Roth also documented the Warluwarra in the vicinity of Carandotta and Roxborough stations in the late 1880s. However Roth used the term Walookera, his version of the Warluwarra synonym Walukana, in his description (Breen 1971:17):

In the Upper Georgina District, stretching along the river between Roxburgh and Carandotta and onwards, with head-quarters [sic.] at the latter locality, are the Eloookera or Walookera, a small tribe using words absolutely distinct, showing no traces of contact with neighbouring peoples. The Yunnalinka, who also had their head-quarters [sic.] at Carandotta only a few years ago, are now probably extinct. Beyond the Walookera are the comparatively numerous Yaroinga scattered between Urundangi and Headingly; these extend northwards along the Georgina as far as Lake Nash, and westwards along the course of Gordon’s Creek. Here the Yaroinga come into contact with the Undekerebina of the Toko Ranges and surrounding country, with whom they are friends and messmates, and, as will be noticed in the lists referring to their respective dialects, the similarity of many of their words is very marked. The Yaroinga are also messmates with the powerful and warlike Workia people, who live north of them. (Roth 1897:42.)

Roth’s ‘Upper Georgina Ethnographic District’ is significant as it loosely conforms to the description of country commonly provided by Warluwarra people (above) and it loosely conforms to the area of the Warluwarra/Georgina River People Native Title Claim. It is thought that the Yunnalinka are a Warluwarra sub-group, however there appears to be no contemporary identification of people with this sub-group name, similarly there appears to be no contemporary identification with Yaroinga (or Ayerrerenge in Arrerntic orthography). (Tindale 1940:166, 1974:187; Breen 1970:2; 1971:19).

In contrast to Roth, in the 1960s and 1970s linguists found relationships between Warluwarra and some neighbouring languages.  

40 Hale (1961:3–4) found a close relationship between Warluwarra and Wakaya languages.41 According to Breen (1970:268) Wakaya, Waluwara and Bularnu comprise one language group which he called the Wakayic Group (1971:37). It has more recently been termed the Warluwaric Group (Breen 1993:22). 42 Breen (1971) mapped the closely related Bularnu language on the Templeton River, to the immediate north of Waluwara. The Wakaya are the northwestern neighbours of the Bularnu.

In addition to the Yunnalinka, a number of Warluwarra sub-groups have been documented: Pankara, a dialect on Moonah Creek43; Kapula on Carandotta; the Warluwarra proper in the vicinity of Walgra and Urundangi; and the groups Didjadidja and Gigge around Roxborough.44 Of these sub-groups, Warluwarra and Pankara continue to be recognised and some people are identified as Pankara/Warluwarra. Breen (1970:2) was also informed of the groups Manda and Paringkarama having an association with the area. According to Tindale (1974), Manda is a

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40 In addition to the work on spoken language, Meggitt (1954:2-16) analysed Roth’s description of the sign language of the various groups of Northwest Queensland and found that with the exception of the Kalkadoon the Warluwarra (Walookera) had a high percentage of signs in common with proximate groups (of course Meggitt’s work is subject to Roth’s methodological inadequacies).

41 Most languages with such a relationship are geographically contiguous, these are not. However these two groups have a history of interaction and shared experiences in place.

42 This language group includes Yanyuwa (Breen 1993:21-22; Blake 1990:52).

43 According to Tindale (1974:188), Pankara or Paringgara means “creek dwellers”.

44 Didjadidja and Gigge are now thought to be from the neighbouring Wangka Yujuru language group.
southern sub-group of Yaroinga located near Urardangi. It is unclear with which places the Paringkarama group were associated.45 (Breen 1970:2, 289; 1971:17, 19,37; Tindale 1974:187; Memmott et al1988.) (See Figure 3.12.)

Hale (1961) and Tindale (1974) mapped the Warluwarra language across longitude 138° into the Northern Territory. In contrast, Breen (1971) mapped the most westerly distribution of Waluwarra language to the east of the Northern Territory-Queensland border. The Warluwarra/Georgina River people have claimed native title rights as far west as the Northern Territory border. This claim runs along the border for a distance of approximately 140 kilometres. This action by the Warluwarra/Georgina River people perhaps reflects the significance of the Northern Territory - Queensland border for Aboriginal people of western Queensland and eastern Northern Territory. This border is not just a line on a map; nor is it simply a fence line in the landscape complete with grid crossings; nor is the border simply maintained by the Queensland and Northern Territory governments. There are numerous Aboriginal historical, political and socio-cultural elements that contribute to the nature of this border. (See Figure 4.24.)

The Queensland-Northern Territory border is a boundary in the Aboriginal geography of Northwest Queensland that is commonly recognised. However, in an era (1990s-2000s) when Aboriginal groups are required to prove and agree on ‘fixed’ boundaries to native title claims, it is interesting to note that the exact location of the Queensland-Northern Territory border has historically been disputed by the Queensland and Northern Territory governments (Sunday Mail, 10/2/1985:21). Is this border in the right place?

Neighbouring groups and visitors

A number of groups appear in the ethnographic literature as neighbours to the Warluwarra, and there is some contemporary identification of people with some of these groups, although little is known of others. To the east are the Kalkadoon who are associated with the hilly country of the Northwest Highlands and the Leichhardt River basin (Palmer 1884:278-295; Roth 1897:42; Memmott 1995:111). To the southeast are the Yalanga who are associated with Wills Creek and the Burke River (Curr 1886:3476; Roth 1897:135; Tindale 1940:176; 1974:169; Breen 1970:2; 1971:18-19; Capell 1963:8).46 The Bularnu have been mapped to the north of the Warluwarra around the junction of the Templeton and the Georgina, and on Bybby Ck (Lamond 1948; Yallop 1969:912; Lyon and Parsons 1989:13; Breen 1971:17, 1976:331, 1993:22; Memmott et al 1988; Yallop 1969:192). Between the Warluwarra and the Bularnu, a dialect related to Bularnu, Baringkiri, is supposed to be associated with country around Toby Ck and Headingly Station, little is known of this group (Breen 1970a; Memmott 1988). Beyond the Bularnu are the Didhani on the Buckley River and further north again, the Indjiladji in the Camooweal area

45 It is possible that this is the Pankara (also listed as Paringarra), although it should be noted that Breen did not make this association (Breen 1970:2, 289; 1971:37; Tindale 1974:187-188; Memmott et al 1988).
46 Little is known of a Yalanga sub-group mentioned in the literature called Wonganja.
The Yaroinga or Ayerrerenge have been consistently mapped northwest of Urandangi and west of Headingly on Gordons Ck (Roth 1897:42, 135; Breen 1970; 1971:16-17; ‘The Queenslander’ 1898:71; Yallop 1969:190; 1977:2; Memmott et al 1988). In the last eighty years, the Alyawarr have succeeded to country around Lake Nash and are now the northwestern neighbours of the Warluwarra (Yallop 1969: 192; Lyon & Parsons 1989:13).

To the southwest and west are the East Arrerntic groups, including the Antekerrebenhe who are identified in the literature with country from the Toko Ranges in the south and north towards Gordon’s Creek (Breen 1971:19; 1977:371-2; 1993:21-7; Tindale 1940:186; 1974:220). A number of Antekerrebenhe sub-groups appear in the literature including Nyampel-Nyampel, Nambila-Nambila and Nharr (Breen 1971:19; 1993:21, 27; Tindale 1974:220). There is a history of interaction between the east Arrernte groups and the Warluwarra.

Two groups have been documented to the immediate south of the Warluwarra: the Runga-Rungawah (Curr 1886:351) or Rungo-Rungo (Roth 1897:41; Breen 1971:8) on Roxborough and the Wangkatjutjuru or Wangka Yujuru around the junction of Pituri Ck and the Georgina (Breen 1970:2; 1971; Tindale 1940:175; 1974:190; QLT 1994:82-86; Roth 1897:41). The Wangkatjutjuru is a sub-group of Wangkamadla or Wangkamanha, which are the group names most commonly identified with the area to the south and southwest of the Warluwarra (Breen 1971:7).

In the late 1800s, Roth documented a number of neighbouring groups visiting Warluwarra country including East Arrerntic groups, the Wakaya, the Kalkadoon, the Yalanga, and the Yaroinga. With the exception of the Yaroinga, these groups continue to visit Warluwarra country and interact with the Warluwarra and vica versa (for example there is intermarriage between these groups). (Roth 1897:104, 135.)

The documented ‘Cultural Heritage’ of Northwest Queensland

Negligible ‘traditional’ cultural heritage research (normally confined to the recording of archaeological sites) has occurred in this area, particularly on the plains country or river country to the west of Dajarra. Until recently, cultural heritage research in the region had concentrated on the recording of Aboriginal archaeological sites such as paintings, engravings and artefact scatters in the hills and mountains of the Northwest Highlands (see Border & Rowland 1990:48). An upsurge in such recordings occurred in the 1970s when government employed Aboriginal rangers began documenting sites (Sutcliffe nd.). A number of places that have been recorded by archaeologists are well known and are frequently visited by Dajarra people (see Section 5.9) (Morwood 1985; Davidson et al 1989; Sutcliffe nd.). One of these places, Black

47 Gordon’s Creek is also known as Woodroffe River. The Yanindo have been mapped below Gordons Ck, little is known of this group (Davidson 1938:649-679; O’Grady et al 1966:41; Tindale 1974).

48 See also Roth (1897:42, 135, 396); Matthews (1901:75); Davidson (1938); Gresser (1963:38); O’Grady et al (1966:41); and Yallop (1969).
Mountain, also appears in the illustrated Register of the National Estate (AHC 1981). Most of the recent cultural heritage (archaeological) research in the region has accompanied major infrastructure projects such as the development of the WMC Phosphate Mine, the Miscellaneous Transport Infrastructure Corridor and main roads projects.

**Follow the creeks and rivers**

A significant proportion of the study area is comprised of Mitchell Grass Downs (50% of the Urandangi map sheet and 95% of the Glenormiston map sheet) (Border and Rowland 1990: 8). According to Border and Rowland (1990:57-59, 72, 98) the highest density of archaeological sites in the Mitchell Grass Downs Biogeographical Zone is to be found in alluvial plains and woodland landsystems, that is, along the creeks and rivers.

During my first field trip, a Dajarra resident informed me of the high density of visible camp locations along creeks in the area and a very simple principle: if you are looking for ‘old camps’, follow the creeks. The creeks and rivers are the travel routes of western Queensland and the foci of resource exploitation and habitation. During my travels with people from Dajarra we came across a number of these ‘old camps’ on creeks. People also find archaeological items at places on river systems that continue to be utilized and people also continue to deposit materials at such places. In a seminar paper presented at an early stage (1997) of this project I speculated that the Georgina River would produce a wealth of archaeological material: “The banks of a perennial waterhole in a dry region would, it seems, provide a ‘treasure’ for archaeologists seeking material evidence of past occupation.” At the time I was advised that this prediction was optimistic given the nature of flooding. Recent archaeological studies accompanying the construction of a new bridge over the Georgina River at Camooweal have found a large quantity of archaeological materials including various tools. This recent study is the only major archaeological study that has been undertaken on the Georgina.49 (ARCHAEO 2001:40-42; ARCHAEO 2002.)

Border and Rowland’s (1990) assessment of the ‘heritage resources’ of the Mitchell Grass Biogeographic Zone is symptomatic of the current model of cultural heritage. This assessment is focused on documented archaeological sites and estimated densities of archaeological sites in this Zone. Their recommendations concerning the future management of the ‘heritage resource’ are focused on the development of a program of archaeological research: “The first step towards effective management is to locate sites and to assess their significance”(Border and Rowland 1990:105). Whereas Border and Rowland emphasised roles for government officers, for University researchers and for land users in this management program, they failed to promote a primary role for local Aboriginal groups. In fact they failed to acknowledge, (i) continuing Aboriginal interests in this zone, (ii) local Aboriginal knowledge of archaeological

49 Morwood & Gibson (1984) wrote a paper concerned with items taken from a rockhole near Lake Wonditti [on Pituri Creek, a tributary of the Georgina] and held at the Queensland Museum. Morwood (1984) published a paper concerned with incised stones on Glenormiston. These are exceptional studies for the otherwise non-researched status of the Georgina Basin.
sites, and (iii) contemporary Aboriginal rights and interests in archaeological sites. In sections entitled ‘Demography’ and ‘Aboriginal groups of the region’ they failed to identify local Aboriginal groups or organisations that may hold interests in particular areas and places. (Border & Rowland 1990:45, 83, 106-109.)

The closest these authors came to recognising a role for Aboriginal groups in the management of Aboriginal archaeological sites in this area is to be found in the following excerpt:

The Heritage Branch should explore and define ways to involve local communities and historical societies in recording both historical and prehistoric sites. In particular the Stockman’s Hall of Fame Authority, Longreach should be contacted in regard to liaison on historic sites. (Border and Rowland 1990:108.)

In contrast the following are examples of the role they promote for others:

Given the large size of the MGD, the small population, the relative isolation and the predominant grazing land tenure of the area it is recommended that local landholders become the main focus of site management in this region. (Border and Rowland 1990:108.)

The Heritage Branch should prepare an information leaflet explaining what an archaeological site is and what scientific, cultural, heritage and educational values such sites have. It should also attempt to persuade landholders of their important role as ‘honorary custodians’ of such sites.... (Border and Rowland 1990:108.)

In focusing on archaeological sites, Border and Rowland’s assessment excludes a range of Aboriginal places. For example, along the river systems of Northwest Queensland there are high densities of places created by Ancestral Beings and places inhabited by Ancestral Beings (Dreaming places or Story places). Border and Rowland’s assessment concentrates on places that can be found using archaeological techniques and it excludes those that cannot.

More recent cultural heritage research in Northwest Queensland has included anthropologists’ attention to meanings as well as archaeologist’s attention to material culture. Thus, Story places as well as archaeological sites are now included in such studies. However, some studies continue to have a narrow focus and there are numerous places that continue to be excluded. For example, in the Miscellaneous Transport Infrastructure Corridor (MTIC) project, investigations of Aboriginal cultural heritage and investigations of the social impact of the project on Aboriginal communities were conducted separately whereas they are not mutually exclusive. Thus the social impact of this project on Dajarra and the lifestyle of Dajarra people (including the exploitation of resources) should have been considered as a cultural heritage issue. (Memmott et al 1997; PMA & UQASU 1997.)

There are limits to desktop studies of cultural heritage, particularly where (as in this region) little research has been carried out. A particular problem is that such a study inevitably focuses on
‘places that were’ - the archaeological model of cultural heritage that is anchored exclusively in the past. There is a definite need for an approach that is capable of encompassing a multiplicity of heritage types, values and time contexts.

3.3 A HUMANISTIC APPROACH

A phenomenological approach to cultural heritage research

...a discovery of phenomenology, will occur in archaeology as its attempt to integrate mental and material phenomena matures and catches up with developments in geography. (Hodder 1987:140.)

Few studies of cultural heritage in Australia have employed a suitable cross-cultural theory of cultural heritage that can accommodate individual ethnic group perspectives. In the meantime, the essentially static and physical archaeological model of cultural heritage continues to exclude contemporary Indigenous societies and to deny the reality of their cultures and cultural heritage traditions. Unless studies begin to incorporate models, approaches and methods that are inclusive of Indigenous cultures, then the archaeological model, or similar models, of cultural heritage will prevail. Phenomenology provides an approach to cultural heritage investigations which is capable of being inclusive of contemporary Indigenous societies and their cultural heritage traditions. The remainder of this section deals with the usefulness and relevance of this approach, but at the same time notes a number of methodological limitations that need to be addressed. It is a call to maintain an exploratory approach to phenomenology as having the potential to provide an understanding and appreciation of cross-cultural values of cultural heritage despite some recent calls by sceptics that it is methodologically flawed and should be abandoned.

Various theorists concerned with people-environment interactions have undertaken their research from a phenomenological position (e.g. Seamon 1982:120; Taylor et al 1990:382-385). The aim of the phenomenological approach is to understand and describe the “subtle, complex and multi-dimensional” nature of these interactions (Seamon 1982:122; Seamon and Mugeraeur 1985:10). The central concern of this approach is human experience and meaning; this is in contrast to a positivist approach that excludes these aspects (Norberg-Schulz 1980:5-7; Seamon & Mugeraeur 1985a:3-9; Relph 1985:15; Tilley 1994:12). Phenomenologists assert that it is through human experience and interaction with the environment that meanings are generated (e.g. Bidney 1973:134).

Phenomenologists aim to see the phenomenon as it is. In order to discover the essential meaning of the phenomenon, they attempt to separate themselves from preconceptions and pre-definitions (Seamon 1982:123, 119; Holstein and Gubrium 1998:138-139). Whilst positivist science claims independence of the observer from the phenomenon, phenomenologists aspire to immerse themselves in the phenomenon, to empathise with the phenomenon. They aspire to understand
the lifeworld of individuals and groups in the same way that these people experience and perceive it. This lifeworld includes both tangible and intangible sense data such as: experiences, events, behaviour, artefacts, atmosphere, sacredness and meanings (Seamon 1982:119; 1987:18-19).

There are three aspects to the phenomenological research method (Korosec-Serfaty 1985:68). The first is the phenomenological description; an holistic description of things as they are experienced, as distinct from what a scientific paradigm would say they are (see Smith and Smith 1995:9). The second aspect is the eidetic approach, which seeks the essential nature of the phenomenon. This approach forms the basis of the phenomenological description (Korosec-Serfaty 1985:68; Seamon 1982:122). The third aspect is a hermeneutic approach, which involves the uncovering of the meaning(s) of the phenomenon through interpretation (Korosec-Serfaty 1985:69).

As opposed to the naive method of a naturalistic epistemology and behaviourism in psychology, which tend to assume that objects, things, and modes of behaviour have an intrinsic meaning in themselves, phenomenological method is radically subjective in that it refers all meaning back to a transcendental subject who is the source of meaning and for whom alone meaning is valid (Bidney 1973:139).

A phenomenology of man based on this method would have to present first a picture of man as he experiences himself immediately, i.e., independent of all information which he may derive from science and scientific inference...(Spiegelberg 1975:268.)

A phenomenological approach would seek to understand and describe the essential nature and meanings of Indigenous cultural heritage, in all of its dimensions. Importantly, such an approach would take Indigenous experience and knowledge systems as a central concern. It is through the experience and action of Indigenous people that Indigenous cultural heritage is known. Thus, according to a phenomenological approach, the investigator understands the nature of Indigenous cultural heritage as it is defined and experienced by Indigenous people. A phenomenological approach is capable of being inclusive of multiple and diverse Indigenous definitions of cultural heritage. This presents a radical departure from current practice and legislation.

Clearly, to explore what is immediately given as it is given in its pure shape is no simple assignment. Husserl was fully aware of this difficulty....it was in the attempt to get at these pure phenomena that he developed the procedure of the so-called phenomenological reduction, the suspension of our beliefs in the existence of the phenomena (Spiegelberg 1975:58).

In order to understand the phenomenon as it is experienced, the phenomenological approach calls for a suspension of presuppositions (Spiegelberg 1975:67-68; Smith & Smith 1995:11). This seems to be a difficult if not unachievable task; ‘How do I suspend that which I already know’? Whereas phenomenologists attempt to suspend their presuppositions, social scientists undertaking different approaches do recognise a degree of presupposition laden-ness to their
observations (Livingston & Harrison 1983:296; Dovey 1999:44). For example Myers describes ethnography as a ‘special sort of dialectic’:

An ethnographer with a past and cultural background that focuses his or her attention on particular issues encounters the reality of other human subjects. Part of this background, inevitably, are the problems that anthropology currently defines as its subject matter. These issues make up the culture we share with our audience. Thus, for example, Malinowski’s justly famous ethnography was drawn to the issue of whether or not the “family” was universal. One of the enduring anthropological issues concerning hunter-gatherers has been the question of territoriality. My own analyses of these issues are defined in relation to those of my predecessors.

Malinowski...not only brought his special sense of problem to the Trobriand Islanders; his experience made him aware of issues salient to them. The sexuality of these Melanesians, for example, was not simply his preoccupation. No less has the Pintupi definition of human relations in terms of compassion, sympathy, and sorrow shaped my own conception of what analytic frameworks are viable. (Myers 1991:13.)

There are a number of limits to the phenomenological approach. One of these limits is the contradiction at play in the phenomenological reduction. A phenomenological approach would claim to investigate cultural heritage free of presuppositions. Yet in choosing to investigate the phenomenon ‘cultural heritage’, the investigator is presupposing that there is a phenomenon ‘cultural heritage’. What would happen if we were to suspend this belief?

Despite this contradiction, and the contrary nature of the phenomenological reduction to the trend of identifying the ethnocentricities and paradigms that affect one’s work, the process of reduction (or ‘bracketing’) is useful to investigations of cultural heritage. It is useful, and significant, because it asks the investigator to suspend what they may think cultural heritage is, or to suspend what the dominant model of cultural heritage defines cultural heritage as. By undertaking this attitude researchers place themselves in a position whereby they can more easily and respectfully understand the cultural heritage of others. According to Spiegleberg this type of phenomenological attitude:

...should protect us particularly from rash claims to knowledge of other people, other groups, and other nations with their different worlds, about which we tend to be so naively dogmatic (Spiegelberg 1975:68).

For someone from outside of the discipline of archaeology (or who is not embedded in current cultural heritage practice), the suspension of archaeological definitions of heritage may not seem so difficult a task. However, for those who are, it is likely that it is a very difficult task. It is difficult because it threatens existing cultural heritage paradigms, and it threatens the role of archaeology in cultural heritage practice and management. Archaeology may continue to have a role in cultural heritage, however if the phenomenological approach is undertaken, it is likely to be a substantially different one to the defining role that it has had over the last 30 years.
Earlier I discussed concepts of culture and argued that they inform us of a number of considerations which must be incorporated in cultural heritage investigations. I also argued that interactive models of people-environment relations, the concepts of place and cultural landscape are capable of encompassing Indigenous world-views and must also be incorporated in cultural heritage investigations. Defining these issues as worthy of consideration may seem to contradict the notion of a phenomenological reduction. Perhaps they do. However these theories do not define cultural heritage, instead they are indicative of some of the elements and dynamic properties that may be involved in the phenomenon. The actual phenomenon of cultural heritage is yet to be defined, and its definition must accommodate local/specific circumstances of particular investigations.

The phenomenological description and reduction provide useful approaches to cross-cultural investigations of cultural heritage. The eidetic and hermeneutic approaches may prove useful to certain types of cultural heritage research, but one must be aware of problems with these approaches. The eidetic approach, in its search for essences can introduce idealism (see Spiegelberg 1975: 62-64). This approach could contradict the descriptive approach and the phenomenological reduction by assuming that an ideal model of cultural heritage exists. In the instance of producing a cultural heritage ideal it is more than likely that some experience, or form of cultural heritage is excluded from the model. The hermeneutic approach also seems to ‘violate the spirit of descriptive phenomenology’ as it introduces the interpretations of the researcher (Spiegelberg 1975:69). Indigenous interpretations of cultural heritage must be central to cultural heritage investigations. Despite Spiegelberg’s warnings of the limits of these last two approaches the current author has cautiously interpreted observations made of people-environment interactions in Northwest Queensland.

Through a focus on the subject’s (individual’s) experience and interaction with the environment, phenomenologists have tended to neglect the effects of others and of social systems in the formation of knowledge (Livingston and Harrison 1983:295; Dovey1999:44). That is, phenomenologists have neglected the tensions between the subject and inter-subjective. Phenomenologists have assumed that individuals possess a creative freedom in the way they experience the world and in the types of meanings that they generate through this experience. Whilst phenomenologists believe that these meanings can be shared, they are only shared as a result of commonalities, not as a result of some constraining system (see Smith 1995:394-411). For example Relph argues:

The meanings a particular place has for individuals are shared, at least to some degree, because they derive from a common social background. There is unlikely to be unanimity in this sharing or intersubjectivity, but it is usually sufficient for us to be able to comprehend the reactions and attitudes of others. And it is the basis for a sense of community in place. (Relph 1993:36.)

Myers (1991) provides a useful example of an investigation of these subject-intersubjective tensions in Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self. Sentiment, Place and Politics among Western Desert Aborigines.
Investigations of Indigenous cultural heritage must accommodate any tensions and or commonalities.

Some would argue that a further limitation to a phenomenological approach to cultural heritage is that it relies on the assumption that all relevant knowledge of a society and its cultural heritage lies within the living tradition and living people. They would argue that there exist relics of past human activity for which no living people hold knowledge. They would argue this justifies a role for archaeology in cultural heritage. The phenomenological approach that I propose does not deny Indigenous people the ability and right to engage archaeologically derived knowledge in their construction of cultural heritage. However, archaeological knowledge in its own right is not synonymous with cultural heritage knowledge. Furthermore, although there may be cases where living Indigenous people do not hold knowledge concerning material culture of the past, or are unable to interpret such elements, it is highly unlikely that there are cultural items and places for which there are no living people who ‘claim’ those items and places. Under a phenomenological approach, archaeological control of the Indigenous past, is itself a thing of the past.

Unfortunately, the skills and social contexts for making places no longer exist. Indeed, in a world of multi-national corporations, universal planning practices and instantaneous global communications, we have to take seriously the argument that sense of place is just another form of nostalgia and that places are obsolete. (Relph 1993:25.)

Somewhere behind most discussions about place and sense of place lies an image of quiet, simple landscapes where there are no great cities, no suburban tracts, no ugly factories, no money-based economies, and no authoritarian political systems. In this landscape, people know their neighbours, who share traditions and social rituals. People have an intimate familiarity with the local geography, and they feel a responsibility for maintaining the nameless qualities of their place with its intricate townscape and regionally distinct architectural styles. (Relph 1993:25.)

In applying phenomenological approaches to cultural heritage, one has to be wary of the focus that some phenomenologically inspired works have placed on past environments. In undertaking a phenomenological approach to cultural heritage, one must avoid overly focusing on the past as others have. Such an approach would be as limiting to Indigenous cultural heritage as archaeological models of heritage and their focus on the past have been.

A number of weaknesses in a phenomenological approach to cultural heritage have been illustrated. Such weaknesses will only create problems if they are ignored. However the current author is of the view that there is enough ‘strength’ in the phenomenological approach to carry such weaknesses. This strength lies in the intent to understand Indigenous cultural heritage as it is experienced and defined by Indigenous people. In a way, the phenomenological approach substitutes a ‘void’ for the archaeological definition of heritage. This ‘void’ is to be filled by Indigenous definitions of heritage, or more specifically particular Indigenous people-environment values.
Applying phenomenological approaches to studies of cultural heritage

What we now need in Queensland to progress is a number of young professionals.... travelling around the State to collect all information available from living Aborigines, and to inspect and evaluate the relics of their past.

[This is] to ensure that information rapidly being lost by the passing of older inhabitants is preserved. Already an alarming number have crossed the great Divide and Father Time each year continues to reap his grim harvest (Killoran 1970:167).

These words by the Director of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs in 1970 typify the assimilationist and evolutionist nature of the policies of the Queensland Government during the 1960s and 1970s and the defunct notion of the recording of a dying race. I do not propose that a new generation of professionals race around the State employing a phenomenological approach to the collection of all available information concerning Indigenous cultural heritage. Rather, I propose that the phenomenological approach be employed in a much more humble and yet radical way.

This approach should be undertaken by social scientists engaged in cultural heritage research in three situations. Firstly, social scientists, particularly social anthropologists and archaeologists continue to be engaged by Indigenous communities in their dealings with State and Federal governments on cultural heritage issues (part of this work pertains to the central role of cultural heritage in the native title of Aboriginal groups). The second situation involves social scientists engaged by government agencies to research cultural heritage issues. The third situation involves researchers who have the opportunity to work with Indigenous people outside of the requirements of these regimes.

If the aforementioned researchers employ phenomenological approaches whilst working ‘within’ the current system, they have the opportunity of contributing to change through research. This can be defined as a form of ‘participatory action research’. That is, whilst fulfilling the research requirements of the current model, researchers also have the opportunity to go beyond these requirements and simultaneously challenge and change the model. It is useful to consider the aims of participatory action research:

One aim is to produce knowledge and action directly useful to a group of people - through research, adult education, and sociopolitical action. The second aim is to empower people at a second and deeper level through the process of constructing and using their own knowledge. (Reason 1998:269.)

Thus, researchers undertaking a phenomenological approach will not only produce knowledge immediately useful to the people with whom they are working, and which is in terms of dealing with the current cultural heritage model, but they will also endeavour to produce knowledge
which assists in Indigenous claims to rights of ownership and control of Indigenous cultural heritage (Indigenous cultural heritage as it is defined by Indigenous people).

Does a phenomenological approach mean the end of positivist research? The answer is no. There is a time and place for positivist research. I argue for the phenomenological approach to be employed as a starting point, as an initial approach to cultural heritage investigations, as a way of establishing the ‘space’ for Indigenous definitions of cultural heritage. Beyond that, social scientists will find it necessary to engage various methods and approaches according to the issues at hand (Bernard 1988:26). To do so they are likely to find it necessary to work collaboratively with other social scientists. As mentioned earlier, Indigenous groups may wish to engage knowledge derived from a traditional archaeological approach. Consequently, positivist methods could be used in combination with knowledge gained from phenomenological methods (the two approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive).

Just as it is important to recognise that societies are dynamic, we also need to recognise that models of society and methods of working with societies also need to be dynamic. This includes definitions of society, culture and cultural heritage. For too long the cultural heritage area has been marked by stasis. For example static definitions of culture have been employed. But the research area itself has also displayed an unwillingness to change. Academics and government agencies must be willing to change and to redefine where necessary. Thus social scientists who are prepared to engage in the proposed approaches must also be prepared to modify them as necessary.

The emphasis that phenomenology places on understanding the life world of people as people themselves experience it, provides a useful approach for non-Indigenous researchers of Indigenous cultural heritage. Whilst this is a good starting point, one’s enthusiasm must be tempered by knowing that it is never possible to do this fully.

The constructs of culture and place (as defined in the previous chapter) combined with phenomenology provide an approach that facilitates investigations of Indigenous cultural heritage as it is experienced and defined by Indigenous people. Heritage legislation must be responsive to these experiences and definitions. In the following section I describe how I have applied a phenomenological approach in the field.

### 3.4 FIELD WORK

**The aim of field work**

The primary aim of field work was to gain an understanding of places as Dajarra people perceived and experienced them at the time of the research. I wanted to understand the ‘lifeworld’ of the Dajarra community without (or at least resisting) any preconceived notions of

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51 See Appendix 1 for an overview of the approach taken to ethical issues associated with the project.
the types of places I would encounter or would choose to investigate. Early in the research I described this as taking on an attitude of ‘see what happens’ by which I mean having a general (in keeping with the primary aim above), rather than specific intent (examining particular types of places) to field work. This was an attempt at the phenomenological reduction and it is easier said than done.

The broad aim (above) lead to frustration and a feeling of inadequacy with the progress made in early field work. When you aim to explore the ‘lifeworld’ of a community this inherently means investigating everything. Where do you start? Where do you stop? It took some time for me to fully realise that I was interested in people’s everyday experience of place, everyday places. It also took me some time to realise that the places set aside as ‘extraordinary’ by the current model of cultural heritage, are actually part of the everyday. They are part of the same lifeworld as other places. During field work the overarching aim was refined to an investigation of a selected range of places.

I employed three main field methods: (i) participant observation, (ii) interviews, and (iii) photography. Photography and interviews were centred on participant observation. These methods are described in turn.

**Come this way Monaghetti - participant observation**

The term ‘observation’, and in particular ‘participant observation’, is usually used to refer to methods of generating data which involve the researcher immersing herself or himself in a research setting, and systematically observing dimensions of that setting, interactions, relationships, actions, events and so on within it. (Mason 1996:60.)

With this method a single observer becomes a member of a society or group and attempts to observe and record every aspect of behaviour in that culture...Informants are natives of the culture who become teachers and interpreters of what the observer sees. (Betchel and Zeisel 1990:17-18.)

In attempting to immerse oneself in the research setting, in this case the lifeworld of Dajarra people, participant observation could be described as the application of a phenomenological approach. Participant observation proved the most useful strategy that I employed in my investigation of people-environment interactions.

There are a number of reasons why participant observation is applicable to this type of project. The first reason for applying participant observation is what Mason (1996:61) has described as an ‘ontological perspective’; of central concern to my work are the interactions between people and the environment that generate, transform and maintain places (Mason 1996:61). Many examples of people-environment interactions would not be easily accessed by other means such as retrospective accounts of interactions; for example the collection of firewood would possibly

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Davies (1999:67) and Bernard (1988:150) argue that participant observation is more a research strategy than a research method.
be overlooked in a program of interviews (Mason 1996:62; see also Bernard 1988:152). The second reason is one of gaining an ‘epistemological position’ (Mason 1996:62); it is possible to gain knowledge about places by sharing experiences with people, that is, learning how people interact with an environment by doing it with them. Thirdly, I felt that it was, in this case, more ethical to attempt to become involved in the social world of the Dajarra community, rather than attempting to gain an understanding of the lifeworld of Dajarra while remaining distant from people (Mason 1996:63). Participation gave people time to get to know and trust me and vice versa. Participation also gave people the opportunity to decide if they wanted to interact with me; people could decide if they wanted to ask me to ‘come this way’ or not. Participation fundamentally relies on people accepting and incorporating the researcher in their activities and lifestyles. Control of participation in the research lay with individuals in the community, not with the researcher. In contrast I believe a program of interviews puts people under more pressure to participate in research projects, and especially in the early stages of field work interviewing is more intrusive. It feels like you (the researcher) are barging in.

Another significant reason for participation, one overlooked by Mason (1996), is that the people with whom you are working may encourage it. My participation in the lifestyle of Dajarra people started on the first day of my first field trip to Dajarra:

Following phone conversations with Keith my next introduction to Dajarra people occurred in Mt Isa. This encounter occurred as I followed a track along the Leichhardt River from a hostel to the town centre where I was to meet the ‘Jimberella bus’ for a lift to Dajarra. Three Aboriginal people sitting in the shade of the high bridge called out to me:

“What are you going?”
“Dajarra.”
“What?”
“Dajarra.”
“BULL SHIT.”
“No bullshit. I’m going to Dajarra.”
“What for?”
“To work with Jimberella”
“We’re all DJ mob.”
“DJ mob?”
“DJ, that’s what we call Dajarra”

We shook hands. I was asked to sit down. I was asked who I knew in Dajarra and how I was going to get there.

53 Unfortunately I could not participate in all events that I was invited to. In particular I regret missing the opportunity to accept JC’s invitation to travel with him from Dajarra to the Gulf Country as he made a video of his life story.
“You had better get up to K Mart, the bus leaves at 4 O’clock”
“There’s a big mob of DJ people up at the park, all cousins and relatives, we’ll walk you up there and you can meet them.”

We arrived at the Civic Centre Park to find everyone had gone, so I went on to K Mart where I met up with the Jimberella store manager, Noel, and other Dajarra people who had come up to Mt Isa for the day. On the way out of Mt Isa we stopped at the ‘Jimberella house’ adjacent to the Mt Isa base hospital. The house was used as a place for family to stay whilst visiting relatives in hospital. Some of the school children were in Mt Isa for a sports carnival.

As we travelled along the Dajarra road, Noel pointed to various places, such as the Ardmore cattle station boundary with its trespass and no hunting sign, Jayah creek, Ardmore station buildings, and an important hill. In the late afternoon light, the landscape created a vivid impression - a huge open plain, ranges in the distance and grass glowing white like a strip of sand below the range, warping the perspective.

We left the plains country and entered the hills. About ten kilometres out of Dajarra we passed through a cutting in the north-south running hills, ‘The Gap’, and a young child started singing ‘Dajarra’.

In town Noel drove around dropping people off. The form of the town struck me as rectilinear with rows of identical house types. Later I was to see beyond the identical form of houses to see that houses were in fact personalised and distinguishable from others.Keith met us at the ‘Jimberella Hall’. Keith mentioned a trip he made with school children earlier that day out along the Mt Isa road to watch rally cars heading north. Whilst out there, the kids went wild over a fruiting emu apple tree he had found.

I went to Noel’s for a ‘cuppa’ with his wife Susan and their children. Susan asked after Paul Memmott, and asked if I’d seen photographs of her relatives when Memmott visited their camp across the creek in the 1970s.

That evening I sat in the visitor’s unit at the back of the ‘Jimberella Hall’, nervously chain smoking to the sound of crickets. The quiet was broken by a man yelling out to someone else further down the street. Then he started to sing a Slim Dusty tune, “It takes me back down the Leichhardt.........”

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54 Architectural critics have blamed modernism and the construction of regular architectural form for a loss of place. What these critics fail to realise is the ways in which people personalise space to create a place.
The following morning Keith drove me around town visiting the households of the Dajarra elders. He introduced me and explained my work to them. We went on to visit various places around town such as the West End, the cemetery, ‘the Jimberella store’, and the old police lock-up (now a store at the rodeo ground). Back at the hall Keith introduced me to some of the Dajarra men who were working on a house construction gang.

Keith invited me to his home for a lunch of corned meat and baked vegetables. I was introduced to his wife and her niece. Amongst other things, Keith talked about Jimberella, an important place on the Georgina River. The co-operative had aspirations to set up an outstation at this place but had experienced difficulties obtaining the land. Keith also introduced me to the history of Dajarra and of Aboriginal migrations to the town from as far south as Birdsville and west from the Northern Territory. He talked about the railway, drovers and mobs of cattle waiting to be loaded onto trains. Keith asked me if I liked to drink, I answered ‘a little’. The women laughed.

Later in the afternoon Keith took me to a house (Georgie’s house) where a group of men were sitting in the shade of a carport. One man had ‘jumped off’ a droving job on the Georgina River and was celebrating with his pay. Keith and I walked across the road to the school where Keith introduced me to Tracey and Barry, two Aboriginal teachers aides. We returned to the group of men. One man called me in to listen to a song on a cassette, “Abor, Abor, Aborigine…” It was a tape of Aboriginal bands played over and over. I was offered a drink from beers stashed in a car parked under the carport. Keith’s son Russell called me over to sit down next to him. Keith left. Russell said he’d look after me, and that I wouldn’t have to worry about any fights; he’d fight anyone who hassled me. Some of the men, including a Dajarra elder introduced their life stories and said they would like to talk to me some more. Russell spoke of his mother’s father’s outstation on the Barkly Tableland in Wakaya country. He also spoke of a rock art complex to the north of Dajarra. Russell talked about taking me out to get a kangaroo so that he could cook up the gut for me. Tracey walked passed and some people asked if they could take me to her 21st birthday party the following night.

As the sunlight faded to reds and purples and the street lights began to flicker white, I decided to head off back to the hall. When I left the group of men they were standing around the front of the house and at the road edge, red dirt, kids riding bikes around, the smoke from a burning rubbish bin. As I walked passed the pub Farren sang out from the verandah, “See you tomorrow Steve”.

This description of my first few days in Dajarra illustrates a number of invitations made by Dajarra people; invitations to sit down and join social groups, an invitation to share a meal, an invitation to a party. It also illustrates the encouragement people offered through making social

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55 It was a six month long droving trip and he had left after 3 1/2 months.
introductions (giving me a break) - the offers to introduce me to relatives in Mt Isa, introductions to elders in Dajarra, and introductions to groups of men in Dajarra. The description also illustrates early encouragement to participate in people-environment interactions in the broader environment (visiting art complexes, having a feed of kangaroo etc).

Participant observation is a slow, yet effective way of learning about places. I found it to be a process of learning that was like a slow revealing of subtleties. Over time as my relationships with people developed, my level of participation in activities increased. As my participation increased, so too did my observation skills. My observation skills were also sharpened by those with whom I interacted. Dajarra people regularly observe (and comment on) the behaviour of others and properties of the environment. Conversely people are almost always aware that they are potentially being observed. The likelihood of being observed to some degree affects behaviour. This creates a range of situations from people concealing themselves and at the same time observing, to a situation where people exploit the fact that they are being observed. Through ‘hanging out’ with people, I slowly learnt how to observe and what to observe. Myers (1991:15-16) argues that the Pintupi taught him what is important to them. My intention was to continually place myself in a position where people could teach me what was important to them.

Since no single participant observer is able to participate in all roles in a society, any observation is somewhat biased by being limited to the points of view obtained in the roles penetrated. (Betchel & Zeisel 1990:18.)

Over the time I visited Dajarra I interacted with many members of the Dajarra community and others in Northwest Queensland. I developed closer relationships with some than others. At some stage in the first year of field work someone gave me the nickname ‘Monaghetti’, after Steve Monaghetti, the Australian marathon runner. This became ‘Mona’, ‘Spaghetti’, ‘Baked Beans’, and ‘Monascetti’. Most people in Dajarra have at least one nickname – ‘Rusty’, ‘Shark’, ‘Dagger’, ‘Little’, ‘Puggy’, ‘Cabbage’, ‘Cat Eye’, ‘Enie’, ‘Kitty’, ‘Sister Girl’, ‘TT’ and perhaps receiving a nickname is indicative of social acceptance. I spent a considerable amount of time with groups of men some of whom I met under Georgie’s carport during my first day in Dajarra (above). It seemed easy and appropriate to participate in the male social groups that were found in Dajarra. I spent time with family groups such as the Marshall family with whom I stayed in Dajarra and I also interacted with mixed gender social groups, and groups of women. (See Figure 3.8.)

I learnt of many places in the cultural landscape of the Dajarra community by spending time in Dajarra in social situations, sitting with people and listening to conversations and stories

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56 Davies (1999:72-73) has noted that in the field a researcher often moves across the spectrum of complete observer; observer-as-participant; participant-as-observer; and complete participant. Rabinow (in Davies 1999:73) describes how participation leads to new observations, which in turn alter how the researcher participates.

57 Not all men participate in these social settings. In contrast to my experience, Sarah Moynihan from Feral Arts developed a much stronger relationship with groups of women in Dajarra.
(narratives) which are nearly always place-based. This is a slow but effective method of learning the local geography. During early field trips I contributed little if anything to these conversations. People would sometimes encourage me to contribute a story, a challenging task with limited knowledge of place and no shared experiences in place. I initially found it difficult to do so. Amongst Dajarra people, narratives are commonly employed as a method of teaching and reinforcing the local geography. Narratives are a form of entertainment; they are an important method of sharing information concerning people and place and also of establishing one’s identity and status through being knowledgeable on a certain subject, or having experienced or done certain things (occasionally this leads people to accuse the narrator of ‘skiting up’ or ‘big noting’ oneself). Teaching me in this way was not all that extraordinary, and in fact was a normal method of enculturation in Dajarra.

This type of interaction occurred at various places in Dajarra. Two places where it frequently occurred were people’s yards (or external living environments) and in front of the Jimberella store. The Jimberella store is sometimes referred to as ‘the meeting place’. It is an ‘independent’ social environment where people can meet, sit together for a while and talk.

People often retold place-based narratives while participating in other activities. Therefore listening to these stories did not necessarily prevent people from carrying out the things they wished to do, at least not in the same way that carrying out an interview does. So for example, I could sit with a group of men fixing a car who might simultaneously discuss recent experiences on a cattle station, or I could sit with elders outside the store who might discuss recent hunting or talk about the days when droving camps brought big mobs of cattle to the railway.

Another benefit of listening to narratives is that within a cognitive map of the cultural landscape one can travel great distances with little effort. For example, on a number of occasions I listened to one man’s stories of pastoral work on Monkira Station on the Diamantina River, yet we never visited this place together. Many stories originate at a place and involve mentally following the storyteller across the cultural landscape as the story unfolds, or as some other related story is told about another place. Just as experience is never focused on one place, so too do stories take one from place to place. It took time for me to develop a cognitive map of the geography of these stories.

I have also learnt of people-environment interactions by visiting places with people, by being taught about a place at that place, by participating in activities at places with people, and by watching people active in place. There are obvious limits to how much an outsider can experience a place in the manner of others. One of the limits is that amongst a social group there may be a number of types of experience to be had in a place. It is therefore not easy to know of

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One ‘epic’ describing encounters with devils lasted a whole day. I recently heard that the storyteller now has the nickname ‘devil’.
a place as all sub groups do. There are also limits to how much physical experience one can gain. For example, although I listened to men tell numerous stories of their cattle station work experiences, and although I visited men at work in stock camps, I did not have the physical experience of stock work.

Travelling to a place with people can stimulate the recall of knowledge properties including people, experiences and events associated with places. Travel can stimulate narratives about places near or close to the point of travel as well as more distant places. However travel is not always characterised by animated conversation. Just as powerful experiences are journeys with a car full of people in silence. A lot of time was spent visiting places in Dajarra and close to Dajarra. Bush trips to more distant places (such as the Georgina River) were less frequent. I was interested in visiting some of these more distant places but I could not easily promote such visits as I did not always have a vehicle and I did not have access to generous funds that may have facilitated these types of trips (paying for fuel, food and people’s participation). Visitation to distant places had to fit in with people’s lifestyles; that is, I had to travel to distant places when people did so. For many people, extended bush trips to distant places occur mostly in the school holiday period when they can camp at a place for a number of days. Some extended bush trips also occur during weekends; this is particularly so when fish are plentiful.

Some anthropologists have described how their access to a reliable four-wheel-drive vehicle has (i) assisted in the development of reciprocal relationships with people, (ii) provided immediate benefits to the people with whom they are working, and (iii) facilitated visiting places with people (see Merlan 1998:27, 30; Hafner 1999:13). I had access to hire vehicles on two occasions for very short periods of time (three days) in 1996. In 1997 and twice in 1998 I drove my own vehicle, a small station wagon, to Dajarra. There is no doubt that access to a vehicle in geographically isolated communities presents a range of opportunities. At the same time, when I was without a vehicle I learnt something of the experience of many Dajarra people who similarly did not have their own vehicle. These times spent walking around town placed a focus on places ‘in town’ and narratives related to places ‘out bush’.

**Got many stories yet Monaghetti? - interviews**

In their investigations of Aboriginal properties of place Memmott (1979), Myers (1991:18) Baker (1999:27-29) and Merlan (1998) all conducted a program of interviews investigating personal histories. During early field trips I attempted similar interviews with Dajarra elders. These were the first interviews I had ever conducted and my technique felt (and no doubt was) inadequate and awkward. Although a number of Dajarra people continued to encourage this approach.

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59 It was a small, four-cylinder Subaru four-wheel drive. Although the car made many laps around the town, it never really made it in the identity stakes and some suggested that I sell the Subaru and purchase a ‘real rig’, a V8 Holden!

60 The only community vehicle in Dajarra was a twenty-seat bus.

61 Merlan (1998) and Baker’s (1999) attention to the development of place properties about settlements/ towns echoed with my own experiences in Dajarra.
Early interviews probably felt awkward because I did not know what I was asking about, thus they seemed to dissect place. As I gained experiences in place and developed a cognitive map of the cultural landscape, my ability to ask questions about places improved.62 Another reason for my hesitancy was that I conducted field work from a very tight budget (90% self funded) and I knew that I could not compensate people for their participation in interviews. In contrast, similar interviews with the same community for a native title claim and social impact assessment had seemed much easier. This is perhaps a result of the aims and benefits of the latter interviews being more obvious. These projects also occurred later at a time when I had developed basic knowledge of the geography of Northwest Queensland and at a stage when many of the interviewees knew me directly or indirectly through friends and relatives.

As a researcher, one cannot experience and observe everything; one cannot rely on experience to learn about all places and all properties of place. For example, behaviour setting theorists mistakenly emphasise the observation of phenomena and neglect ‘ideational’ aspects of culture; meanings, knowledge properties, emotional attachments, memories etc (see Schoggen 1989: 49). To learn about people-environment interactions, to learn how to experience, one sometimes has to ask questions. Interviews are a necessary supplement to participant observation (Mason 1996:68). However, I generally moved away from those interviews that were disjointed from social life, to interviews embedded in experience and social life. This was also the approach taken by Myers (1991:15). If I needed to know more, I would ask questions within the context of conversations and narratives.63

Interestingly some men who encouraged me to participate in activities with them, that is who encouraged a movement towards complete participation, did not want to be interviewed, or did not want to discuss their life histories in a more formal way. In contrast, others became key informants who I could ask direct questions abstracted from the context of day-to-day experience.

For a long time I felt that I was failing as a field worker because I returned to Brisbane without extensive knowledge or documentation of Dreaming Stories. For example, whereas I learnt of the location of some Dreaming and ceremonial places, I initially learnt little of the knowledge properties of these places. There are a number of possible reasons for this: (i) people may not have wanted to share this information, (ii) people did not commonly talk about these types of narratives, that is, they were not accessible by participation in everyday lifestyles, (iii) perhaps it was inexperience at interviewing, or (iv) I did not press people for these Stories.

62 Bernard (1988:150) predicts this experience: “Participant observation helps you to formulate sensible questions in the native language. Have you ever gotten a questionnaire in the mail and said to yourself “What a dumb set of questions?”

63 Some situations seemed to be excellent opportunities for conducting a number of more formal interviews. For example, there were events like the Urandangi rodeo when numerous Georgina people were camped together. But to conduct interviews at this time would interrupt the social interaction and participation in the rodeo event that had drawn people to Urandangi in the first place.
In relation to this last point, I felt that one could learn a lot about Aboriginal people-environment interactions without knowledge of Dreaming stories or the full details of Dreaming stories. To a large extent this is true. For example some young Aboriginal people often experience places without extensive knowledge of Dreaming stories. A number of cases in the following chapters illustrate Indigenous people-environment interactions without reference to Dreaming stories. This is in contrast to native title and cultural heritage processes where knowledge in the form of ‘Dreaming stories’ is viewed as the ultimate evidence of claims to country and rights, and where the strength of this knowledge is also sometimes placed under close attention. I learnt of these types of places in more detail during research for the Georgina River Native Title Claim. When I later learned more about Dreaming places, this added another dimension to knowledge of place and another dimension to my understanding of the way people experience place. However, as examples in the following chapters will illustrate, there are many types of Aboriginal people-environment interactions that can be explored without having to access this information. This has strong implications for cultural heritage legislation and research.

Monaghetti, where are those photos? - still photography

To the extent that anthropologists use photographs, they generally relegate them to record keeping or cataloguing. (Harper 1998:134.)

The texts on field methods for social research, particularly anthropological research, seem reticent about the use of still photography (see for example Davies 1999:119-124). This reticence is centred on issues of realism (Harper 1998:131; Davies 1999:121), staging (Davies 1999:121), selectivity (Davies 1999:122; Harper 1998:140), and viewer interpretation (Harper 1998:140).

None of these issues are particularly problematic as long as we are aware of them. Photographs are representations of a particular place, at a point of time, taken using a particular type of film and speed, using a particular type of lens. The image taken is selected by the eye of the observer, or by the group involved. The image excludes non-visual and other phenomena. An image chosen for reporting is selected from others, manipulated on a computer, and then viewed by you the reader who participated in none of the aforementioned. However, one of the benefits of photography is that an image can in some instances more easily illustrate and document properties of place than text which itself is just as problematic (see Mead 1975:9).

I employed photography in a number of ways. Firstly, I used photographs to document attributes of the physical environment. For example I photographed self-built structures or ethno-architecture. I used photography to describe people interacting with an environment (Collier 1975:211). I used photography to describe the changing properties of place. For

64 This approach has strong implications to cultural heritage legislation and management. Do people need to reveal sacred/secret knowledge in order to establish their rights? In many cases I don’t think so.
example, I photographed the same environment over a period of time (sometimes years) documenting some of the changes in that environment. I made photographs from the same viewpoint of Memmott’s photographs from the 1970s. Other photographs were taken as a reminder of a place or a particular property of place, a similar process to making quick notes (Collier 1975:224). I also conducted some informal photo-elicitation interviews using the photographs Memmott took in the 1970s (Collier 1975:222; Harper 1998:144-145). This last technique in one instance (see Section 5.13) powerfully highlighted knowledge properties of place. I also purchased a number of aerial photographs to reconstruct the historical development of Dajarra and to assist in the mapping of Aboriginal camps in and around the town.

Because photographing is much more active than observing, it certainly influences how the field-worker is received in the field. (Harper 1998:137.)

One of the most powerful attributes of photography is that the researcher can produce data that are immediately beneficial to and accessible by the people with whom one is working. Subjects or participants can also determine the type of data recorded; people can point one’s camera by either (i) directing one, or (ii) pointing the camera themselves (see Mead 1975:8). Thus photographs were often made of things that people wanted photographed. These included; (i) ‘Happy Snaps’, for example photographs of people partying or humorous situations, (ii) people asking to be photographed with an elder, friend(s) or family, (iii) photographs of groups of people such as softball teams, (iv) people asking for photographs to be made of events such as rodeos, (v) people asking for photographs to be made of certain places such as the poddy dodging yard mentioned above. I also took numerous photographs of things that I chose such as external living environments.

The people with whom I worked also determined the type of film I used. I started by taking photographs using a mixture of slide film and black-and-white film. Slide film turned out to be problematic as it prevented the return of photographs to the subjects and the easy and cheap reproduction of multiple copies of a particular photograph. Black-and-white at first seemed a good choice because of the longevity of the print and access to darkroom facilities meant that I could produce multiple and enlarged prints. However, people had a preference for colour photography so I turned to the sole use of colour print film. Prints of all material were returned to the individuals photographed, or to appropriate community representatives where the photograph involved places.

A number of photographs were ‘staged’. Three situations deserve mention here. Firstly, groups of people would assemble and ‘pose’ for a photograph. The importance of the photograph seemed to lie in people being together. The second situation is where people humorously over-emphasised a particularly activity, for example on one occasion a large group of men who had been socialising whilst a few worked on a car, constructed a photo in which they pretended they were all concerned with fixing the car. Another situation comprised photographs that people set
up and took of me doing certain things. For example, on one occasion some men set up a photograph of me pretending to butcher a kangaroo that they had butchered. The men involved were keen for me to show my family and friends the photograph and to report back on their reaction. Photographs thus need to be accompanied by additional information.

‘See what happens’

Qualitative research should be systematically and rigorously conducted. I do not think there are any excuses for a casual or ad hoc approach to qualitative research. ...This should, however, be distinguished from a rigid or structured approach, which is usually not appropriate for qualitative research. (Mason 1996:5.)

The loosest use of observation comes about when one simply wants to know what is happening in an environment. (Betchel and Zeisel 1990:14.)

My field work technique can be loosely summarised in the expression ‘see what happens’. This expression simply embodies the idea of maintaining flexibility in intent and technique; that is, both maintaining a general rather than specific intent, and maintaining flexibility in the techniques employed. It also means modifying and combining techniques in response to issues of gender, age, personality, intellect, social setting, and situation. (Mason 1996:63.)

My application of the phenomenological approach was to attempt to understand and participate in the lifestyle in Dajarra. This meant that opportunities to learn about (and often visit) a place sometimes presented themselves in an ad hoc way, in a ‘see-what-happens’ way. For example, without a vehicle I have sat in town with others for days participating in regular activities around town; then suddenly an opportunity to get out of town has arisen, perhaps an opportunity to join others for an afternoon’s hunting.

Mason’s comments (above) also seem to embody the assumption that a researcher knows field methods before they enter the field. I entered the field armed with my life experience and the literature on field techniques. Bernard (1988:152) warns the researcher that doing participant observation is as much learning how to do participant observation as it is investigating the subject. I fail to see how anyone who is learning field techniques at the same time as collecting data can claim to have conducted their research in a systematic way. The data produced is a product of my ability to learn and apply field techniques in many situations that were unfamiliar to me.

A number of academics have reacted strongly to my use of the expression, ‘see what happens’ most believing that it is methodologically inappropriate (Mason would probably think so). But how many researchers fully understand the organisation of lifestyle in a community and can apply rigorous data collection methods to that organisation? How many researchers can fully

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65 Dajarra people commonly use this expression to suggest a flexible response to a situation, for example: “Do you think you will go tomorrow?” “I am not sure, see what happens”.

66 One academic believed I was using the expression facetiously.
control the system of their data collection? More researchers (particularly anthropologists) are probably applying a ‘see what happens’ approach than might admit it.

Mason (1996: 68) warns against just ‘hanging out’ and argues that the researcher needs to be selective about the type of issues in which they are interested. Whilst I ‘hung out’ during most of my time in the field, I also selected a number of people-environment interactions that I regularly observed. These interactions were selected (i) because I was able to access them, and, or (ii) because they characterised a diversity of people-environment interactions, and (iii) they stood out in contrast to current models of cultural heritage.

I haven’t seen you writing in your book for a few days Monaghetti - describing people-environment interactions

I don’t think I have described today properly - but isn’t that it, you cannot. You can only live experience and capture fleeting moments. You cannot record all of life, you cannot record your own let alone someone else’s. If everyone could record their life, what would be the point? To be relived? (Excerpt from field notes, August 1996)

It should be perfectly obvious that any observation covers a slice in time and can never cover the full life history of an environment. (Bechtel and Zeisel 1990:16.)

Whilst moving about Dajarra I rarely carried a notebook. Instead I would write field notes whenever I had the chance, sometimes at night, sometimes in the early morning, sometimes lounging with others in the shade of a tree during the heat of the day. I listened to numerous place narratives without documenting them in detail. This was because they mostly occurred in situations that precluded documentation. For example, I recall one night standing around with a group of men at the front fence of a house on the highway at Dajarra. It was late, cool, quiet and the Milky Way lit up the sky with a frosty light. The men talked about their experiences growing up at the West End town camp. It was the most animated discussion I had heard from these men concerning this topic. Conversely, documentation seemed to preclude hearing narratives, that is, some people were happy to share narratives with me, but not to have them recorded in a formal way such as direct field notes or audio recordings (which were briefly attempted).

I hold two concerns with my description of my experiences or understanding of the cultural landscape of Northwest Queensland. Firstly, I have felt uncomfortable with the documentation process because writing about places, and analysing places is inevitably going to reduce them as phenomena and simplify them. This is perhaps a rather obvious and unavoidable limitation. Any description is always going to be a small bit of the picture.

The second concern relates to ongoing arguments concerning reflexivity and ethnography (see for example Davies 1999:3-26). Phenomenologists claim validity to their work if others experience the same phenomenon (Seamon 1982:122-123). It is tempting to argue that the
ultimate test of my descriptions will not come from academics, but from the people who have taught me the geographical knowledge. If anyone, it is Dajarra people who are in the position to confirm my descriptions, ‘to back me up’, or to ‘run me down’ for getting it wrong. I attempted to understand and describe places as Dajarra people experience them. However, I hesitate to suggest that my descriptions somehow reflect an Indigenous description of people-environment interactions. It seems more appropriate and productive to follow the limits that Hafner (1999:9) places on her work with the Lamalama, and declare that this work presents one perspective of the people-environment interactions of Dajarra people, albeit one that I have attempted to strongly bias from their viewpoints, and it also reflects the nature of the particular interactions that I have had with them (see Davies 1999:15, 16 and Seamon 1982:122,123).

**It takes time to know a place - field work program**

My understanding and description of the people-environment interactions of the Dajarra community is limited by the fact that “it takes time to know a place” (Tuan 1977:179). It takes time to learn and time to be taught about properties of place and so my knowledge of these interactions must be viewed as limited rather than authoritative.

Between August 1996 and February 2005 I visited Northwest Queensland on 33 occasions for the purpose of this study and other studies (see Appendix 2). Dajarra was visited during most of my trips to Northwest Queensland. My first field trip to Dajarra, a pilot study, was in August of 1996. A further field trip of ten days was undertaken in September-October of the same year. During this trip, the researcher travelled with members of the community to regional events. My last trips to Dajarra were early in 2005 whilst working on the Greater Mt Isa Anthropological Research Project and a study of Indigenous mobility in Northwest Queensland and the eastern Northern Territory.

A pattern emerged whereby it was most convenient for me to visit the community in July and September. The timing of these trips coincided with school holidays; this was particularly relevant in September when Dajarra and Mt Isa people travelled to Urandangi for the annual rodeo. The times also coincided with University holidays, when I was free of employment commitments. The pattern that emerged of making a number of short field trips seemed to work well, although I was not happy with the length of a number of the shorter field trips; it always seemed that I had just readjusted to life in Dajarra when I had to return to Brisbane.⁶⁷

**Community reports**

During the first pilot trip and subsequent to each trip to Dajarra, ‘reports’ were created and posted at places such as the store, school and health clinic. The use of these reports was inspired by successful use of similar reports by Cathy Keys during her PhD research with the Warlpiri (see Keys 1999). My community notices provided general information concerning myself; they

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⁶⁷ Outside of field work I kept in regular contact with some Dajarra people over the telephone and caught up with Dajarra people when they visited Brisbane.
briefly described the interest of my study and they described things I did whilst visiting Dajarra. In a sense they were used to report back to the community (in a general manner) following each trip. These notices were designed to be accessible to different age groups and literacy levels. A combination of hand-drawn visual images and plain English text was employed to describe each point of information. These reports have proven effective in providing general information to the community. A report was posted in Dajarra in 2005 informing people that a draft of the thesis was returned to Henry Dempsey (President of the Jimberella Cooperative) and it invited people to read the draft and inform me if there was anything that needed correction. (See Appendix 3 for an example of a community report).

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented numerous methodological issues concerned with the investigation of Aboriginal people-environment interactions.

There is cross-cultural diversity and commonality amongst the Aboriginal societies of Queensland. On account of this commonality and diversity a case study of the people-environment interactions of a small group of people was the most effective way for the author to limit the scope of the research. I was able to readily establish contacts and support for my work with the Dajarra community with a residential population of 200-300 people. There is very little literature concerning the people-environment interactions of this community and its sub-groups.

Dajarra people interact with a range of places within the Georgina River Basin, a region that has a distinctive hot-dry climate with high evaporation rates. These conditions make surface and ground water sources very important features. Rain is a significant economic and religious phenomenon for Aboriginal people of the region. The study region is characterized by low or subtle relief and it has three broad topographical features: black soil plains, low hills and streamlines (including braided streams). Across the region there are distinctive vegetation types such as Mitchell grasslands, stands of gidyea, the larger trees of the stream corridors, the spinifex and turpentine of the hills country and a variety of bush fruits and vegetables that are utilized.

Most Dajarra people identify as Warluwarra, a language group with a history of interaction with neighbouring groups on the Georgina River and more recently in Dajarra and other towns. There are some groups that were documented in the region in the 1890s and 1900s for which there seems to be no contemporary people who identify with them. It also appears that there has been a decline in identification with sub-groups; instead people tend to identify with larger language groups.

A literature based introduction to the physical environment and Aboriginal groups of the region provided the author with a useful background for field work and it provides the reader with the
basis to understand the people-environment interactions described and analysed in following chapters.

Phenomenology is a theoretical framework that responds to Indigenous calls for cultural heritage legislation that reflects the nature of cultural heritage as it is experienced by Indigenous people. Phenomenology establishes an approach to an investigation of Aboriginal people-environment interactions that takes as its central aim an understanding of these interactions as Aboriginal people themselves experience them. A phenomenological approach provides the space for Indigenous concepts of cultural heritage.

I found the most effective way to learn of these interactions was through participant observation. Because participant observation is a slow method of learning about people-environment interactions, it will not suit all investigations of Indigenous cultural heritage. However, participant observation is significant because it recognises that people continue to interact with their environments. This is a fundamentally different position to the existing model of heritage. Other methods such as photography and interviews can be effectively combined with participant observation. Participation meant that people could choose if they wanted to interact with me. It also meant that those who did, could choose what types of people-environment interactions I would learn.

This chapter provides a methodological contribution to the study of Aboriginal cultural heritage. The following chapters describe observations of the everyday people-environment interactions of Dajarra people.
**Figure 3.1** A view over Dajarra from the east. The tree line of Carbine Creek lies to the west of the town. (Photograph by Thompson 2004.)

**Figure 3.2** Early morning on the Georgina River at ‘the Clay Pan’.

**Figure 3.3** The dry course of Moonah Ck at the crossing of the Urandangi-Dajarra Road.

**Figure 3.4** Plains country on Carandotta.

**Figure 3.5** Approaching the hills from the plains country on the Urandangi-Dajarra Rd.

**Figure 3.6** The valley of Carbine Ck near Black Mountain.

**Figure 3.7** A view east along Lethem St to storm clouds over Dajarra.

**Figure 3.8** Brucie Bookie, Steve Long, Paul Costelloe and Scott Punch.at a Dajarra softball match.
Figure 3.9 The location of Dajarra and the study region.
Figure 3.10 Map of area between Dajarra and the Georgina River.
Figure 3.11 Roth’s (1897) map of North-West-Central Queensland.
Figure 3.12 Part of Jindale’s (1974) map ‘Aboriginal Tribe’s of Australia’
The previous chapter introduced the Dajarra Aboriginal Community and the geography of Northwest Queensland. In Chapters 5 - 8 a selection of the people-environment interactions of Dajarra people are examined. To fully understand these case studies it is important to first gain an understanding of the wider geographical and historical context in which they are embedded. It is also important to understand the dynamic and changing nature of this context. Thus, this chapter provides an overview of the people-environment interactions of the Dajarra community within an historical context.

The chapter begins with an account of Aboriginal people-environment interactions during early non-Aboriginal incursions in the area. The nature of changes to people-environment interactions influenced by the establishment of the pastoral industry in Northwest Queensland is discussed. This industry has basically displaced the Georgina River people from their country, yet this industry would not have survived without the labour of Georgina River people who have shaped and developed it. Paradoxically the value of Aboriginal labour has meant that people have maintained relationships with places within this displacement. The migrations of Georgina River people and other Aboriginal groups to Dajarra are described. Finally, an overview of people-environment interactions in the late 1990s is provided.

4.1 ‘WITH GUNS’: CATTLE, CONFLICT & THE WATERHOLES.

The log is burnin’
Old people yearnin’
Till the mornin’
And the white man takes our rights away
But the DJ rockers
Have no worries
Cause we can stick to our old cultural ways

Chorus (I)
D - A - J - A - double R - A
That’s the place I’d rather be
We love this land our country
And our ancestral ways

Chorus (II)
But the DJ rockers
Have no worries
Cause we can stick to our old cultural ways

Dajarra people
Love bush tucker
And we eat them every day
All the stories
All the language
All our dances
We’re throwin’ nothin’ away

Chorus (I) & Chorus (II)

The white man taught us
For drinkin’ poison
Took our land
With guns and alcohol
But we’ve been waitin’
For our people
To stand up and to fight for what is right

Chorus (I) & Chorus (II)

So we’ve been there
That old Georgina
For our dances and our corroboree
We drove their cattle
To Dajarra
And our land, the people, the Aborigine

But D - A - J - A - double R - A
That’s the place I’d rather be
We love this land our country
And our ancestral ways
But the DJ rockers
Have no worries
Cause we can stick to our old cultural ways
Cause we can stick to our old cultural ways

‘DJ Rockers’ (Dempsey et al 1995.)
Initial incursions on the Georgina

An extraordinary craze had seized on the imaginations of the southern colonies to send out expeditions to strive to be the first to cross the continent from the southern shore to the northern one... (Favenc 1967:203.)

A result of the ‘craze’ reported by Favenc was the ill-fated transcontinental crossing by Burke and Wills of 1860-1861. A small party of this expedition had travelled north along the river systems to the east of the Georgina (Favenc 1967:208-221). Their failed rendezvous with their depot party on Coopers Ck prompted four rescue expeditions (Favenc 1967:214-221; Griggs 1993:19). One of these, headed by Landsborough, travelled south from the Gulf of Carpentaria and came across the Georgina River in Indjiladji country, on the 21st of December of 1861, naming it the Herbert River. As there was already a Herbert River in Queensland, it was later renamed ‘Georgina’ after the daughter of Queensland’s Governor Kennedy (De Satge 1901:374). Landsborough gave the European names Lake Mary and Lake Francis to two significant Indjiladji waterholes on the Georgina River at Camooweal. He travelled downstream to 50km south of Lake Francis. At Lake Mary, Landsborough observed a group of about 100 Aboriginal people. (Sutherland in Fysh 1933:172; Favenc 1967:229-230; Memmott et al 1988:43.)

The first pastoralist on the Georgina River was Sutherland who had followed Landsborough’s route south to the Georgina River after being disappointed with the pastoral potential of the Gulf country. In 1864, Sutherland’s party arrived close to Lake Mary at night, and his sheep rushed the waterhole disturbing a large Aboriginal camp. An account of Sutherland’s arrival at Lake Mary is included, as it typifies incursions by pastoralists on the Georgina and their attempts to usurp waterholes from traditional owners (Sutherland 1913:8-13):

Down they went and smelt the water. Then there was a terrible baaing and galloping. On the left bank of the river at the lake, the ground was high and rocky. Fires were burning in scores right down to the water’s edge- a sure sign of a large camp of blacks. On rushed the sheep through fires, blacks, and all other impediments to quench their thirst. The unfortunate niggers had a terrible time of it. To be roused up out of their sleep at midnight by some eight thousand sheep rushing madly and tumbling over them, was chaos; was something demoniacal to the simple natives, who never saw or heard of jumbucks before. Of course the whole tribe took up their beds quick smart, and ran. To this day the Georgina blacks have a corroboree indicating ‘the rush of the sheep to water at night’. (Sutherland 1913:12.)

After the fright the blacks got on the night of our arrival to rob them of their country, we thought the poor wretches would give us a wide berth, and not molest us for many a long day. In this we found ourselves very much mistaken. Landsborough found them anything but friendly when passing through, and actually deemed it dangerous to camp near the waterholes.... (Sutherland 1913:112-13.)

Despite Landsborough’s warning Sutherland occupied the Aboriginal camp on Lake Mary, where he established Rocklands Station. This is a Dreaming place and traditional camping place

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1 Leichhardt had earlier (1844-45) traversed the Gulf country by following existing Aboriginal pathways (Favenc 1967:152-155; Baker 1999:42).
of the Indjiladji. After a few days on Lake Mary, Sutherland’s party was attacked at night by a group of Aboriginal men. Fearing they would be massacred Sutherland and his men rushed to retrieve their guns. In the meantime the Aboriginal men ran off with utensils from the camp such as pannikins, knives, forks, and billies. A group of Sutherland’s men set out the following morning to track these men but were unsuccessful. (Sutherland 1913:13.)

Sutherland had arrived on the Georgina at the start of the 1864-1866 drought. As Lake Mary failed, he moved south to Lake Francis and then further south to Don Ck. Sutherland reported what seems to have been heavy Aboriginal resistance on Don Ck. His men went about armed and fired upon Aboriginal people. They also carried out punitive raids, chasing Aboriginal people on horseback “to give them a further scare and make them understand we were their masters.” There are two peculiar aspects to Sutherland’s account of Don Creek. Firstly, despite attacks by Sutherland’s party Aboriginal people seem to have continued (to some degree) with certain activities, such as the construction of bird and fish traps, within full view of Sutherland. Secondly, Sutherland seemed surprised at the large numbers of Aboriginal people who continued to occupy this Creek in defiance of punitive raids. It is possible that just as Sutherland’s party had moved to Don Creek to access water during this drought period, so too had the large numbers of Aboriginal people he encountered in the vicinity of the Creek. It is also possible that he had followed Aboriginal people to this water source on Don Creek just as he had attempted to follow Aboriginal people to water on the Ranken. (Sutherland 1913:13-20.)

This first incursion on the Georgina was to typify future relationships between Aboriginal people and pastoralists. It was a relationship characterised by conflict over waterholes - particularly during periods of drought. (Memmott 1985:6-9; Memmott et al 1988:45.)

Six months after Sutherland had arrived at Lake Mary, others travelled further down the Georgina. Nash and Brown headed down to the junction of the Ranken and the Georgina where they established Stony Plains. Some fifty kilometres downstream from their ‘head station’ was a Bularnu waterhole called Ilperrelhelame (or Alpurrurulam). Nash and Brown called the place ‘The Lake’; it was later called ‘Lake Nash’. A number of Ancestral Beings interacted with Ilperrelhelame including antyipere the flying fox, nyemale the grass rat, who began at Ilperrelhelame and partly formed the River, and kwerrenye, the green snake who finished up here. Ilperrelhelame is a place of economic and ceremonial activity. Further south, Steiglitz and Lyne occupied country in the vicinity of Roxborough and Lake Katherine. Ranken established a camp on the Ranken River to the west which was later to become Avon Downs Station. (Sutherland 1913:21; Hodgkinson 1877:24; Memmott et al 1988:45; Memmott in Lyon and Parsons 1989:3-5.)

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2 This suggests the group had knowledge or appreciation of these items, perhaps from experiences people had in the Gulf with Leichhardt or Gregory, or perhaps from news of these items that had travelled south from the Gulf or from the east. This action may also have been a resistance tactic of ‘economic warfare’. (Reynolds1995:106; Griggs 1993:18.)

3 Lyne who was soon after involved with a lower Georgina station participated in one such raid with Sutherland (Sutherland 1913:20).
An exodus took place from the Georgina and the country was again in the possession of the blackfellow.... (Sutherland in Fysh 1933:173.)

By 1869 these early Georgina stations were all abandoned. The late 1860s were a number of factors that contributed to this ‘exodus’: supplies shipped into Burketown were unreliable and expensive, wages were high and workers hard to find and the wool price was low and shipment to market expensive. The vital supply township of Burketown was a renowned haven for southern criminals; it was hit by an epidemic in 1866 and by 1868 it too was deserted. Two periods of drought affected the region during this period, in 1864-66 and 1867-69 (Memmott 1885). It is not known if Aboriginal resistance also contributed to the demise of these stations. Memmott (in Lyon and Parsons 1989:5) describes events around Lake Nash in the final year of this initial occupation: “as though reclaiming the country, a devastating flood dramatically broke the drought in the region. A plague of grass rats - nyemale, whose Dreaming this was - followed.” (Sutherland 1913:21; Fysh 1933:111, 174; Favenc 1967: 273; Hodgkinson 1877:1, 2, 24.)

An account by a Sydney Bulletin correspondent who travelled down the Georgina with sheep in 1865 mentions the possibility of establishing peaceful relations with Georgina River groups. However, the same report alludes to violence towards the Georgina River groups by those who were not so peaceably minded. (See Memmott et al 1988:44.)

We never feared those interior Aboriginals so long as we knew no whites had preceded us. On a grand six-mile lagoon in the Herbert [Georgina River] we found camped over 200 blacks, a fine tribe, with whom we established friendly relations, giving presents etc., and keeping away from them. With the old chief I would have gone anywhere, confident of his protection. He was simply a grand type of man. (J.L.D 1897.)

The explorer Hodgkinson (1877:2) claims he maintained amicable (at least cautious) relations with Aboriginal people during his northward travel on the Georgina in 1876. As he travelled in a north-northeasterly direction between the Toko Ranges and the Georgina he came upon an important place on Pituri Ck called Walayah Waterhole. On his arrival, he disturbed a small group of Aboriginal people who were hunting birds with nets. They fled the intruders leaving behind their catch, nets and other tools. Hodgkinson’s party ate the fresh catch. Hodgkinson reports a degree of nervousness, as he was aware he was entering an area where violence against Aboriginal people had preceded him. (Hodgkinson 1877:22.)

I carefully put the nets and weapons in a conspicuous place, so that if the natives returned they should find them uninjured. Unfortunately, however, we are now approaching the region of ‘dispersions’ and the blacks justly dread any white intruder. (Hodgkinson 1877:21.)
Some days later at the same waterhole Hodgkinson’s activities were under surveillance:

Two gin’s tracks were seen during my absence at the lower waterhole; they must have gone there during the night. While bathing in the same place to-day, I noticed a blackfellow up a tree intently watching the camp, but upon my moving in his direction he bolted. (Hodgkinson 1977:23.)

Hodgkinson’s party spent a number of days at Walayah as they searched for water sources to the north. They eventually came onto a creek he called Fenner’s Ck (possibly Racecourse Ck), which they followed onto the Georgina. His first camp on the Georgina was close to a waterhole he called Obrien’s Lagoon, which is probably Brooks Lagoon, below which he mapped Cattling’s Lagoon, which may be Mangala Waterhole. The presence of Aboriginal people near this first camp made Hodgkinson nervous (Hodgkinson 1877:22-23):

Started at 7.30am to get out of this camp, which is too scrubby and too thick with natives, from the tracks about. (Hodgkinson 1977:23.)

According to Memmott (1985:7) the term ‘dispersions’ was commonly used at the time and meant: “to chase after blacks on horse back, shooting at them, wounding and killing some or many, in order to scare them away from a particular district, or at least discourage them from gathering in large numbers at the best waterholes”. It is not known if the ‘dispersions’ Hodgkinson speaks of occurred during the initial occupation of the Georgina, in which case they are likely to have been carried out by Steiglitz and Lyne or Nash and Brown, or whether they occurred as a precursor to the restocking of the Georgina during the late 1870s. Irrespective of who was responsible for these ‘dispersions’, they must have been significant for Hodgkinson to have knowledge of them and to travel more cautiously because of them.

Hodgkinson’s ‘Northwest Exploration’, which stumbled from one water source to another, was the last expedition of the Queensland Government, as the colony was supposedly “now nearly entirely known...” (Favenc 1967:273). The role of the expedition was to determine the pastoral potential of the country between the Diamantina and the “boundary of the colony” (Hodgkinson 1877:1). However, as Hodgkinson ‘explored’ the Georgina the pastoralists had already commenced a rapid re-occupation of that area. For example, as Hodgkinson travelled north on the Georgina, he caught up with Buchanan who had travelled up the Georgina with cattle to restock Rocklands. Hodgkinson and his party camped at Rocklands and obtained beef from Buchanan. (The Queenslander 6/5/1876, 25/5/1878; Hodgkinson 1877:1, 23-24; Memmott et al 1988:46.)

Hodgkinson’s travels are noteworthy, not because they revealed pastoral potential (the pastoralists were already on their way to the Georgina), but because in ‘discovering’ the last ‘unknown’ part of Queensland, Hodgkinson unwittingly followed the Aboriginal geography of this area. As he travelled northeast from Pituri Ck to the Georgina River he was following a Dreaming route and an important branch of the north-south trunk trade and travel route of Aboriginal Australia (see Section 7.3).
The Georgina River cattle stations

At the time of Hodgkinson’s expedition, Northwest Queensland was one of the last regions in Queensland that was relatively free of pastoral occupation. Buchanan’s presence on the Georgina marked the start of a second and more intense period of incursions as pastoralists rushed westward to ‘rob’ Aboriginal lands. Simultaneous with this violent occupation was a period of successive droughts that devastated the region into the 1900s. (Fysh 1933:65-75; Memmott et al 1988:48-55; Griggs 1993:22.)

The establishment of a supply centre on the Burke River during 1877-8, which was to grow into the township of Boulia, facilitated the advance of pastoral incursions (Fysh 1933:110). Alexander Kennedy established one of the cattle stations neighbouring Dajarra, Buckingham Downs, during this time.7 (Fysh 1933:175.)

Kennedy had numerous encounters with Aboriginal resistance fighters and participated in numerous violent raids on Aboriginal groups in the region (Fysh 1933:92-98, 112-117). One of these raids in 1878 followed the killing of four stockmen who were camped at Wonomo Waterhole on Sulieman Ck, close to Kennedy’s station (see Figure 4.1). According to Fysh (1933:95) the Aboriginal groups of the area had planned to ‘wipe out’ the non-Aboriginal people at Stanbroke Station (to the east of Dajarra on the Burke) and those on Kennedy’s Sulieman Creek Station. The manager of Stanbroke, the Native Mounted Police from Boulia and Kennedy carried out revenge attacks killing numerous Aboriginal people.8 (Fysh 1933:95-96; see also Brisbane Courier 5/3/1879.)

In the late 1870s, the pastoralists returned to the Georgina and established their head stations adjacent to the perennial waterholes. All of the Georgina River waterholes are places of economic and spiritual significance to the local Aboriginal groups (Memmott 1985:8; Memmott et al 1988:50-53). These waterholes were of critical value to the invading pastoralists for watering station stock and as a stock route to southern markets, particularly prior to the use of ground water sources. (Lamond 1950:10; 1953a:17.)

Table 4.1 The establishment of cattle stations on the Georgina River in the late 1870s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Watercourse</th>
<th>Waterhole/place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1879-1882</td>
<td>Lake Nash (Lyon and Parsons 1989:5)</td>
<td>Georgina River</td>
<td>Ilperrethelame or Alpurrurulam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>Headingly (Car-Boyd in Memmott 1985:10.)</td>
<td>Georgina River</td>
<td>Butharravaliya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>Carandotta (Fysh 1933:109.)</td>
<td>Georgina River</td>
<td>Mangala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>187?</td>
<td>Roxborough</td>
<td>Georgina River</td>
<td>Kuthawarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>187?</td>
<td>Glenormiston</td>
<td>Pituri Ck</td>
<td>Lake Idamea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>187?</td>
<td>Rochedale</td>
<td>Moonah Creek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 Kennedy had explored westward to the Georgina and Territory border and had also taken up Linda Downs country (Fysh 1933:72, 175).
8 In contrast to Kennedy’s violence towards Aboriginal people was his friend Ernest Henry who maintained friendly relations with Aboriginal people, often travelling alone with local Aboriginal groups. (Fysh 1933:114.)
The Carandotta homestead was initially situated adjacent to a Story place called Mangala; it was later shifted east onto the plains near the banks of Moonah Creek (Lamond 1953a:18). Just as Kennedy had a history of interacting with Aboriginal people with loaded gun, so too did one of those responsible for establishing Carandotta Pastoral Company, Oscar DeStage. Prior to his involvement on Carandotta, De Satge had been involved in violent confrontations with Aboriginal people elsewhere in Queensland (Lloyd nd.; De Satge 1901). While on Carandotta, De Satge had three children with a local Georgina River woman. These children were supposed to receive an inheritance from Carandotta but never did, their descendants continue to live in Northwest Queensland. (Ruby De Satge in Rosser 1987: 8,36.) The townships of Urandangi and Camooweal followed the pastoral occupation of the Georgina. As with the stations, both townships grew from the occupation of one of the Georgina waterholes. Camooweal grew from a hawker store, which Cronin set up on Lake Francis in 1882; it was soon followed by a pub (Fysh 1933:176). Urandangi is said to have grown from a store set up on that part of the Georgina by Webster and Hutton in 1885 (Robinson 1976:13). Maps from this era show a road following the Georgina south from Camooweal to Urandangi, then east from Parapituri Waterhole to Boulia (McLean 1886). From Boulia roads branched to Cloncurry, Winton and Birdsville. Roads also linked Camooweal north to Burketown and west to cattle stations on the Barkly Tableland (Memmott et al 1988:50).

**‘The station manager hunted us’ - waterholes and early conflict**

From the late 1800s and early 1900s there are reports of Aboriginal people being ‘hunted’ from the Georgina River waterholes by pastoralists. To ‘hunt’ people from the waterholes meant to violently displace people. The station owners appealed to their protectors, the police, to assist in their campaign as illustrated by this report from 1902:

> The chief trouble here is with the bush blacks. They camp on waterholes, frighten cattle and prevent them from drinking and their excessive ensemble of dogs destroy a large number of calves and sheep during the year. The consequence is that the squatters write in wanting the police out to hunt those unfortunate off their runs...They do not care whether there is any other place to go to or not, but they want the blacks shifted. In some of their complaints they have been able to say that the blacks speared a beast or killed a sheep. (Queensland Police 1902.)

Massacres of Aboriginal people accompanied the re-occupation of the Georgina. Dajarra people and Warluwarra people remember a massacre that occurred on Wakabi Waterhole at a place known as ‘Hangman’s Bend’ (see Section 5.6). The invading pastoralists killed Aboriginal people at this place by hanging and shooting them. According to Lamond this massacre occurred prior to the formation of the Carandotta Pastoral Company in 1879 (Lamond 1953:18). During a drought period in 1878, there was a report of a large group of Aboriginal people gathered on a waterhole called ‘Double F’ located 160km downstream from Stoney

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9 Orthography after Nancarrow (2002:16), the waterhole is shown as Waukaba on the Natmap, SF 54-9 Glenormiston topographic map.
Plains (Old Tablelander 1878 in Memmott 1985:8). ‘Double F’ may be Mangala or Wakabi Waterholes.

Why was there such a concentration of Aboriginal people on this waterhole? This area was in between the homesteads of Headingly and Roxborough. Perhaps prior to the occupation by Carandotta, this part of the Georgina provided some sort of safe place, a refuge in the early occupation of the area. The waterholes on this part of the Georgina, particularly Wakabi are the most reliable on the River, a critical water resource during drought, of which the pastoralists were fully aware (De Satge 1901:372; Lamond 1950:40). Furthermore, people may have been attending ceremonial activities associated with sacred sites on this part of the River, including Rain making ceremonies.

Was it the people who ‘Old Tablelander’ observed on ‘Double F’ who were massacred? Or, are oral histories of this massacre associated with the ‘dispersions’ mentioned by Hodgkinson? Some oral histories place the massacres at ‘Hangman’s Bend’ in the late 1890s or early 1900s. Given the economic and spiritual significance of Wakabi and Mangala to Aboriginal people and the economic significance of these waters to pastoralists it is possible that more than one massacre occurred at this place.

People continue to use phrases such as ‘we were hunted’ in their everyday description of conflict with white authority figures such as pastoralists and in descriptions of local events, for example “hunt those kids out of the yard”, “she was hunted from school”. Some cattle stations continue to attempt to ‘hunt’ people from country.

**Drought, disease, conflict and relief**

The combined effects of pastoral incursions, introduced diseases and drought impacted heavily on the Georgina River groups. Between 1882 and 1903 there were five periods of drought (a total of 13 years of intermittent drought) the longest being 1882-1886 and the severe drought of 1898-1903. As the country and waterholes dried, Aboriginal people congregated on the big perennial waterholes, and so too did the pastoralist’s stock. The stock polluted the waterholes, destroyed edible plants and grasses and trampled sacred places; bogged animals died and decayed on the waters edge. The harsh conditions made travel impossible. In 1892 Carandotta station was trapped without water; all of the surrounding waterholes had failed which prevented the movement of stock. 90,000 sheep and 10,000 cattle died. In such conditions Wakabi Waterhole would have been a focus for Aboriginal people and pastoralists. (Gordon in The Queenslander 1901:53; The Queenslander 1889: 438; De Satge 1901:373; Memmott 1985:7-9.)

A number of reports illustrate the severity of the situation for Aboriginal groups in western Queensland. Gordon the Western Protector of Aborigines (Boulia) reported:

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10 De Satge claimed the Wakabi Waterhole was the largest natural waterhole in western Queensland (De Stage 1901:372).
During the last three years (since 1896) owing to the drought, they have been deprived of the back country for hunting purposes, and what little water is in the river they are not allowed to go near as it is crowded with stock. They are consequently compelled to congregate about the townships and stations where there are wells, and even then, in many instances, they are forced to steal the water. (Gordon 1899b:2.)

Owing to the drought there is little chance of fishing, and the big water-holes are stocked with cattle and the blacks cannot get about them; their dogs would disturb the cattle. (Gordon in The Queenslander 1901:53.)

In 1901, Police Inspector Gailbraith wrote to the Northern Protector for Aborigines (Roth):

Another contentious matter which must be approached with great care is the right of the aboriginals to hunt and fish on the watercourses. It is their right, and it is their only means of existence when in their natural state. They must camp by water to appease their thirst....Their food (i.e. game) is nearly always found by water. To deprive them of this right simply means wiping them out or driving them into the smaller townships, where the women must prostitute themselves in order to enable the men and children to live. Those that are myalls will naturally kill cattle, or even commit murder, if driven away from their hunting grounds. The station owner or manager claims that his stock have to go to water- so have the aboriginals’ game- and that the sight of the blacks disturbs his cattle. The result is that the blacks are often dispersed by the station hands. Of course such dispersals are not reported to the police. (Gailbraith in Roth 1903:23.)

A report on the situation by Roth (1903:23):

The Time has, in my opinion, now arrived when it is imperative that various areas in the extreme Western and Gulf districts be dedicated wholly and solely to the natives. A reserve half full of occupation licenses (i.e., annual leases held by private occupiers) will not answer the purpose. The whole question resolves itself into one of either sacrificing many human lives, or losing a few pounds derived from rents. So long as the land can be taken up at a few shillings per square mile, and no provision made for the dependant blacks who can and are being hunted off it, there certainly will be trouble. The stockowner naturally does his best for his cattle- one cannot blame him- while I do the best I can for my blacks. The value of one human life, no matter the colour of the skin which clothes it, is more to me than that of all the cattle in creation. Here for instance, is the official correspondence from the Camooweal district re stockowners complaining about blacks camped on the waterholes during the drought, and “frightening” the cattle....

(1.) Sergeant Quain, Camooweal, 19-11-02: “Stockowners in district complain blacks camped waterholes frighten stock causing many perish. Owing scarcity of water and absence aboriginal reserve am unable suggest remedy.”

(2) Inspector Gailbraith, Normanton, 19-11-02: “Inform stockowners that matter has been referred to Northern Protector. Also inform them that I will not recommend blacks be hunted from water under present conditions, but will be perfectly willing to forward any merciful recommendations suggested by stockowners that will preserve stock, and also prevent blacks from perishing for water....

The Georgina River people employed a number of resistance tactics to the pastoralists’ incursions. Aboriginal people killed and wounded cattle. In some instances it was to obtain meat whereas in other instances it was to effect economic hardship on the invaders. The spearing of cattle was a resistance tactic used by Aboriginal groups throughout Australia which Reynolds (1995:106) has called ‘economic warfare’. Georgina River groups also physically attacked the invaders, and they performed special ceremonies such as the Molonga to issue powerful and destructive forces on the invaders. Reynolds describes the Molonga:
The unrestrained actions of the pastoralists were supported by the police who also attempted to crush the Aboriginal resistance. The Native Mounted Police were active in the region from the late 1870s with stations to the southeast at Boulia, then near Cloncurry and then to the north on the Gregory River (Fysh 1933:175). Native Mounted Police were active on the Georgina at the time of the conflict at Wonomo Waterhole (Brisbane Courier 5/3/1879). Robinson’s (1976:37) account of the Native Mounted Police in the area suggests a Native Mounted Police ‘fort’ was established on the Georgina in the vicinity of Wakabi Waterhole. A Sergeant Mossman three constables and a number of native police occupied the fort.11 De Satge, one of the owners of Carandotta, had camped with a detachment of Native Mounted Police at Rochedale on Moonah Ck, while travelling to Carandotta in 1888 (De Satge 1901:380). There is a report in 1880 of Eglington of the Boulia Native Mounted Police carrying out punitive raids in the vicinity of Lake Idamea (Glenormiston Station); this is near the junction of the Georgina and Pituri Ck (‘The Potjostler’ in The Queenslander 1880:308).12

In the 1890s and early 1900s, police officers stationed at Urandangi and Camooweal found it difficult to control non-Aboriginal people in the area.13 Criminal gangs such as horse thieves worked the Northwest Queensland/Northern Territory Border region and wanted criminals frequented the townships.14 In Camooweal (and presumably elsewhere) all of the men were reported to have gone about town armed with guns or revolvers. Accidents involving firearms occurred, for example, there is a report of a Blacksmith who shot off two of his fingers whilst playing with his revolver. Murders took place such as that of an ‘overlander’15 who was shot dead in a Camooweal pub. It was reported in The Queenslander that the lone police officer at Camooweal experienced difficulties in making arrests and only attempted to make them in the event of murder. Any criminals who perceived a threat from ‘the law’ fled across the border into the Northern Territory, as there were no police there at this early stage of frontier history. (The Queenslander 30/1/1886:179-180; 6/2/1886:218; 23/4/1887:657; 30/6/1894:1240; Roth 1901b; Memmott 1985:18-20; Petition by Lessees Ratepayers and Residents of Urandangi, circa 1895.)

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11 Robinson is possibly confused with Lamond’s presence on the Gregory (see Fysh 1933:175). The suggestion of a Native Mounted Police fort on the Georgina south of Carandotta is intriguing as the stone foundations of a hut remain at a place called McKellar’s Hut on Wakabi waterhole. According to oral histories massacres occurred very close to this place. Whether these foundations have anything to do with Robinson’s report remains to be determined.
12 Oral histories of massacres and of Aboriginal people fleeing violent raids in the Glenormiston area were recorded by the author during site recording for the Greater Mt Isa Anthropological Research Project in 2003-2004.
13 Urandangi residents petitioned for a permanent police presence at Urandangi to protect them from “malefactors escaping from justice elsewhere” who would use Urandangi as a haven and as an escape route to the Northern Territory. (Petition by Lessees Ratepayers and Residents of Urandangi, circa 1895.)
14 In the early 1880s, the head stockman of Carandotta, Holmes and his offsider, Myrtle, became part of a criminal gang known as the “Ragged Thirteen” (Lamond 1986:25, 26,53).
15 The term ‘overlander’ seems to encompass people who drive cattle overland (drovers) and people travelling great distances overland to employment opportunities for example from Western Queensland to gold fields in the Kimberley. (See for example Lamond 1986.)
The Georgina River Aboriginal groups also attacked the invaders in retaliation for the kidnapping of Aboriginal women. Some station workers forced Aboriginal women to their camp where they were imprisoned for sexual exploitation (Ruby De Satge in Rosser 1987:29; Gordon in The Queenslander 1901:53; Thorpe 1898:113-114). A Correspondent to the Queenslander reports:

The blacks spear a bullock or two, and one or two of them get shot in reprisal. As a race, these inland blacks are the most peaceable lot I have seen, living on little flesh- generally fish and roots- they are more like mild Hindoos [sic.] in manner than savages. Nevertheless we don’t trust them, but I am certainly anxious to see amicable relations retained as long as possible. Our chief curse is really from ignorant and cowardly working hands, who for trivial matters shoot blacks, and who take their women, and resent any sort of expostulation on the part of their legal owners with lead. (The Queenslander 1879:77.)

Foreign infectious diseases followed the occupation of the Georgina and spread rapidly amongst the Aboriginal population killing large numbers of people. By the late 1890s sexually transmitted diseases were common and there were outbreaks of other diseases including influenza and measles. In 1900, the Western Protector, Gordon, ordered fifty Aboriginal people suffering from influenza be removed from Urandangi to a bush camp on a waterhole one mile from town. Within a period of three months eleven of this group died. (Queensland Police 1899; Gordon 9/3/1900, 20/4/1900; Memmott 1985:35-37; Thorpe 1898.)

Carandotta seems to be the centre of disease and there I saw sunken men and women their faces sunken in, their bodies so shrunken, and eyes so far back in their heads that at first sight they appeared like mummies of centuries gone by walking about the camps.

The Urandangi blacks presented the same appearance while at Headingly many of them were starving without blankets and reeking with disease- poor old men of 50 and 60 years of age dying slowly from syphilis- what a sight. (Purcell in Evans et al 1993:386-7)

During this period of destruction, sedentary Aboriginal camps developed at townships such as Urandangi and on the cattle stations. Aboriginal people camped at Urandangi throughout the contact period and continue to do so. At Urandangi and Camooweal the police established ‘relief’ stations where food, some medicines, and materials were provided to Aboriginal people. Records for the annual blanket distribution provide an indication of the numbers of Aboriginal people visiting or residing at Urandangi in the early 1900s; for example, 98 people in 1900, 33 people in 1901, and 95 people in 1902. Cattle stations such as Glenormiston and Roxborough also acted as relief centres and provided some food and medicine to people camped there. For example Rose (1901), the manager of Roxborough, reported feeding approximately 50 Aboriginal people who came into Roxborough in 1901 because of drought (there were also Aboriginal station workers living on Roxborough at the time). (Gordon 8/2/1900, 20/4/1900, 25/6/1900, 25/7/1900; Roth 1900:3; 1901:3; 1902:4; 1903:5, 14; 1904:7.)

The combined effects of violence, drought and disease impacted heavily on the population of the Georgina River groups. An indication of the changes that were occurring amongst the Warluwarra population is provided by Edge’s (1899:69) report that in 1885 it was common to
see camps of up to one hundred and sixty Warluwarra people in the vicinity of Carandotta but by 1899 a camp of ten people was considered to be a big camp.

As the pastoralists moved further west into what was then South Australia, an eastward migration commenced into Queensland amongst eastern-Northern Territory groups such as the Wakaya. These groups followed traditional travel routes eastwards in response to the combined effects of ‘frontier’ violence, drought, and disease, and in search of highly valued items such as tobacco that could be obtained from the fledgling townships and cattle stations of the Northern Territory-Queensland border. Some travelled down the Ranken or James River to Austral Downs, then down the Georgina to Lake Nash and into Queensland and the relief station at Urandangi. Others travelled east from Avon Downs on the James River into Queensland and the relief station at Camooweal. (Roth 1901b; Memmott et al 1988:63-66.)

4.2 ‘THE GEORGINA RIVER MARKETS’

During this second period (1870s-1900) of incursions on the Georgina, a period marked by drought, disease, violence, upheavals, and displacements, Aboriginal people maintained numerous customary people-environment interactions whilst adjusting to the heavy presence of the pastoralists and others. In particular, a lively system of travel and trade was maintained. It was in this period (early 1890s-1900s) that Roth made his observations of Aboriginal people-environment interactions in the ‘upper Georgina district’ and elsewhere in Northwest Queensland. A brief description of elements of Roth’s account is provided to establish a sense of the lifestyle of people on the Georgina River amongst these times of drastic change.

The waterholes

Roth observed the importance of waterholes and water systems in the Aboriginal geography of Northwest Queensland. The following description of a waterhole on Roxborough suggests the detailed nature of this geography. It also suggests frequented or semi-sedentary camping places:

At the chief encampment the central camping-home of each tribe, there is a name for every landmark, or what can possibly be used as such, in the vicinity: each sandhill, mountain, water-hole, river bend, stony ridge, gully, bigger-sized tree, indeed anything and everything out of the ordinary has a special name applied to it. During my visit to Roxburgh Downs I was shown a fairly-sized water-hole, the portions of which are described at least under seven different names. The importance of water both in the neighbourhood of camp and along the different lines of travel will explain in some measure how it happens that, except in the case of a mountain or some markedly elevated ridge, all geographical location is indicated among these different peoples by words denoting creeks, rivers, water-holes, lakes, or springs. It thus comes to pass that the head stations, townships, &c., of the white settlers, which have been built on sites selected for exactly similar reasons, have all their aboriginal equivalents in the names of their adjacent water-holes. (Roth 1897:133.)

Contemporary Georgina River people maintain detailed knowledge of places along ‘The River,’ including numerous places along waterholes such as Wakabi. Their knowledge of these places
includes their own experiences at such places, as well as those of their ancestors and those of the Ancestral Beings.

Roth’s recorded ‘lines of travel’ are the customary travel and trade routes of Northwest Queensland, which follow the water systems. Roth reports that travel occurred mostly in the cooler months when water was most available. The waterholes are replenished with summer rains and are most plentiful in the first half of the year. These creek and river systems supported something of a cosmopolitan hum of travel and trade in the region (including in the post contact era) (Roth 1897:132-138). The creek and river systems are not only travel corridors; they are also important resource corridors. (Roth 1897:132; Border and Rowland 1990:38-39.)

**Resource exploitation**

The waterholes were obviously utilised as water resources, not so obvious is the fact that not all waterholes in the area provide good drinking water. The water quality can also vary within a waterhole. Thus, some waterholes on the Georgina are favoured for drinking water.

Contemporary Dajarra people regularly catch fish, particularly after floods (rains) when waterholes fill and creeks run. At the time of Roth’s (1897:94) study the use of fish nets made of string from plant fibres was common throughout Northwest Queensland. Other fishing techniques included constructing weirs, drawing fish to the surface by muddying the water and hitting fish with sticks as they come up, and in shallow water trapping fish with feet (see Figure 4.2).16 People also used their feet to feel for fresh water mussels in the mud (the same technique is used today) and roasted them in their shells. (Roth 1897:93-96.)

Kangaroos and emus were trapped in nets placed across regular paths to water (see Figure 4.3). Kangaroos were also hunted with spears and boomerangs while they rested in shade during the day. Both kangaroo and emu were ‘run down’ with ‘kangaroo dogs’, and driven into enclosures.17 People recall ‘the old people’ keeping ‘big’ kangaroo dogs into at least the 1950s. Roth reported the use of pitfalls to trap emus at Glenormiston. (Roth 1897:96-98, 100.)

Various species of birds were caught at waterholes. Flocks of birds including pigeons and budgerigar were netted adjacent to waterholes. Hodgkinson (1877:22) and his party enjoyed a meal from one of these catches, and Sutherland (1913:20) observed the use of bird nets in the vicinity of Don Ck. Other birds such as galahs, ducks and pelicans were captured by people sneaking up on them in the water. Roth describes the capture of turkey bustards; in Dajarra they are referred to as ‘turkey’ or ‘plains turkey’ and are a popular source of bush tucker throughout Northwest Queensland.18 (Roth 1897:98-99.)

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16 Some people occasionally mudd the water by throwing clods of dried mud into the water when fishing with hand lines.

17 Roth (1897:98) reported emus being run down with dogs at Roxborough.

18 Some people are aware that this bird is protected (presumably under Queensland’s *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (previously the *Fauna Conservation Act*)), but they assert that they have always hunted turkeys. This assertion seems to conform to s93, ‘Aborigines’ and Torres Strait Islander’s rights to take etc. protected wildlife,’ of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.
Goannas and other lizards are a popular source of bush tucker amongst Dajarra people. Roth (1897:94) mentions lizards being chased on the ground and dug out of burrows.

Roth (1897:91-92) reported people utilising species of grass and plant seeds (see Figure 4.4). According to Roth (1897:91) in the Boulia District, all seed-food is referred to as pap-pa. Contemporary Georgina River people refer to ‘pap-pa grass’. A number of grass seeds were prepared and eaten by Georgina River people. Roth describes the preparation of “star grass” seed:

A sufficient amount having been collected...it is more or less broken up with the hands, next brushed into a heap, and then put into a circular hole in the ground. Within this hole...the woman stands: pressing alternately one foot upon the other she exerts a sort of rotary motion into which she throws all her weight, with the result that the grass upon which she treads becomes more and more disintegrated, the seed itself gradually working its way to the bottom...From the hole the seed is transferred to a koolamon, any of the larger sprigs, & c., are removed with the fingers, and the rest winnowed with the breath or a current of air: it is now clean enough and ready for grinding on the pappa-stone. (Roth 1897:91.)

A description of the preparation of grass seed by a Warluwarra Elder in the 1990s:

Old people dig a hole, put the grass in it and work it with their feet to get the seeds to fall off the shells. Then they lift it up with a coolamon and let the wind blow all the shells away. They get it in the other coolamon then and it comes out real clean too. I used to eat grass seed my grandmother used to do that, clean it. (DW 20/8/1996.)

The seeds of pig weed were also used and the pig weed plant itself was also eaten. Water was added to the grass seed ‘flour’ to create a type of damper that was cooked ‘like johnny cakes’ in the ashes. The seeds of coolibah are also eaten. Roth’s (1897:92) description of the preparation of coolibah seed is very close to that of a Warluwarra elder (below) made some 100 years later:

They get that off the coolibah, they just chop the tree down, cut all the leaves off it, before it’s starting to flower, spread it out on the ground, like a long hard ground, leave it for two days until the shells all open, go and get the bush and shake it and put it in the coolamon they clean it real clean too, not even grass or tree, and they grind it on the big stone, flat stone, they put the coolamon underneath and they grind it. They eat it like that, get a piece of bark or something and eat the ground coolibah seed. ‘Bush people’ used to put the ground seed on a piece of bark and another piece of bark on top and a bit of coal on top, when the seed was cooked they used to eat it. (DW 20/8/1996.)

A further seed-food mentioned by Roth is nardoo (Marsilea drummondii), which is found in swampy areas. According to Roth nardoo was known as por-ri amongst Aboriginal people at

Conservation Act 1992. See Weisbrot’s (1987) account of a Gungalida man who was charged and convicted with offences under the Fauna Conservation Act 1974-1979, for shooting a turkey and taking a turkey chic. The convictions were later quashed by the High Court.

Travelling between Monkira on the Diamantina and Marion downs on the Georgina an overlander made the following observation of pappa grass in the early 1880s: “...a long grass like oaten hay: Pappa grass they call it. This grass is about two feet six inches to three feet high. The natives cut it and stack it cross-ways, like sheaves in a stook, and leave it to dry. The head is tuft shape, full of a small white grain which the blacks shake out and grind into flour on the stones.” (Lamond 1986:17.)
Glenormiston and Roxborough. Nancarrow (2000: 17) has ngartu as the Warluwarra word for nardoo. The seed is first pounded with a tool that Roth calls a ‘nardoo-stone’ before it is worked on a grinding stone. (Roth 1897:92, 104.)

Other plant foods mentioned by Roth (1897:92-93) include ‘mung-ar-oo’ and ‘kung-ga-pa-ri’ (conkerberry (Milson 2000:2)), ‘wild orange’ and ‘emu apple’ all of which remain as popular bush foods. Roth mentions people sucking the blossoms of bloodwood and bauhinia trees for honey at Glenormiston and the blossoms of ti-trees at Roxborough.20 ‘Sugar-bag’ or bush honey is obtained from bees’ nests in the hollow limbs of trees particularly along the watercourses. Roth describes people eating a variety of insects including grubs obtained from trees. (Roth 1897:92-93.)

A plant product that was highly popular and valuable in Aboriginal Australia is the drug pituri that is produced from the plant Duboisia hopwoodi. According to Roth (1897:51) the Warluwarra (his Walookera) term for pituri is ma-ja. This plant is found in the Mulligan River/Georgina River area. Pituri has high nicotine content, one that is much higher than commercial tobacco. In contrast to most drugs, nicotine can act as both stimulant and depressant. Pituri is prepared for use by grinding or chewing up a small amount of the leaves and stems (Roth (1897:100) reports that these are first roasted) and mixing this with the alkali ashes of either Acacia salicina (acacia ligulata), gidyea (Acacia cambegei) or whitewood (Atalya hemiglauca) to form a ‘quid’. The alkali ash frees the pure nicotine making the pituri ‘more powerful’.21 The ‘quids’ were chewed or placed behind the ear where the nicotine entered the body transdermally, that is, absorbed through the skin (just like the nicotine patches that are in contemporary use). Pituri was shared in various social settings including ceremony and corroborees. (Roth 1897:100; Lukin -Watson 1980:24-42.)

According to Lukin-Watson (1980:35,39) pituri was used to (i) alleviate stress, (ii) to increase adrenalin, (iii) to suppress hunger, (iv) to provide efficient use of body fluids, and (v) to minimize pain.

**Artefact manufacture**

Roth observed the use and manufacture of various artefacts in Northwest Queensland. He mentions a number of items that are manufactured either by the Warluwarra or in the ‘Upper Georgina District’ including: shields (1897:53, 149), coolamon (1897:101), fluted and hooked boomerangs (1897:142-146), spatulate-tip woomera spear (1897: 147), woomera (1897:149, and stone knives (1897:101-102, 151). (See Figure 4.5-4.8.)

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20 Large tea-trees line the Georgina at Roxborough.

21 Did Georgina River People produce lime from the abundant supply of limestone in the region to use as an alkali with pituri? The alkali properties of lime are used elsewhere with tobacco, betel nut, and coca (Lukin-Watson 1980:33). Perhaps archaeologists will be interested in this question - did Georgina River people produce lime at fires on the Georgina River? This question first came to mind when visiting an old camp on the Georgina where a series of heaped limestone ‘pebbles’ were observed.
Various artefacts described by Roth continued to be manufactured well into the 1900s and a number are produced today. For example, people recall coolamons being used to hold and carry babies throughout the last fifty years. New materials that travelled west with the pastoralists and explorers were quickly embraced and incorporated in artefacts or in the production of artefacts. Steel blades began to replace the stone tips of gidyea-handled chisels. Similarly knife blades were made from steel recycled from items such as barrel hoops. Glass was used as a tool to ‘smooth off’ timber products such as boomerangs. A Dajarra elder who makes didgeridoos occasionally uses a piece of bottle glass to scrape the timber smooth. Some materials were replaced altogether, for example some people made baby-carrying coolamons from sheets of tin or iron. (Roth 1897:142, 149, 151.)

Travel, trade and the Georgina River markets

...this walk-about is but part and parcel of the great trading and bartering system which is more or less continually going on throughout the various districts. Certain trade routes laid down from time immemorial along their own or messmates’ country are followed by the members of a tribe or tribes, along which each knows that he is free to travel unmolested: these routes, of greater or less extent are rigidly adhered to. (Roth 1897:132.)

Georgina River people and other Aboriginal groups in Northwest Queensland appear to have participated in two broad ranges of travel; (i) regional travel, and (ii) localised travel. Some of the motivators for regional travel included (a) to interact with other groups at ‘markets’ where they traded in artefacts and resources and exchanged knowledge, (b) to meet ceremonial responsibilities, (c) to maintain regional places of shared interest, and (d) to participate in corroborees. The Georgina was critical to the trade and travel network of Northwest Queensland, it was also the key north-south trans-continental trade and travel route of Aboriginal Australia which was part of a trade route that effectively extended from the South Australian coast to the Sepik River and north coast of Papua New Guinea (see Figure 4.9). (Roth 1897:132-138; McCarthy 1939.)

Roth (1897:135) refers to the centres of exchange as the ‘Georgina River markets’. These markets would necessarily have been located close to the perennial waterholes on the Georgina such as Wakabi. At the time of Roth’s observation the cattle stations occupied most of the perennial waterholes. He located markets at the following places: Camooweal, Austral Downs, Lake Nash, Headingly, Carandotta, Roxborough, Glenormiston, Marion Downs, and Rochedale to the east on Moonah Ck. The cattle stations occupied the traditional camping places, Aboriginal cattle station camps continued as centres of trade and travel.

Ceremonial activity continued throughout the occupation of the Georgina. Roth made detailed notes on male and female initiation ceremonies carried out at Roxborough (1897:171), Headingly (1897:172) and elsewhere on the Georgina (1897:175, 177, 178). He also made observations of Rain ceremonies held at Roxborough, Carandotta, Headingly and Lake Nash
Between the Georgina and Dajarra

Chapter 4: Between the Georgina and Dajarra

(Roth 1897:167-168). Roth observed groups travelling to participate in ceremonial activity, for example he reports the ‘Roxborough boys’ singing the Molonga corroboree at Glenormiston and the Wakaya teaching Kalkadoon people Rain songs at Carandotta (a Warluwarra place) (Roth 1897:122, 168).

‘Messengers’ travelled throughout Northwest Queensland carrying ‘message sticks’ on their journeys (see Figure 4.10). These messengers passed on information and requests such as a request for people to attend a forthcoming corroboree, or a request for an item of exchange such as pituri. (Roth 1897:136-138.)

Localised movement included travel for social and economic purposes, including to exploit seasonal resources. Such travel included visiting plains country to exploit seed resources, moving to swamps to obtain nardoo, following fish stocks downstream as floodwaters dried or receded, and travelling from the River to hills country to maintain ceremonial places.

Roth’s observations were made at least fifteen years into the second era of pastoral occupation of Northwest Queensland. This violent occupation affected the ‘line’ of some of the travel routes, and introduced new types of journeys. In addition to travel and trade, people used the travel routes to flee violence and massacres; to migrate to the big waterholes, cattle stations and townships where they could obtain food, water and medicine during this period of drought and disease; and to source the new materials and resources of the invaders. These trade routes were also used by drovers, criminal gangs of horse thieves, cattle duffers, and overland travellers. (Roth 1897:134; 1901; McCarthy 1939:411; Memmott 1985: 18,58-59; Memmott et al: 45, 50; Lamond1986:19-30.)

Camps and ethno-architecture

At least four types of domiciliary architecture were constructed in camps on the Georgina River in the late 1800s, these being (i) wet weather shelters, (ii) cold weather shelters, (iii) shade structures (bough-shed), and (iv) windbreaks. Although Roth’s description of these shelter types applies to his ‘Boulia district’, evidence within his description and the current author’s work with Warluwarra informants, indicate that similar types were built in the vicinity of Roxborough and elsewhere on the Georgina River. (Roth 1897:105-106.)

The wet weather shelter is built on high ground or a mound. The primary structural element of this shelter is an ‘arch’ constructed of two interlocking forked sticks that are buried into the ground at their ends. A secondary frame of sticks is fixed in the ground and supported on the central arch, thus forming a dome. These shelters are elliptical or circular in plan and were about 1.2 metres high (see Figures 4.11-4.14). (Roth 1897:105-106.)

A Warluwarra woman described the construction of this shelter type:
When it’s raining they make humpies, they chuck bushes over it. They put layers of grass and dirt on top— it gets hard on top until it rains again. They lean all the sticks up against each other, chuck the coolibah leaves on top, then the grass, chuck it on. Then get the coolamon and chuck the dirt on top, keep it down so the wind won’t blow. When it gets damp or a little bit of rain, well it’s hard then, that thing can’t go through, the water. (DW 8/96.)

Roth (1897:106) describes mud being placed onto the structures whereas the description above suggests dry soil is placed on top which is later wetted and then hardens as it dries. The use of ‘black soil’ on these structures would produce a very effective water barrier, as the black soil reacts quickly with water forming a clay-like barrier that would prevent further water penetration.22

The cold weather shelter consisted of a domed structure, similar to the wet weather dome, constructed over a flat-bottomed hole. The hole was circular in plan and dug to a depth of approximately half a metre giving the cold weather shelter an internal height of 1.5-1.7 metres.23 Additional mud was placed around the entrance and an internal fire maintained in the space opposite the entrance. Fires were also maintained just outside of the entrance. (Roth 1897:106.)

Shade structures, or bough sheds were lighter structures made of grass and bushes placed over a timber frame. According to Roth this structure was used for wet weather protection, however it is likely to have also been employed as a shade structure during hot weather as found elsewhere in the hot-dry areas of Australia (see for example Keys 1999, 2000). This structure was commonly attached to the entrance of wet and cold weather shelters to protect fires positioned there. Trees with low limbs or angled trunks were also used as primary support structures for shades (see Figure 4.14). (Roth 1897:106.)

The fourth domiciliary structure was the windbreak constructed of interwoven saplings and grasses. Windbreaks were added to cold weather shelters where the entrance was placed opposite the prevailing wind, in this case the south easterlies. According to Roth windbreaks were 75-90 cm in height. (Roth 1897:107.)

Roth noted a number of changes in the structures of Northwest Queensland that occurred in the 1890s with the introduction of new materials. The interlocking forked structure was occasionally replicated by spliced timbers that were bound by ropes. Cattle hides were placed over the domed structures in lieu of the mud and grass composite. Roth also noted the “marked disappearance” of the cold weather shelter. Over a period of seventeen years, Craigie, the manager of Roxborough, noticed that the depth of the holes of the cold weather shelters was decreasing whilst the height of the timber structure of these shelters was increasing. According to Roth,

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23 It is possible that the excavated floors took advantage of the thermal mass effect of the earth. The ground heats up during the day, as the air temperature drops rapidly overnight the ground maintains a more constant temperature and the heat of the ground would be transferred to the air space of the dome. The excavated floor would provide greater exposure to ground surface and this heat than a floor at ground level would. Fires maintained inside would have also heated the ground. (See Szokolay (1987:29- 33) for a description of thermal mass effect.)
these changes were influenced by the introduction of clothes and blankets that had reduced the
need for the warmth provided by this shelter type. (Roth 1897:106.)

Other forms of ethno-architecture were also produced on the Georgina such as structures
accompanying Rain Ceremonies, other ceremonies and corroborees, tree-burial platforms (these
were observed in the vicinity of Roxborough and Carandotta), and various hunting structures.
(Roth 1897:165, 168, 171-172.)

The only recorded evidence of the sociospatial arrangement of camps, that is the spatial
relationships between people of domiciliary groups or sub-camps, is provided by Roth’s
description entitled ‘Arrangements at the Camping - ground’: 24

On the road a man will travel by himself, unlike a woman, or in company. If women are present
they bring up the rear with the children, well-stuffed dilly-bags and other possessions, the men at
some distance ahead carrying their own fighting weapons. As the different parties reach their
ultimate destination, they take up their quarters or build temporary huts around the visited, their
hosts’, camp upon that side of it in the direction whence they came... (Roth 1897:134.)

Roth’s observation of people camping in the direction ‘whence they came’ parallels
observations made of the sociospatial pattern of Aboriginal camps elsewhere in Aboriginal
Australia where people orientate themselves in relation to others according to “locational
principles” such as the direction of travel, or clan country, or country. Roth’s description also
contains a second important principle of Aboriginal sociospatial patterns; camps are transformed
by a process of “social accretion” where new arrivals attach themselves to others on the basis
of social links. (Biernoff 1974; Memmott 2000:32, 2002:79-80.)

Roth’s short description, “…they take up their quarters or build temporary huts around the
visited…” implies that camps are not necessarily comprised of built enclosures; it therefore
alludes to a fifth architectural type- ‘the open camp’- external living environments that are
characterized by minimal transformations in the physical environment.

4.3 ‘WE WERE UNDER THE ACT THEN’

In his position as the ‘Northern Protector of Aborigines’, Roth (1901a) observed the illegal
nature of the pastoralist’s actions against Aboriginal people, the limits of the pastoralist’s rights
and the continuing rights of Aboriginal people to freely access their country:

If the blacks continue to be dispossessed of their hunting-grounds and sources of water supply by
their lands being rented for grazing rights at a nominal figure - lands from which the lessees
naturally desire to drive them - bloodshed and retribution will be certain to ensue...It would be as
well, I think, to point out to certain of these Northern cattle-men (at all events those few amongst
them who regard the natives as nothing more than vermin, worthy only of being trampled on) that
their legal status on the lands they rent amounts only to this: There is nothing illegal in either
blacks (or Europeans) travelling through unfenced leasehold runs. These runs are held only on
grazing rights - the right to the grass - and can only be upheld as against people taking stock, &c.,

24 Memmott (2002:67) has described the ‘sociospatial pattern’ of Aboriginal camps as: “…the division of settlements
into spatial zones, each occupied by an aggregate of domiciliary groups, and possessing some common social identity
and characteristic social structure.”
through them. It certainly is illegal for station-managers, &c., to use physical force and threats to turn blacks (or Europeans) so travelling off such lands...The poor wretches must be allowed the wherewithal to live - their main hunting-grounds and water-supplies; they dare not voluntarily migrate elsewhere, as this, according to tribal law, would constitute a trespass, punishable by death. (Roth 1901:6a.)

Despite the pertinent nature of Roth’s observations he too was responsible for imposing change on the Aboriginal people of Northwest Queensland. As the ‘Northern Protector’ he was in charge of enforcing the oppressive Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of Opium Act 1897 that compounded some of the changes created by pastoral occupation and further controlled the lives of Aboriginal people.

**Removals, enforced labour, and ‘protectors’**

In 1900 the Aboriginal population of western Queensland, between Camooweal and Birdsville, was estimated at 600 (Gordon 25/7/1900). An ‘Aboriginal Protector’ named Gordon, was sent to Boulia to initiate a ‘removal’ of this Aboriginal population to the east coast (Gordon 24/11/1899, 8/2/1900). In particular Gordon was intent on removing Aboriginal women of mixed descent and other young Aboriginal women to Brisbane (‘The Queenslander’ 6/7/1901:53; Gordon 1/11/1899, 20/12/1900). He had planned to travel about western Queensland taking young women from Aboriginal camps and cattle stations (Gordon 6/4/1900). Floods early in 1900 and drought conditions throughout that year prevented Gordon from travelling about the region and consequently he was unsuccessful in this large scale forced displacement. However, he did send at least eight young women from western Queensland to the east coast. (Gordon 9/2/1900, 5/4/1900, 25/6/1900.)

Gordon informed his superior, ‘Chief Protector’ Meston, of some of the difficulties involved in ‘removing’ Aboriginal people:

> There can be nothing done till after the floods in removing Blacks to the coast the only way I can see of getting in is by Cobb & Co coaches as far as the railway stations at Winton and Hughenden you might get Cobb & Co to carry them at reduced rates the fare is £6.0.0 from Boulia to Winton and 2/6 per meal it would require a constable to travel along with them to protect them from abuse and to see that he got them fed on the road down so far the police have had no instructions to assist in any in the removal or escorting of blacks to the coast. (Gordon 8/2/1900.)

Meston (1901) ordered Gordon to find alternative and less expensive means of transporting Aboriginal people from Boulia to Winton. Gordon (6/4/1900) advised Meston that Cobb & Co coaches were the only means of transport available. Meston eventually dismissed Gordon on the grounds that his work in western Queensland was too costly. Following Gordon’s efforts, Meston advised the government in 1901 to discontinue the ‘relief’ provided to Aboriginal people in western Queensland and to send all those unable to work to east coast reserves:

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25 Gordon arrived in western Queensland during the middle of the severe 1898-1903 drought.
26 It seems that Gordon empathized with Aboriginal people. For example, prior to his appointment as the Protector, in a letter to the Home Secretary he wrote as an ex-manager of Headingly Station, “We have taken their country from them. What have we given them in exchange?” (Gordon c1899.)
Where it is absolutely imperative to supply rations to destitute Western Blacks, I would earnestly
advise that these people be marched to the nearest Railway Station and sent to one of the Reserves
where the cost of feeding has been reduced to a minimum and they can have some occupation and
live healthy and decent lives. Feeding them in their western environment means actually
encouraging their degradation and is in all ways most unsatisfactory. (Meston 1901.)

At the time, the nearest railhead was at Winton some 430 kilometres to the east of the Georgina
(Kerr 1990:83,118). The road journey from Urandangi to Winton via the Georgina and Boulia
is approximately 620 kilometres. That Meston planned such a ‘march’ at a time when western
Queensland was in the middle of a severe drought, a time when many Aboriginal people were
suffering from disease, says something of the ruthlessness with which government
representatives systematically displaced Aboriginal people under the pretext of ‘protection’.

Meston never succeeded in his great exile of Aboriginal people from Northwest Queensland.
However, during the early and mid1900s, numbers of Georgina River people, including nuclear
families, were banished to east coast reserves such as Yarrabah, Palm Island, Woorabinda and
Fraser Island (Meston 19/4/1898; Roth 1904:12-13). These reserves are between 1200 and
1700 kilometres from the Georgina River. People were ‘sent away’ for refusing to co-operate
with the ‘authorities’. They may have refused to work, or were simply considered to be
‘troublemakers’, and they were sent away simply for being ‘old’. For example, in 1929 the
Dajarra police constable travelled on horseback to Urandangi “for the purpose of capturing 16
old and indigent Aboriginals for removal on Minister’s Orders to Woorabinda
Settlement”(Queensland Police, 1927-1930.). He returned six days later with the Urandangi
costable escorting thirteen Aboriginal people (Queensland Police, 1927-1930). (Memmott et al
1988:90.)

Young children were also sent away:

Maggie, half-caste, eight or ten years old, from Carandotta camp. The station-manager wrote that
he could not hold himself responsible for her safety. Removed to Yarrabah. (Roth 1904:13.)

During the early 1900s small country reserves were established in the Northwest Queensland
towns including Camooweal and Urandangi. Under the Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of
the Sale of Opium Act 1897, Aboriginal people were placed under the regime of ‘local
protectors’, the police. At these reserves, and on the cattle stations, Aboriginal people were under
the direct control of the ‘local protector’. The police reported on and attempted to control many
aspects of people’s lives including marriage. (Gailbraith 1903; Memmott et al 1988: 89;
Memmott 1996: 9.)

The ‘Northern Protector’, Roth, reports on a marriage in Northwest Queensland in his annual
report:

George Hooper, half-caste aboriginal, stockman [to marry] Aboriginal “Polly” of Walgra (out-
station of Carandotta). (Roth 1904:14.)
The reserves provided a labour pool that was exploited by the Northwest Queensland pastoral industry. ‘Under the Act’, Georgina River people were forced to work for pastoralists, drovers and others. In 1900, only three years after the introduction of the Act, a substantial proportion of the western Queensland Aboriginal population, 175 people out of an estimated population of 600, were officially ‘employed’ (Gordon 25/6/1900, 25/7/1900). Aboriginal workers received little or no remuneration; in fact some people believe their monies were stolen by the ‘local protectors’, the police, who kept Aboriginal accounts.27 The Police only paid people a small proportion of their wages as an allowance for clothing and sometimes for equipment and spending money for events such as race meetings.28 Large sums of Aboriginal wages were held over (remaining unpaid to the worker) by the police. For example in 1963, the Dajarra police held over £7000 and £3 521 of this amount had been collected in the preceding twelve months (Queensland Police 1963a). People had to apply to the police if they wanted a sum of their money greater than the small amount they were normally allowed. (Roth 1906:1-2; Memmott 1988:89.)

The intention and operation of the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act with regard to Aboriginal wages is illustrated by this report from the Normanton Protector:

...I am opposed to aboriginals having much money to squander, except a few shillings as pocket money, but the natives should get the full benefit of his labour for a rainy day. (Protector Old in Roth 1906:2.)

In addition to the threat of banishment to the distant east coast reserves, some sources indicate that ‘employers’ such as station managers and drovers used the valued commodity of *pituri* to manipulate Aboriginal labour (Roth 1897:100; Lukin-Watson 1980:29).

**Pumpers and ironing in the big house**

Throughout the 1900s Warluwarra people, other Georgina River groups and Northern Territory groups such as the Wakaya (who were caught in Queensland by the Act) lived and worked on the Georgina River cattle stations. Some people lived and worked at the head station where women and girls worked in the station house, the ‘big house’, cleaning, ironing and cooking. Other people (and families) lived and worked at outstations and bores. For example, members of the Major family lived at Ybeo Bore on Kallala for many years. (See Lamond 1964.)

People worked as ‘pumpers’ maintaining the bores; people dug wells and put down bores; people cut fence posts; they built cattle yards, fences, tanks and dams. Aboriginal people built the cattle stations. Some people worked in the stock camps, mustering, branding and moving

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27 There is at least one official report of a police officer ‘finding it hard to handle’ the accurate keeping of Aboriginal accounts. According to oral histories this police officer allegedly took the wages of a number of brothers who were working in the area in the 1960s (Queensland Police 4/7/61).

28 See for example the Protector of Aborigines Duchess, Wages Book 1917-1929. This book contains details of the wages banked on behalf of an Aboriginal person and details of monies spent by that person and what they were permitted to spend it on.
cattle. Others worked with sheep; they worked the shearing sheds on Carandotta (e.g. Coona Woolshed) and Ardmore (Rochedale) (see Figure 4.15). Some worked as boundary riders and maintained fence-lines. Some were employed to train horses and as jockeys to ride station horses at popular bush race meetings including the Urandangi races. Aboriginal people developed and maintained the cattle stations of Northwest Queensland.

The value of Aboriginal labour to the pastoral industry was huge. Commenting on the failure of some pastoralists to pay the wages of their Aboriginal workers, Roth observed:

> The curious part of the matter is that employers both recognise and appreciate the value of aboriginal labour; the blacks are better than ordinary white stockmen - they know the country better, and are more reliable and obedient. (Roth 1906:12.)

People remember a time when the cattle industry was so labour intensive that there would be Aboriginal people ‘all over the country’, living and working at outstations, bores, stock camps, and wool sheds. The country was populated with Aboriginal workers, their families and camps. At the head stations, the Aboriginal camp was usually some distance from the station house. Some Aboriginal families had relatively independent camps on such stations. While some were able to live and work in close proximity to their family or extended family, others were separated from ‘their people’, their families, and their country. This includes children sent to work from the age of 10 or 12 and people sent to work at distant places.²⁹ During this time big Aboriginal camps were maintained at places along the Georgina such as Lake Marian and Walgra.

As people moved about the country with station work they encountered family and friends and revisited places of Aboriginal significance. The life history of numerous people includes work at a range of places within a station and it often includes work on a number of stations in the area. Most people who lived through this era recall their life history in terms of the succession of cattle stations (or places within a station) where they (and their families) lived and worked. At the same time others worked for many years on the one station. Whilst living and working on the stations people were able to experience places and maintain knowledge of places. Children were able to learn about many places by visiting and experiencing them. For example, a woman (EP) recalls camping with her parents near the Ardmore woolshed. Her father would go off to work early in the morning and her mother would spend the day with the children walking along Moonah Creek looking for bush tucker.

The introduction of ‘bores’ allowed the cattle stations to expand the scale and focus of their operations from a reliance on the Georgina waterholes, to the pastoral potential of the plains and hills country. Just as Roth, in the 1890s, observed the significance of water systems in the Aboriginal geography of Northwest Queensland (discussed earlier), in the 1900s much of the

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²⁹ Roth reported 10 permanent and 10 casual Aboriginal workers on Carandotta during 1903. Including the families of these workers, the Aboriginal population on Carandotta during that year may have been close to 100. In fact it has been said that all ‘Georgina River people’ worked on Carandotta at some stage and many were born there. (Roth 1904:3.)
work and life experiences of Aboriginal people on cattle stations centred around water systems including the introduced networks of bores, dams, tanks and ‘turkey nests’\(^{30}\) (the development of a cattle station geography). Some bores are located very close to ‘Story places’. In some cases this is because they are located on, or close to, soaks or small intermittent waterholes that are associated with Dreamings. A system of roads that connected this network of ground water exploitation was also introduced. Bores are fully incorporated in the Aboriginal geography of western Queensland and are now used as places of orientation. Travel through country is often recalled in relation to the series of bores that are passed. When orientating themselves on a map, for example when searching for a place on a map, people will often first locate a bore and then search the map for other bores or related places.\(^{31}\)

As previously mentioned, strong associations developed between certain Aboriginal groups and cattle stations. It is probably more accurate to say that certain cattle stations developed relationships with (occupied) the country of particular Aboriginal groups. Thus Roth (1897:42) referred to Carandotta as the headquarters of the Walookera (Warluwarra). The ‘relief centres’ operating from cattle stations in the early 1900s, together with the enforced exploitation of Aboriginal labour by cattle stations throughout the 1900s, may have reinforced the relationships between Aboriginal groups and particular stations (Roth 1903:4). Oral histories confirm that customary people-environment interactions and life/work histories contribute to the significance of Carandotta Station for the Warluwarra. Later, in his reports as the ‘Northern Protector,’ Roth began to identify individual Aboriginal people with particular stations: ‘“Maggie,” ...from Carandotta camp’ (1904:13); ‘Aboriginal “Polly,” of Walgra (out-station of Carandotta)” (1904:14); “Pippa, of Carandotta” (1905:11). It is almost as if Roth had failed to recognise Aboriginal social relationships and relationships with country and instead he identified Aboriginal people with European properties of place, in these cases cattle stations.

Amongst the numerous attempts by non-Aboriginal people to impose socio-cultural values (and place properties) on Aboriginal people was the Australia-wide practice of bestowing breastplates (Cleary 1993: 9-12). These were metal plates commonly inscribed with the name of the Aboriginal person, the title given to them by the government (King, Queen, etc) and the place of their title (Cleary 1993). Circa 1950 a member of the Belia family was given a breastplate that announced that he was the ‘King of Carandotta’.\(^{32}\) Gordon (1993:17) maintains that for some Aboriginal groups such breast plates are “of immense importance and symbolism”. This is certainly true in this case; the King and Queen who had strong relationships with Carandotta station were highly respected and knowledgeable people amongst Georgina River people. In the

\(^{30}\) A ‘turkey nest’ is used to store water pumped out of bores. The ‘nest’ consists of a perimeter earth wall (mostly circular) several metres high to contain the water.

\(^{31}\) For the importance of ground water to the pastoral industry see WRG (1994:10-12, 26-27). In 1993 stock and rural domestic placed the highest demand on Northwest Queensland water resources (24 000ML, 45% of this is estimated to be lost by evaporation and seepage), followed by industrial water demand (15 400ML), urban demand (11 800) and irrigation (1800ML). (WRG 1994:26.)

\(^{32}\) This is likely to have been one of the last ‘King Plates’ in a history of breastplates originating in 1814 (Cleary 1993:12).
1990s their descendants fought to have the breastplate returned from a regional museum where it was under the control of non-Aboriginal people.

**Camps on the Georgina**

From the early contact period well into the 1900s, many of the Warluwarra (and other groups) continued to travel on foot along the Georgina moving between sacred and ceremonial places, camps, cattle stations and townships. Warluwarra people also travelled along the Georgina on horses, in buggies and later in second hand trucks and cars. Since the early occupation of the Georgina, Waluwarra people have also had experiences travelling along this river with droving teams. Two significant Aboriginal camps on the Georgina were Lake Marian and Walgra. Many Georgina River people were born at these two places. People travelled between these camps as well as to the town of Urundangi where they could obtain rations, apply for their money and meet up with friends and relatives.

The pastoral industry introduced broad seasonal units of work time and break time to the lifestyle of Northwest Queensland groups. For most of the year, people lived and worked apart from their extended family. During the cattle station break or Christmas break, a period of up to three months, families and social groups would reunite on the Georgina River and participate in an intense period of social and ceremonial activity.

**ʻWe drove their cattleʼ - the Georgina stock route**

In contrast to working on cattle stations within, or close to, their country some Georgina River people were forced to work for drovers travelling to distant places and spending long periods of time away from family and country. The Aboriginal travel and trade routes of the Georgina River system were utilised by the pastoralists as vital routes for the movement of stock between Northwest Queensland, Northern Territory and Kimberley stations and from these stations to eastern and southern markets as far away as New South Wales. Many Georgina River people worked with the droving teams moving stock along the Georgina. People travelled with drovers west into the Northern Territory and they travelled south to Marree in South Australia. The Georgina River stock route was the main route into Queensland from the Northern Territory. At Urundangi teams branched off eastwards to the rail head at Duchess and later the railhead at Dajarra whilst others continued south. Many people were also involved in localised droving from the Georgina River stations to the nearest railheads (see Figure 4.16). (Maher in Wharton 1994:18-19; Rosser 1987; Queensland Police 21/2/02-28/5/63; and Christian 1952:19.)

The ‘Northern Protector’ had two concerns regarding Aboriginal people working with drovers. Firstly, there was no fail-safe guarantee that at the end of the journey the drovers would return their Aboriginal workers, including children, to their home. The second issue concerned the

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33 The ‘Northern Protector’ also followed the Georgina south from Camooweal to Carandotta when he visited the region in 1903 (Roth 1904:26).

34 Large numbers of cattle passed through Urundangi, for example 60 000 head in 1937, an estimated 100 000 head during 1944, and 40 000 head in 1963 (Queensland Police 3/12/1937; 1944; 1963b).
movement of Aboriginal people across State borders. Which government then controlled the Aboriginal person involved, the Northern Territory or Queensland? Roth (1901:4) asserted that all Aboriginal people within Queensland whether from the Northern Territory or South Australia, came under the Queensland Act. The Queensland Government also attempted to ensure that Aboriginal people were returned to Queensland after droving trips into the Northern Territory by enforcing the *Aboriginal Drovers Regulations*, which required the drover to place sureties against the return of the Aboriginal drover and to hold work permits and agreements. Was the Queensland government concerned with the welfare of Aboriginal workers who crossed State and Territory borders? Or, were they more concerned about a potential loss of labour and income? (Roth 1904:25; 1905; see Aboriginal Drovers Regulations, Queensland.)

**The Great Western Railway and the establishment of Dajarra**

From 1917 the drovers had a new destination, the cattle trains from the east coast that waited for them at a railhead established on the banks of Carbine Ck. In 1910 the Queensland Parliament passed the ‘Great Western Railway Act’ to authorize the construction of a major railway that would significantly expand and connect existing railway infrastructure in western Queensland. The proposed railway, the ‘Great Western Railway’, involved the extension of three existing railways, the northern, central and southern in a southwesterly direction and to link them across western Queensland with a line that was to run from southwest Queensland, in a northwesterly direction to Camooweal (see Figure 4.23).35 The proposed rail network would have linked western Queensland with the coastal ports of Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane. (Queensland Government 1910:10128-10132.)

The proposed extension to the northern line was to run from Malbon, southwest to a point near Sulieman Creek, where it would join the line running northwest and southeast (Queensland Government 1910:10129). A railway station to be called ‘Talganandah’36 was planned for this junction (Kerr 1990:125; QR 2/2/20). In 1915, the terminal of the northern line extension was at Duchess.37 By December of 1915 the terminal was at Butru with over one hundred men continuing work on the next section towards Carbine Creek. During the year 1915-1916, sub-artesian bores were sunk at Wills River, Garden, Carbine, Sulieman, and Jayah Creeks38 to facilitate the movement of stock to the railway. (Queensland Railway s1916.)

35 This part of the line was on the route of a direct line connecting Sydney to Darwin and had it been completed passengers from Sydney would have been able to travel overland to Darwin and then connect with fast steamers and reduced their travel time to Europe (Kerr 1990:123). The un-built northwest to southeast section of the Great Western Railway that was to run between Camooweal and Eromanga is a modified version of the Aboriginal trade and travel route on the Georgina, particularly between Camooweal and Boulia. Just as the Aboriginal trade and travel route relied on water sources, so too the railway, albeit of a different kind - bores that were put down at places like Dajarra to fill the steam engines that trucked cattle to the east, and bores out on the plains to walk the cattle in.

36 The name ‘Talganandah’ means ‘home camp’. (QR 2/2/20.)

37 Duchess was a mine township and supply centre. Camel teams transported goods from the Duchess railhead.

38 Jayah and other bores along the stock route are known as government bores. Some Dajarra men were employed to do the government ‘bore run’. This involved travelling along the stock route checking and maintaining the government bores.
In 1917, the line reached Carbine Creek and it was opened for ‘public traffic’ on the 16th of April of that year. Work on the Great Western Railway was suspended in 1917 although earth works continued on the section west of Carbine Creek until 1920. These works included cuttings alongside the Dajarra-Mt Isa road (still clearly visible) and the haulage of large timber beams that have sat beside Jayah Creek for over eighty years awaiting the construction of the railway bridge there. The terminal at Carbine Creek was the western most point of the line. (QR 1918:26; Kerr 1990:125.)

The township of Dajarra grew from what was initially the Carbine Creek railhead and railway construction camp. Queensland Railway took the name associated with a hill and Dreaming Place, the ‘Jarra Dreaming’, which is close to Carbine Creek and the railway line, as the name for the new terminus calling it ‘Dajarra’ (QR 1956; Davidson et al 1989:16). A relative of a railway employee named Hunt recalls the naming of Dajarra:

When Dad had finished sinking the bore at Dajarra, headquarters sent up word that he was to find a name for that place, as a construction camp was to be opened up there, so he asked an old abo [sic.] what that part of the country was called, and he, pointing to a low hill near by said that it was called “Djarrah” or look out, from the top of which they used to send up their smoke signals communicating as they did with other tribes miles and miles away. So when this information was sent down to Brisbane they named it Dajarra. (Hunt 1999:31.)

Whilst the Dajarra railhead had been relatively insignificant in terms of the proposed ‘Great Western Railway’, it quickly grew in significance as it was the western most point of the rail system in Queensland and as such it became the cattle-trucking centre for Northwest Queensland, the Northern Territory and the Kimberley. Some say that in its prime, Dajarra was the biggest cattle-trucking centre in Australia; others claim it was the biggest cattle-trucking centre in the southern hemisphere. (Memmott 1996:15.)

Within months of the railhead being opened, cattle were brought into Dajarra from the Northern Territory stations of Brunette, Alexandria, Lake Nash and Tobermorey and Queensland stations including; Herbertvale, Mount Guide, Ardmore, Headingly, Walgra, Roxborough, and Linda Downs (North Queensland Register 8/8/1917). In its first year of operation the Dajarra railhead surpassed Butru as the primary trucking centre in the west. Large numbers of cattle were trucked from western Queensland between 1914 and 1918 (this may have related to the demands of the First World War). The numbers of cattle trucked from Dajarra increased dramatically just prior to and during World War II, with 59 332 head of livestock trucked from Dajarra in 1944-1945. Large numbers of cattle and sheep continued to be trucked from Dajarra into the 1960s. (QR 1914:87; 1915:91; 1916:122; 1918:114; 1927:113; 1937:125; 1938:125; 1946:107; 1947:43; 111, 231, 235, 239; 1949:111; 1957:100; 1963:72.)

39 In contrast to the Queensland Railways Report of 1918 which gives the date for suspension of works as 1917, Kerr gives the date for suspension as 1920 (Kerr 1990:125). In 1920 it was believed that the line would continue to Moonah Ck and later in 1953 a review into the viability of continuing the line to Moonah Ck was carried out (Queensland Police 20/2/20; QR 3/2/53).
Dajarra also became a new supply centre for the stations to the west. In 1917 shops operated out of tents, a pub served meals and soothed dry and dusty throats, the mail coach, which had operated from Duchess, began to operate from Dajarra to Urandangi, and carriers took stores by wagon or packhorse to stations in the area including Rochedale and Oban. Afghan and Punjabi camel teams carried goods from the Dajarra railhead and Afghan traders visited Dajarra with their caravans of camels. Within two months of the line being opened the Cloncurry police described Dajarra as a ‘very busy centre’ requiring a police camp (Queensland Police 30/6/17). (Hunt 1999:31-32, 39-40; North Queensland Register, 8/8/1917; QR 1919; Lamond 1961:38.)

Dajarra operated as a tent city for many years. The first police constable arrived in 1919 with a framed tent for accommodation (Queensland Police 1919a, 1919b). The police remained under canvas for at least another ten years (Queensland Police 26/10/1929). A ‘provisional’ or ‘tent’ school opened in 1920 with 26 students attending (Queensland Education c1919; Queensland Education 1920-1967). In addition to the construction of railway infrastructure, such as yards, railway buildings etc, various other buildings were erected, such as stables, stores and dwellings. (Memmott 1996:15.)

The Alyawarr migration to Lake Nash

People can’t sit down in their own country. They might get shot. Gotta move. (Alyawarr man cited in Lyon and Parsons 1989:10.)

In response to pastoral incursions, large-scale migrations of Aboriginal people about the Queensland-Northern Territory border continued into the 1900s. The eastward migration of the Wakaya during the late 1890s and early 1900s was followed in the 1920s and 1930s by an eastward exodus of Alyawarr people from their country situated about the Sandover and Elkedra Rivers, and between the Wakaya Desert and the Davenport Ranges (Memmott et al 1988:63-67; Lyon & Parsons 1989:8). This exodus was in response to the actions of three notoriously brutal pastoralists, Henty, Riley and Kennedy who moved into Alyawarr country in the 1920s (Lyon & Parsons 1989:9). Some Alyawarr travelled across the Wakaya desert to the Ranken River and Soudan Station whilst others followed the Sandover River to the Georgina River and Lake Nash (Memmott in Lyon & Parsons 1989:9).

At Lake Nash the Alyawarr interacted with groups that had already experienced many years of oppression including the Warluwarra, Bularnu and Wakaya. They also interacted with the Wakaya at Soudan. In exile, the Alyawarr maintained their ceremonial life; they also learnt much

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40 There is a report of a trader known as ‘Otto Khan’ visiting Dajarra. According to Memmott Afghans worked between Dajarra and Hatches Creek mine (Northern Territory). Alyawarr worked with them transporting wolfram from the mine to the Dajarra railhead (approximately 500km) (Memmott 1985:60; Memmott et al 1988:98-199; Hunt 1999:39). Photographs in ‘The Queenslander’ show an Aboriginal worker with a large camel team (78 camels) leaving Urandangi with supplies for the wolfram fields (22/11/1918) and a ‘camel road’ from Urandangi along Gordon’s Creek (14/9/1918).

41 Some Dajarra people recall a sawmill that was located at the western end of Dajarra, for the cutting of railway sleepers. (See Queensland Police 6/6/1929.)
knowledge and ceremony of the Wakaya, Bularnu and Warluwarra. In time the Alyawarr became key knowledge holders or custodians of Wakaya business and were passed on responsibility for country around Lake Nash by a Warluwarra man named Pipakarinya. (Yallop 1969:192; Memmott et al 1988:113; Memmott in Lyon & Parsons 1989:12-13.)

The story of Pipakarinya is recalled by Tommy Turner (in Lyon & Parsons 1989:13):

Old people lived here, Ilperrelhelame, no shirt, no hat, no trousers, only boomerang, spear; he jump up Aboriginal...Warluwarra was old time tribe who lived here, wild time. They not shot; flu and cough kill them...Old man, old people called him Pipakarinya, his skin petyarre, was single man, never had kids, last of Warluwarra. That old man was friend of my father. That old man showed me everything. He tell me, ‘You take him my country. I finished. You take him; I got no one behind me.’ Old man Pipakarinya give me dreaming place, old man show me everything: rat dreaming, nyemale, fish irrpenge - he yellowbelly - and flying fox, antipere. All belong this place Ilperrelhelame.

‘The Isa’

As the Alyawarr fled to Lake Nash and Soudan, and as the Georgina River groups worked the Northwest Queensland cattle stations ‘under the Act’, large numbers of non-Aboriginal people travelled to Northwest Queensland to exploit silver-lead deposits that had been discovered in the ranges of the Northwest Highlands. These surface deposits were discovered in 1923 by Campbell Miles who named his lease Mt Isa after the West Australian goldfield Mt Ida. The township of Mt Isa soon followed. By 1929 a train line to Mt Isa from Duchess was completed and by 1931 large-scale production mining of silver and lead had commenced. During the Second World War, copper mining and smelting had commenced. The mine and township developed rapidly with an estimated population of 3000 by 1926, a population of 7430 by 1954 and 24,000 people by 1972. In time Mt Isa was to become the largest underground mine in Australia and one of the biggest producers of lead, silver, copper and zinc in the world. It also became the regional business, and service centre for Northwest Queensland eclipsing Cloncurry that formally had this role. (Blainey 1970; Brooks 1973:1-2, 4; Memmott 1996:20; MIM 2001.)

Queensland side - Territory side

The uncertainty attending the exact position of the frontier line between this colony and South Australia, coupled with the fact that the system of pastoral tenure is different in the one from that of the other, will inevitably tend to the prejudice of both Governments financially, unless steps are taken to mark the boundary. (Hodgkinson 1877:1.)

...all aboriginals who for time being are within Queensland Territory are aboriginals within the meaning of our Act. Whether they come from the Northern Territory of South Australia or not. (Roth 1901b:4.)

As non-Aboriginal miners flooded towards Mt Isa, the movements of Aboriginal people in the region continued to be monitored and controlled by the police. The ‘protectors’ were particularly interested in the movements of Aboriginal people across the Queensland - Northern Territory border. As Aboriginal people from the Northern Territory crossed the border they
became trapped in Queensland under successive Aboriginal Acts (Roth 1901b; Memmott et al 1988:88-91). Memmott observes:

> The regulations of the Queensland Act seemed to be far more rigorous than its N.T. counterpart. At the turn of the century, it was far easier for N.T. Aboriginal people to come into Queensland than for those settled in Queensland to get back into the N.T. (Memmott 1985:83.)

Wages for station workers were higher in Queensland than in the Northern Territory (Memmott 1985:83). The higher wages in Queensland, the nature of the Queensland Acts and the violence occurring on Northern Territory stations and comparatively stable contact relations on the Queensland stations all contributed to higher numbers of Aboriginal people crossing into Queensland from the Northern Territory than those crossing from Queensland into the Northern Territory (Roth 1901:2; Memmott et al 1988:88-93). Lamond recorded this eastward migration in the late 1940s:

> ... lately I’ve heard that many young bucks are coming in from the tribes in the desert. That would go to show the old people aren’t being wiped out altogether, and I’m glad of it. (Lamond 1948:21.)

During the 1900s the police carried out patrols to control Aboriginal movements and Aboriginal employment along the border. For example, in the 1920s police officers stationed at Lake Nash travelled south to the border stations of Tobermorey and Marqua via bores such as Moontah and Georgina tributaries such as Gordon’s, Kelly and Linda Creeks. Despite the patrols Aboriginal people continued to cross the border. Some Aboriginal people crossed into Queensland to escape these patrols. Others crossed between the Northern Territory and Queensland with droving teams. Some Aboriginal people may have crossed the border whilst working with Afghan camel teams that carried supplies west (Lamond 1961:40; N.T. Police 12/7/19-31/12/25).

There are accounts of Aboriginal people assisting Chinese immigrants to surreptitiously cross the border by guiding them down the Ranken and Georgina Rivers. The Chinese were travelling overland to the Queensland goldfields from Darwin to avoid the expensive fees they would encounter if they landed at a Queensland port. Numbers of these Chinese travellers worked and rested on the Georgina stations before continuing their journey east via either the Buckley River, Templeton River or Gidyea Creek. (Roth 1901b:3; The Bulletin 1894, Lamond 1953b:4.)

It was during this era under the government control of successive Aboriginal ‘Acts’, that the Queensland-Northern Territory border became significant for Aboriginal people. The enforcement of the border disrupted regional relationships between Aboriginal groups; it

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42 In 1901 Roth proposed a system of border patrols involving police stationed at Urandangi, Camooweal and Turn Off Lagoon (Roth 1901b:5-6).

43 In 1920 a Police border patrol reported Afghan camel men interacting with Aboriginal people at camps on Gordon’s Creek (N.T. Police 12/7/19-31/12/25).

44 According to Lamond Chinese workers built a number of dams on Georgina River cattle stations (Lamond 1953b:4). A number of limestone dam walls remain on the Georgina near Carandotta and close to Camooweal.
disrupted relationships within Aboriginal groups and it separated people from country on either side of the border. The enforcement of the Queensland-Northern Territory border was effectively an act of displacement. On the Queensland side of the border Aboriginal groups experienced intensive non-Aboriginal incursions and disruptions to place from the 1860s. In contrast, the Alyawarr who migrated to the border area at Lake Nash experienced intensive disruptions to place significantly later in the 1920s. This time differential has contributed to a difference in the nature and degree of disruptions on either side of the border. Thus Government actions and administration during this era, combined with different contact histories have contributed to a distinction made by Aboriginal people of the border region of ‘Queensland side’ and ‘Territory side’. The Territory side people are considered to retain more of their classical customary law and knowledge than those on the Queensland side who suffered the imposition of culture contact some decades earlier.

Nevertheless, from the time of the establishment of the Georgina River Cattle Stations in the late 1870s until the late 1960s and early 1970s, a period of almost 100 years, Warluwarra and other Georgina River people lived and worked on the cattle stations. Whilst Georgina River people experienced hardships during this era, they were able to maintain many of their relationships with places and country including ceremonial activity and the transmission of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next. Bush tucker was exploited, and bush tucker skills maintained. Many people were born in their country. Whilst living and working on stations such as Carandotta, people had continuing association and experiences at Jimberella and other places on the Georgina. The stations had occupied the waterholes; Aboriginal labour built the stations ‘up’, the droving routes of the pastoralists followed Aboriginal travel routes. The geography of cattle stations was a geography that Aboriginal people helped to create and maintain, a geography they continue to maintain.

4.4 FROM THE GEORGINA TO DAJARRA

Visiting the Dajarra railhead

Hunt’s recollection of the naming of Dajarra (discussed earlier) suggests, that when the Railway bore was sunk on Carbine Creek in 1916, there was an Aboriginal presence close to the Dajarra area. However, the same author suggests that Aboriginal people in the area were wary of contact with non-Aboriginal people and kept their distance from the one hundred or more railway workers at the Dajarra construction camp. (Hunt 1999:31, 40; QR 1919-1927.)

Despite Hunt’s recollection it is likely that Aboriginal people began to visit Dajarra soon after the establishment of the railway construction camp. Police records from Duchess (60km

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46 Aboriginal people were working the cattle stations around Dajarra and names of Aboriginal workers appear in the wages book for the Protector of Aborigines Duchess in 1917.
47 This wariness may have been the result of the violent encounters that had occurred in the area. The Wonomo conflict had occurred almost forty years earlier.
northeast of Dajarra) indicate that a number of Georgina River men and numbers of Yalanga and Kalkadoon people were working in the Duchess area in the early 1920s. Aboriginal people, including Georgina River people, are likely to have travelled to Dajarra with droving teams, from the time when the railhead was opened. The history of Aboriginal town camps in Queensland suggests that it is also possible that Aboriginal people may have established camps alongside the construction of the Dajarra railhead. Furthermore, it is also possible that Aboriginal people were employed in menial tasks at the Railway camp or by local businesses. (Protector of Aborigines, Duchess, 1923.)

From the Georgina to Dajarra

The early relationship (1917-1930s) between Aboriginal people and the township of Dajarra remains historically unclear. However, during the 1930s small numbers of Warluwarra people are known to have moved into Dajarra. In the same era there were significant numbers of Aboriginal people camped at Urandangi and on the cattle stations (De Satge in Rosser 1987:35; Queensland Police, 25/4/1937). The De Satge family was one of the first to move into Dajarra. Ruby De Satge describes the situation:

When my mum and dad came to Dajarra, there were no other [Aboriginal] people in here. They were scattered around on stations. Urandangi would have been the biggest town in those days. (Ruby De Satge in Rosser 1987:36.)

The Warluwarra who migrated to Dajarra camped on the western side of Carbine Creek at a place known as ‘the West End,’ that is, on the opposite side to the town proper (an Aboriginal Reserve, R. 25, was located in this area). At the West End, the De Satges built their own dwellings at a place known as ‘the Ridge’. Members of the De Satge family lived in self-constructed dwellings at the ‘the Ridge’ into the 1970s. A place on Carbine Creek, below ‘the Ridge’, became known as ‘De Satge’s Crossing’. During the 1930s Aboriginal children attended the Dajarra State Primary School (Queensland Education 1920-1967).

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s the Warluwarra and other Aboriginal people continued to move into Dajarra from Urandangi and the cattle stations. Some people recall that their families were ‘hunted’ into Dajarra to enforce the school attendance of their children. During the decade 1940-1950 the number of students at the Dajarra State School doubled. Many of the 57 students attending the school by 1950 were Aboriginal children (Queensland Education 1920-1967). Perhaps reflecting the steady migration to Dajarra, the numbers of school students at...
Dajarra increased during the 1950s to a maximum of 90 students in 1958 (Queensland Education 1920-1967). In keeping with assimilation ideologies of the time some teachers attempted to force Aboriginal children to repress aspects of their customary knowledge such as language. People recall that they were prohibited from speaking their language and were punished for doing so. Some people also remember the move into Dajarra and the commencement of school as the time when they began to lose some of their language skills.

The Warluwarra arriving at Dajarra joined other Warluwarra people already camped on ‘the Ridge’ and ‘Snake Gully’ at the West End. Within the Warluwarra camp people camped with their extended family. Within these family camps people located and built their own dwellings. The ‘West End’ was a Warluwarra/Georgina River environment. Other Aboriginal groups migrating to Dajarra became associated (and mutually identified) with other camping locations along Carbine Creek and on the edge of the township. Kalkadoon people were associated with a camp to the north of the Warluwarra near ‘The Junction’, the junction of Carbine and Anthony Creeks. The ‘Craigie mob’ camped further upstream on the east side of the Carbine and north of the town proper near a place called ‘Mullet Hole’. Some Pitta-Pitta people camped near ‘gidyea’ to the southwest of the Warluwarra. Two Aboriginal families moved into the town itself. The Marshall family lived in a timber and tin cottage built by Rowie Marshall (now known as ‘Emily’s House’ or ‘the Pine Trees’) and the Wilde family moved into an existing timber and tin house. (See Figure 4.25.)

During the 1940s and 1950s, some Warluwarra people were born at the West End and thus a new generation began their early childhood in Dajarra. At the same time others were born on cattle stations and at places along the Georgina (such as Walgra) and spent their early childhood in Dajarra, on the stations and at Urandangi. As people ‘grew up’ at the West End and around Dajarra, some of their older relatives including parents continued to work on the cattle stations and with drovers.

There was regular movement of Aboriginal people between Dajarra and the cattle stations. During breaks or at the end of a stint of work people would return to Dajarra and the West End and spend time with family before being sent off to work again. When people came into town for the Dajarra races they would camp at the West End and the Pensioner Camp. During school holidays some children would leave Dajarra to join their relatives on cattle stations. However, if they failed to return for the start of the school term the police would go out to the station and bring them back to Dajarra. On occasions nuclear families would return to the stations after residing in Dajarra for a period of time. Some people were made to work for businesses and

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53 Some teachers were notoriously violent for example in the mid-1940s a teacher was investigated for beating children with a hardwood rod. The same teacher was also investigated for (i) making children do manual labour for him, (ii) making children drink bore water instead of rain water, (iii) being absent from the school, and (iv) walking through the school grounds wrapped in a towel during lunch breaks. (Rossington 1946; Queensland Education 1946.)

54 A police inspector reported on the lack of available labour in Dajarra in the mid 1940s, “All men about Dajarra are working on stations or droving and there are no prospects of getting fencing done until after New Year” (Queensland Police 11/8/1944).
services in Dajarra such as the hotel and the Police. Not only did the Police control Aboriginal labour and ensure school attendance during this time, but they also continued to send Aboriginal people to east coast reserves. For example, in 1954 Fred Age and his family were sent to Palm Island from Dajarra (by train); they returned four years later.

During the 1950s and 1960s, as Dajarra developed as a centre for some Georgina River people, Urundangi continued as a residential and employment base for others. For example in 1963 there were 32 Aboriginal people permanently employed through the Urundangi Police Station (this number increased during the stock season) (Queensland Police 1963b). Throughout the 1950s and 1960s some Georgina River families continued to live on cattle stations as family groups (nuclear and extended family groups) and children were born along the Georgina.

The migration of Georgina River people to Dajarra culminated with the closure of the Urundangi Police Station in 1965 (Queensland Police, 16/3/1965). With this closure most of the responsibilities of the Urundangi Police Division were transferred to the Dajarra Police this included an area covering Urundangi, Carandotta, Walgra and Kallala Stations (Queensland Police, 16/3/1965). These responsibilities included acting as the ‘Protector of Aboriginals’ which involved the keeping of Aboriginal accounts, paying Aboriginal people, issuing employment permits, and controlling the lives of Aboriginal people in general. If people wanted their money they would now have to visit the Dajarra Police.

Station owners and managers, the Urundangi publican and others unsuccessfully opposed the closure of the Police station arguing the following reasons for its retention: (i) to control the influx of people at Urundangi during the droving season (Slater 8/2/65), (ii) to control the ‘large floating population’ of Aboriginal people (Slater 8/2/65), (iii) to prevent conflict that Grant (J.C Grant 1965) believed would occur between Northern Territory and Queensland Aboriginal groups when Northern Territory people came into Urundangi for a drinking spree at the pub, (iv) to keep ‘wayward’ drovers on the move (Hooker Pastoral Co.18/11/64), (v) to prevent the theft of cattle (Hooker Pastoral Co.18/11/64), and (vi) to send drunken stockmen back to work (Hooker Pastoral Co.18/11/64).

55 The Urundangi Police collected £2 366.19.2d in Aboriginal wages for that year in comparison to £3 521 collected by the Dajarra Police (Queensland Police 1963a, 1963b).
56 Memmott says this occurred in the 1950s but this appears to be erroneous (Memmott 1996:16).
57 The Police officer who closed the Urundangi station warned his seniors of possible irregularities in the records of Aboriginal payments: “Regarding the balance cards of aboriginals I wish to disclose that as far as it has been possible I have made all of the necessary entries. However there no doubt will be a number of foreign transactions…” (Queensland Police 1/3/1965.)
58 These petitions are close in sentiment to an 1895 petition by lessees, ratepayers and residents for a permanent Police presence at Urundangi to protect their interests (Petition by Lessees Ratepayers and Residents of Urundangi, circa 1895).
59 Grant (1965) defines the Northern Territory people as Aboriginal people from Tobermory, Manners Creek, Marquas, Lake Nash, Roxborough and Glenormiston stations; Roxborough and Glenormiston lie within Queensland. He defines the Queensland Aboriginal people as people from Carandotta, Walgra, Headingly, Ardmore, Kallala and Oban. Grant believed that conflict would arise from the Northern Territory men attempting to win the hearts of Queensland women. Grant was suggesting that the Police control social interactions between the Aboriginal groups of the Queensland-Northern Territory border who had a history of such interactions and intermarriage.
60 Hooker Pastoral Co. controlled Walgra Station to the south of Urundangi (Hooker Pastoral Co. 18/11/64).
61 See also Boulia Shire (18/ 12/ 64) and Hartig (18/12/64).
Although the transfer of Police responsibilities from Urandangi to Dajarra may have influenced additional migrations towards Dajarra, it is not the reason most cited by Dajarra Aboriginal people. Instead, they say that they were forced to move into Dajarra so that children would attend school. Between 1960 and 1965 there was a significant increase of students (54 additional students) at the school with 127 children attending the school in 1965 (Queensland Education 1920-1967). In 1963 there were 240 people in Dajarra, the highest proportion being Aboriginal people (Queensland Police 1963a.) In the 1960s people were travelling about the region working on cattle stations; they were also visiting other regional centres such as Boulia, Cloncurry and Mt Isa for employment and for social events such as the Mt Isa rodeo. Some Dajarra men worked on the construction of the Mt Isa-Dajarra Road and the Dajarra - Boulia road. Some people began to move to Mt Isa where jobs could be found with Mt Isa Mines, the Railway and the Mt Isa Council.

Those old blokes used to rattle the boomerangs up properly and the old women used to tap tobacco tins together. (pc KM 10/7/2000.)

As the West End developed as a residential base for the Georgina River people, it also emerged as a centre for the performance of Georgina River corroborees. These were performed ‘in the camp’ and near ‘the lagoons’ on Carbine Creek. Other Aboriginal people, including Kalkadoon and Yalanga people visited some of these corroborees and participated in them on occasions.

This migration to Dajarra followed a similar pattern throughout western Queensland, whereby Aboriginal people were forced onto country Aboriginal reserves adjacent to towns or on the fringes of towns. Here they were under the control of the local protectors, the police. From these reserves Aboriginal labour, via the police, could be supplied to and exploited by the cattle industry. (Anderson 1981:62; Memmott 1996:9.)

For the Warluwarra at the West End, Carbine Creek marked an important division, or ‘territorial dichotomy’, between town camp and town, between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal environments (see Section 7.2). This dichotomy was characterised by behavioural, spatial and physical differences. For example, The West End is located on the western fringe of Dajarra, in contrast the ‘the Aboriginal protectors’, the Police, were stationed on the eastern fringe of the township. Within the West End the camps were located according to social relationships. In contrast, the timber and tin houses in Dajarra were located on allotments within the rectilinear grid of the town plan. Whilst Warluwarra people interacted with the town itself, until the 1960s the West End was the centre of Aboriginal social life in Dajarra. (Memmott 1996:16.)

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62 A number of Georgina River men who started work with Mt Isa mines in the 1960s remained with the company for at least thirty years.
Moving into town - the cottages

In 1966 the Department of Aboriginal and Islanders’ Advancement (D.A.I.A.) commenced the construction of seven masonry cottages in town, that is, on the eastern side of Carbine Creek (see Figure 4.17). Perhaps reflecting the territorial dichotomy of town/ town camp, or Aboriginal/ non-Aboriginal environments, the row of houses known as ‘The Cottages’ were built at the western end of town, adjacent to Carbine Creek on an area that is flood prone whereas the camps at the West End were on high ground.63 In the late 1960s people from ‘The Pensioner camp’ and ‘the West End’ crossed the Carbine (moved into town) and occupied the new cottages. Others also moved into town and occupied some of the old timber and tin cottages. (‘Courier Mail’ 22/11/69; Memmott 1996:16; ‘North West Star’ 17/4 1970.)64

Coming in for school - from Urandangi to Dajarra

As people settled into ‘the Cottages’ in Dajarra, a large group of people were camped on the banks of the Georgina at Urandangi.65 The camp of approximately 80 people consisted of East Arrernte and Warluwarra people living in self-constructed dwellings or humpies. Some of these people had gathered at Urandangi following the Equal Wages ruling for Aboriginal stockmen in 1968, which resulted in many workers being sacked and their families evicted from cattle station camps in the Northern Territory (Kidd 1997:235-236). Some families had lived on these stations for many years and had strong relationships with the country the stations occupied. As there were no longer any school, police, or hospital facilities at Urandangi, the D.A.I.A. planned to move these people to Dajarra and Boulia. (‘Courier Mail’ 22/11/1969; Memmott 1996:16.)

At Dajarra acceptance of the aboriginals may be more feasible. There are seven brick cottages housing colored [sic] people… (‘Courier Mail’ 22/11/1969.)

This group of people was not entirely foreign to the Aboriginal population of Dajarra as the above report suggests. In fact members of this group were related to many of the Georgina River people who had already migrated to Dajarra. For example, ‘Walgra George’ and his children who were part of this migration had Warluwarra relatives already living at Dajarra. The D.A.I.A. prepared for the forced relocation of this group of 80 people by building four additional houses in Dajarra (North West Star 17/4/70). This migration from Urandangi took place in the early 1970s, once again, people who were children at the time recall that they were made to come into Dajarra for school. A report in 1976 suggests that by the mid-1970s, no Aboriginal people remained camped at Urandangi (Mount Isa Welfare Council 1976:2). (See Figures 4.18.)

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63 Some people remember this area being used as a ‘square up’ ground where disputes were resolved by customary fighting, prior to the construction of the cottages.
64 The land set aside as Aboriginal Reserve was also relocated into town. R.25 was no longer shown on maps and a new reserve R. 28, Reserve for the Benefit of the Aboriginal Inhabitants of the State was established in town and this is where the cottages were constructed. (See Anderson 1981: 101; QSA 1978.)
65 The camp was located between the ‘township’, that is ‘the pub’, and the Georgina.
Chapter 4: Between the Georgina and Dajarra

The West End in the 1970s and 1980s

As the Georgina River group that had occupied the West End for a number of decades moved into town, the group of people arriving from Urandangi in the 1970s occupied the West End and became the dominant group there. In 1970 it was estimated that 300 Aboriginal people were living at Dajarra (Clements in ‘North West Star’ 17/4/1970). In the same year 80 of the 84 school students at the Dajarra State School were Aboriginal children (Queensland Education 8/4/1970). (Memmott 1996:15-16.)

The territorial dichotomy that had existed between town and town camp, town and the West End, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal environments, now reflected two different Aboriginal social groupings, the earlier Aboriginal migrants who occupied the town and the later Aboriginal migrants who occupied the West End (Memmott 1996:16). These social distinctions are remembered by people who were children at the time, they remember ‘the West End’ kids doing things together such as playing along Carbine Creek and some people remember the ‘West End’ kids and ‘the Town kids’ fighting one another. These social groupings were also observed by the school administration:

Whilst the “Urandangi people” like to remain in a clique this aspect is used to promote learning. At the same time their assimilation with age peers is respected... (Queensland Education 4/6/1971.)

As with previous groups that occupied the West End this new group of people established camps and built ‘tin sheds’ or humpies within the domiciliary space of these camps. The Singh family and one of the Age families occupied existing timber ‘high houses’ at the West End. Like those before them, the families camped at the West End in the 1970s exploited bush tucker resources around Dajarra; people snuck up on kangaroos, children dug up ‘mungaroo’ near ‘the lagoons’ and people collected various bush fruits. Water was carted from the creek and clothes washed in soakages dug in the creek bed. At times people had to purchase drinking water. People crossed the Carbine and visited town where they purchased rations from the store and obtained monies from the police and children crossed the Carbine to attend the school.66 (Memmott 1996:16-17.)

By the mid 1970s, 17 houses or cottages had been built by the D.A.I.A. for the Aboriginal population of Dajarra, which was estimated at 250 people in 1976 (Mount Isa Welfare Council 1976:2-15). According to Memmott (1996:17) the West End Town camp was gone by the late 1970s. However, some people continued to live at the West End in self-built dwellings into the early 1980s at which time a building program was commenced to replace the last of these dwellings with architect-designed single-bedroom cottages. These cottages have an unusual roof form and became known as ‘the opera houses’ (see Figure 4.19).

66 Education Department records for Dajarra indicate that assimilation ideologies were prevalent amongst school administrators in the 1970s: “It was a most pleasant experience to spend such a day with dedicated teachers prepared to do, under real outback conditions, what is best for culturally deprived children. As their stated philosophy indicates, they are truly attempting to “bridge the gap which is at present in the home environment.”” (Queensland Education 8/4/1970; also see Queensland Education 4/6/1971.)
Jimberella Co-operative

In 1974 an Aboriginal housing co-operative was formed in Dajarra. The organisation was named ‘Jimberella Co-operative Society’ after ‘Jimberella’ on the Georgina River. The initial aim of the organisation was to provide appropriate and affordable housing to the Aboriginal community of Dajarra, but its role has expanded over time to provide a range of assistance and services to the community including the operation of a community owned store, the provision of transport, education and skills training, representation in land and cultural heritage issues, and cultural development. Since the organisation began, it has aspired to acquire land in order to develop community-owned enterprises. (Memmott 1974; Minniecon & Burke 1996:2.)

Employment in the 1970s and 1980s

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Northwest Queensland cattle industry remained an important source of employment for the Dajarra Aboriginal community. However, during these decades there was a gradual reduction in the Aboriginal labour force employed by the industry. There were a number of factors which contributed to this reduction including (i) a general reduction in the need for labour as a consequence of the introduction of mechanised means including the use of helicopters and motorbikes in mustering, (ii) droving teams were supplanted by the introduction of road trains and reliable roads, (iii) a system of accrediting skill levels was introduced, (iv) the introduction of award wages, and (v) the Aborigines Act 1971 freed Aboriginal people from the enforced labour system of previous Acts. The era when family groups or individuals developed a close working relationship with a particular station was virtually over. (Memmott 1996:15; Long in Memmott et al 1997: 26-28.)

During the 1970s and 1980s some Aboriginal people gained employment on the railway and worked as gangers or linesman. The families of these workers, including the Bismark and Costelloe families, occupied a row of railway cottages between the railway line and the highway (see Figure 4.20). However, the introduction of road trains also initiated the demise of Dajarra’s significance as a rail-trucking centre. By the 1970s the railway was in decline.

From Dajarra to the Georgina and Urundangi

Whilst Aboriginal relationships with country via the cattle industry changed during the 1970s and 1980s, a pattern of travel from Dajarra to the Georgina continued. From the time the West End was first occupied, that is from at least the 1930s, the Warluwarra, East Arrernte people and others returned to the Georgina and Urundangi to reunite with family members and visit country (see Section 4.3). Large groups of people returned to the Georgina during cattle station breaks and school holidays, particularly at Christmas time. People returned to Urundangi at times, for example for the race meetings. Others regularly travelled from Dajarra to the Georgina to go hunting and fishing during which time numerous places along the Georgina were visited.
During the 1970s and 1980s the Alyawarr from Lake Nash also frequently visited Urandangi and it was an important supply centre for them. In 1980, eight Alyawarr families moved from Lake Nash to Urandangi where they formed a camp of between 30 and 50 people at the Urandangi racetrack (Lyon & Parsons 1989:115-118; Queensland Police 17/9/1980; North West Star 13/11/1980). They had moved to Urandangi because the Lake Nash management had refused to sell them supplies from the station store, an intimidating gesture that they had repeatedly used in a long-running dispute with the Alyawarr. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the Alyawarr stockmen at Lake Nash had taken industrial action against the station over employment and living conditions. The dispute broadened in the 1970s and early 1980s as the pastoral company attempted to evict the Alyawarr who in turn fought for an excision on Lake Nash on which to build a permanent community. The development of this community called Alpurrurulam has contributed to the growth of an Alyawarr population that maintain strong identification with the Georgina, who see themselves as successors to estates and sites on the Georgina and who recognise people within their community as bosses for those places. (Lyon & Parsons 1989:56-157; Queensland Police 17/9/1980.)

It was reported that 30 people who were camped at Urandangi in 1980 wanted to live there permanently (‘North West Star’ 13/11/1980). It was not until 1984 that the small Marmany community had become formally established at Urandangi. The Marmany community is comprised of Warluwarra and Alyawarr people who maintain strong links with Lake Nash. Six houses and a hall were constructed for the community on a site approximately two kilometres from the township. (‘North West Star’ 23/9/1980, 30/9/1980; see also Moran & Burgen 2000:39.)

**Returning to country - going back over the border**

The *Queensland Aborigines Act 1971*, relaxed many of the oppressive controls of former Acts including the restrictions that had been placed on Aboriginal movements along the Queensland-Northern Territory border. A type of ‘cultural revival’ ensued whereby people began to travel over the border for return visits to their country in the Northern Territory. For example, in the 1970s a group of Wakaya who had been trapped within Queensland by that States Aboriginal Protection Acts, began visiting senior Alyawarr at Ammaroo and Lake Nash in the Northern Territory who had retained knowledge of Wakaya ceremonial business. These Wakaya received training from the Alyawarr in Wakaya Law. In the 1980s these Wakaya men commenced a land claim over their country; the training that the Alyawarr provided contributed to the land claim process. In 1980 one of these Wakaya men, Jack Punch (and his family), began efforts to establish an outstation at Wunara, a Wakaya place close to the Barkly Highway inside the Northern Territory. (Memmott et al 1988:190-192, 199-201.)

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67 In 1980 it was estimated that Urandangi had a floating population of between 25 and 100 Aboriginal people (North West Star 13/11/1980).
68 The Alyawarr had lived and worked on Lake Nash and maintained ceremonial responsibilities for the area since the 1920s. See Lyon and Parsons (1989) for a detailed account of the history of the Alyawarr fight for land at Lake Nash.
69 Jack Punch is remembered by his descendants as the man who ‘fought’ for their country.
Migrations to Mt Isa

Whilst the 1970s and 1980s saw people returning to the Northern Territory it was also a time when people began to migrate from Dajarra to Mt Isa. Some people stayed in Mt Isa for a period of time having travelled there to utilise services. For example, women travelled to Mt Isa to have their children at the Mt Isa Base Hospital. Others travelled to Mt Isa to seek out employment opportunities. In the 1970s the anthropologist Memmott described Mt Isa as:

... a regional centre for Aborigines living in north-west Queensland, and eastern parts of the Northern Territory. It is a centre of social attraction, a place where people from the surrounding small country towns go to see ‘the city bright lights’, the annual rodeo and enjoy the working class recreational facilities of the city. (Memmott 1973:1-2.)

Some Dajarra people stayed at the Aboriginal camping reserve at Mt Isa where Memmott observed distinct territorial spaces associated with different ‘hometown’ Aboriginal groups from Northwest Queensland. The ‘Dajarra mob’, ‘Boulia mob’, ‘Urandangi mob’, ‘Camooweal mob’, the ‘Mornington Islanders’, Burketown and Doomadgee people all had distinct territorial zones within the reserve. Others occupied D.A.I.A houses which, reflecting the policy of assimilation, were scattered throughout the Mt Isa suburbs. (Memmott 1979:435-443.)

Catching the last train

In 1988, just over seventy years after the railway bore was put down on Carbine Creek the railhead at Dajarra was obsolete. The railway that had been the genesis of the township of Dajarra was made redundant by the success of road trains and the line was closed. The Dajarra township had developed quickly from a large railway camp of predominantly non-Aboriginal people to a township with a majority Aboriginal population. The township had rapidly gained national significance being the biggest cattle-trucking centre in the nation, a vital centre for the cattle industry of northern Australia. For Aboriginal people, the township had developed from being a destination for a series of forced migrations from the west, to being a residential base, a ‘home’ for a number of Aboriginal groups including Warluwarra people and East Arrernte people, and more broadly the town had become one of the key centres of Northwest Queensland Aboriginal lifestyles. In 1988 Warluwarra and descendants of other Georgina River Groups joined non-Aboriginal people for the last train ride from Dajarra. (Campbell 1996a, 1996b.)

4.5. ‘WE LOVE THIS LAND OUR COUNTRY’

70 In 1945, the Queensland Commissioner for Railways had warned of the potential decline of rail transport in Queensland as a result of competition from alternative transport sources. (QR 1947b:5.)
End of the line - Dajarra in the 1990s

When I arrived at Dajarra in 1996 a railway gang, including a number of Dajarra men, had just completed the dismantling of the train line. The rails were ripped up and taken away, the sleepers burnt and the track graded. Although the railway earthworks and other railway infrastructure including the station building and water tanks remained, it was the end of the line at ‘the end of the line’. A few days after arriving at Dajarra I met Billy Dempsey who observed that the ‘white fellas’ had now stolen the railway just as they had stolen Aboriginal women and Aboriginal land and taken Aboriginal lives (see Figure 4.21). 71

During that first field trip to Dajarra, a building crew of Dajarra men was completing the construction of a new house at ‘the West End’, one of a number of new houses that had been constructed in the early 1990s (some of these workers had also dismantled the line). A second work gang was laying concrete footpaths near the Jimberella store. In contrast to the sharp decline in the population of rural and remote towns in many parts of Australia in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly following a decline in local industries, the size of the Dajarra Aboriginal population remained relatively stable. 72 During the 1990s, as the railway was being dismantled various improvements were made to the infrastructure of the township. Old town buildings were removed and replaced with new houses. Septic systems had been replaced with sewage lines and evaporative ponds. A community hall, ‘The Jimberella Hall’ (‘the new hall’) was built and opened by the elders of the Dajarra community in 1994. 73 Memmott (1996:15) had described Dajarra in the 1970s as “essentially the townscape of an elderly railway town past its prime”, in the 1990s although the activity of the railway had gone the Dajarra Aboriginal community remained and was concerned with the development and maintenance of their town.

The Jimberella cooperative is involved in decisions concerning changes affecting the Dajarra community, the Dajarra townscape and to some degree the surrounding area. However, just as Billy felt that the railway had been ‘stolen’, some Dajarra people feel that a number of critical decisions affecting the community remain out of the community’s control. A number of major decisions affecting the community fall within the control of the Cloncurry Shire Council, the local government authority for Dajarra. One example of this sometimes frustrating relationship for the Dajarra community is the lack of response to their urgent need for access to a reliable supply of good quality town water (see Koori Mail 5/9/01). The Cloncurry Shire Council has had difficulty in providing town water since at least the 1940s (see Irrigation and Water Supply Commissioner 23/8/54; WRG 1994:35). 74 During a water supply crisis in 2001 the community,

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71 See also Campbell 1996a, 1996b.
72 In contrast to ABS data, local estimates indicate the Dajarra Aboriginal population in the 1990s was close to the population of the 1960s and 1970s. (ABS 1994; 1997.)
73 The hall was opened by Emily Marshall, Dorothy Webster, Harry Spencer, Edward Major, Jack Punch, Biddy Punch, Alice Singh, Ruby De Satge. Amongst this group were people from more distant country who through a long association with Dajarra became recognized as Dajarra elders.
74 Some of the history of the town water supply: In 1935 the railway put down a bore for stock at Dajarra. In 1945 Cloncurry Shire Council put down a bore for the town, but the supply was insufficient. In 1950 and 1953 the Department of Irrigation and Water Supply drilled two bores at Dajarra but they were failures. In 1954 the Cloncurry
desperate for immediate action and critical of Cloncurry Shire’s inaction, issued a press release to draw attention to the ongoing health issues and other implications they faced as a result of the failed water supply. One Dajarra woman observed:

I remember collecting water from the Carbine River when I was a kid - and guess what? I am well in my fifties and still heading to the river, collecting water today. What a bloody joke. (Koori Mail 5/9/01.)

If one could take a ‘snap shot’ of activity in Dajarra in the late 1990s and early 2000s, what would they see? They might see people filling water drums at the bore on Carbine Creek when the town water fails. They are likely to see a number of groups of people in social interaction; perhaps a small group of people sitting in front of the store, one of the group might be staring out over the abandoned railway to whispers of clouds coming up over the hills in the direction of ‘the West End’; perhaps another group of people are sitting in a yard eating steamed kangaroo and pausing to watch a road train rumbling and rattling through town; and yet another small group of people in a different yard are sharing a beer and a yarn. They might see a car full of Dajarra men leaving the roadhouse, fuelled up, heading down the Boulia Rd and back to station work; another car is somewhere along the road on the return trip from a meeting in Mt Isa; a car in Dajarra slowly cruises down the street and pulls up at the front of a house, the driver waits for a person from the house to approach the car, “When are we going?” “To the River?” “Yeah, when are we going ?”, “Might be Saturday”, “Anyone coming?....”. They might see the Jimberella Store manager serving a pie and a can of soft drink to a worker on ‘smoko’, the next customer waiting with a shopping trolley of groceries; or the publican sitting at the southern end of his bar with the slow, blue haze of smoke from the fresh tobacco of a couple of young jackeroos in from Buckingham Downs. They might see the ‘pensioner bus’ pulling up in front of the high fence of the health clinic delivering passengers to their appointment with a visiting doctor. They might see a man and his dog leave the road verge for a pad that will take them ‘across the creek’. Another man, an elderly man, places a ‘boiler’ over a gidyea fire in his yard and returns to sit with his wife and daughter in afternoon shade. A Jimberella worker tends the garden at the hall, while inside, a local social security worker sends a facsimile to Mt Isa from one of the offices. They might see many of the children in school, some of them in a class taught by their aunty; a couple of young children (too young for school) are stragglng along the wide street to their grandmother’s house. Perhaps they see the policeman venture into the heat to shift the sprinkler on the station grass. A kite whistles overhead, sparrows twitter in the bushes, a couple of peacocks wait patiently for evening to cry ‘haw haw’, and a V8 engine sings out and issues a dense cloud of smoke as it is coaxed back into life by a ‘bush mechanic’ and his offsiders at the back of the cottages.

Shire Council asked Queensland Railway whether water from the railway bore could be supplied to residents. (Irrigation and Water Supply Commissioner 23/8/54.)
‘D - A - J - A - double R - A, that’s the place I’d rather be’
The above description provides a brief picture\(^{75}\) of some of the regular activities or patterns of
behaviour in which Dajarra people participate. It is an introduction to the individual and shared
life experiences people have had and continue to have in this town. This known and regular
lifestyle contributes to the strong attachment and identification that people have with Dajarra.
“D-A-J-A-double R-A, that’s the place I’d rather be”, are the words from a song written and
recorded by Dajarra men in the 1990s, sung with ‘box guitar’ around gidyea fires, played at
community ‘discos’ in Mt Isa, and played over the Mt Isa airwaves by Mob FM radio station.
“That’s the place I’d rather be” - the Dajarra population is comprised of a number of family
groups that form a core group of long-term Dajarra residents, yet the population of Dajarra is
also characterised by regional mobility with members of these core families migrating between
Dajarra and other regional centres, particularly Mt Isa. Some Dajarra people have migrated to
Mt Isa and are long term residents there yet continue to strongly identify with Dajarra. At times
distinctions are made between ‘Dajarra people’ and these ‘Mt Isa -Dajarra people’. In contrast
to Mt Isa, Dajarra is a town that is entirely dominated by Aboriginal behaviour patterns and
social relations. It is a town where relatives and friends can maintain close and intense social
relations. During my first trip to Dajarra a member of the Singh family said something like,
‘Dajarra is a good place because if you have no food, you can jump the fence, we are all
relations’. Although ‘jumping the fence’ isn’t always that easy as it is subject to the state of
complex and dynamic social relations. At times it may be impossible to ‘jump the fence,’ for
example following a recent fight, and although some people never cross certain fences (in the
case of long term disputes), this observation encapsulates a sense of the shared lifestyle that
family groups are able to maintain at Dajarra.\(^{76}\)

**Queensland side - Territory side**
The ‘snapshot’ above suggests something of the action at places and the action between places,
that is, the movement between places. One of the journeys that people continue to make is across
the Queensland/ Northern Territory border. Similarly from the west, from the Territory side,
people come in to Queensland, to Urandangi, Dajarra and Mt Isa, to visit relatives, to live in one
of these townships for a period of time, to go shopping in Mt Isa, to use medical and other
facilities in Mt Isa, to attend regional sporting events and to attend funerals. Aboriginal Law is
relatively strong in the Northern Territory. Ceremonial life is maintained and so too is
customary law including payback. Some Dajarra people express the perception that enforcers of
the Law, dangerous people, sometimes travel from the Territory side to enforce Law on the
Queensland side. From the Queensland side, people travel west to visit country, to visit relatives,
perhaps to live at outstations such as Wunara for a period of time. Some people travel to the
Territory side to participate in ceremony. Urandangi continues as a place of interaction between

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\(^{75}\) This brief introduction is bereft of some of the politics of social interaction. Dajarra people might also critique this
description for making the town seem more ‘lively’ than it is.

\(^{76}\) It is likely that Dajarra people reading this will find these last sentences amusing not the least because the phrase
‘jumping the fence’ is also used within the context of someone having a clandestine relationship with another person’s
partner.
the border Aboriginal groups. At the Urundangi rodeo people come from as far west as Harts Range and Alice Springs to interact with other Northern Territory groups and the Queensland people.

There is a fence-line along the border and stock grids marking places to cross. Since the 1970s Territory people and Queensland people can freely cross this line. At the same time Aboriginal people are aware of and maintain cultural differences that exist either side of the border. In certain circumstances these differences make border crossings more difficult. There are people who identify with either side of the border, and there are also those who identify with both sides of the border: ‘I worry for my country and I worry for Dajarra.’

**Teacher’s aides and Slashers Creek**

Whilst some of the cattle station lessees continue to make access to bush resources difficult, Dajarra people continue to visit cattle stations for work (see Figure 4.22). I was initially under the impression that very few people from Dajarra had had recent employment on cattle stations. However, over the period of my field studies, numbers of Dajarra men obtained work on various cattle stations in Northwest Queensland. Nonetheless the involvement of Dajarra people in the pastoral industry is far less intensive than it was in the 1970s and prior to the 1970s. Whereas older Dajarra people worked the Georgina River stations on Warluwarra country including Roxborough, Carandotta and Headingly and a number of eastern Northern Territory Stations, contemporary involvement in the pastoral industry has also involved stations to the east of the Georgina. This includes stations closer to Dajarra such as Ardmore, and Kallala, stations to the east of Dajarra such as Stanbroke and Devencourt, and stations further to the south such as Slashers Creek. Some men regularly return to particular stations, for example Georgie regularly returns to work at Slashers Creek, and others continue long-standing relationships between family groups and certain stations; for example members of the Major family continue to work on Kallala Station.

It is common for an individual to organise to go out to work on stations with a mate or in a small group. Young men often go out to stations for the first time with older relatives. A number of men have learnt work skills from older relatives in this way, and many have gained knowledge of places from older relatives whilst working with them. Thus one of the ways that Dajarra men gain shared experiences of place ‘out bush’ is through these periods of work together. In addition some men have acquired knowledge of archaeological sites, ‘places where the old people were’, whilst working on cattle stations, having found them while mustering on horseback.

In recent years there have been more employment opportunities in town, in Dajarra, than on cattle stations. One of the most regular employers of Dajarra people is the Dajarra State School. In contrast to the assimilation influences of earlier periods, Dajarra people are themselves now heavily involved in teaching classes and the school also promotes ‘cultural education’ including
visits to country. Other Dajarra people are employed by the recently introduced CDEP scheme, by the Cloncurry Shire Council, the health clinic and the Jimberella Co-operative. Ongoing aspirations of the community include formal training and skills development, long-term employment and the development of community-controlled enterprises.

Two new employment opportunities arose in the 1990s. The first of these was cultural heritage projects where people were employed as consultants on cultural heritage surveys and monitors on work area clearance programs. The largest of these projects was the Ballera to Mt Isa gas pipeline constructed by AGL in 1997. The second opportunity was the construction and subsequent operation of the Phosphate Hill mine at the Monument. Numerous Dajarra people have been employed on this project as maintenance, service and construction staff and heavy machinery operators.

Population focus on townships

A Dajarra elder, Henry, observed the consequences of a reduced Indigenous participation in the pastoral industry as I drove with him through one of the cattle stations— the country was no longer occupied by people. In contrast to the labour intensive days of the cattle industry when Aboriginal workers and their families were ‘all over the country’, a time when there was a good chance of encountering others during your travels, today people rarely encounter workers on cattle stations, particularly Aboriginal workers. Not only has the pastoral industry displaced Aboriginal people and removed them from country; it has also greatly reduced the numbers of station workers in general. To some extent, at least in the form of human occupation, the pastoral industry has also removed itself from the country; to some extent the country is empty of a permanent pastoral presence. For example, during the 1990s Carandotta, which was once a hub of pastoral employment was run by a caretaker/boreman; similarly Ardmore had a caretaker. Many of the small outstations such as Coona, Suva and Warwick have been closed. Thus large tracts of country that were once occupied by significant numbers of station people, including Warluwarra employees, only have small numbers of people permanently working and living on them. Today one is unlikely to encounter others when travelling on a cattle station.

The focus of the population on townships has implications on the types of experiences in place that children have. Dajarra children do not have the same opportunities to access places/country that their parents or grandparents had as children. Today, pastoral and mining interests attempt to prohibit Aboriginal people in Northwest Queensland from visiting certain places. They are also attempt to prohibit Aboriginal people from undertaking certain place-specific behaviour. One of the ways that children learn about places is by physically visiting them with elders and carrying out place-specific behaviour. Whereas older people learnt of many places on cattle stations by living at them or visiting them, many children learn of the same places by hearing about them. In comparison to the generations before them, Indigenous children in Northwest Queensland have physical access to a restricted repertoire of places. Yet at the same time they have greater opportunities and freedom to travel.
Are you coming out for ‘Dangi this year?"
A few days after I arrived in Dajarra, I attended Tracey’s 21st birthday party held at the ‘old hall’ (mentioned in the previous chapter). The party was attended by Dajarra people and people who had travelled to Dajarra from other places such as Mt Isa. The life of Dajarra people is punctuated by key social events such as birthday parties, anniversary celebrations and funerals. These are all social events in that they are attended by particular social groups.

The year is also punctuated by a series of regional events such as the Urandangi Rodeo: ‘Are you coming out for ‘Dangi rodeo this year Steve?’’ These regional events are an important part of the lifestyle of Dajarra people and more broadly a characteristic of the lifestyle of Northwest Queensland. These regional events are mostly sporting events that are simultaneously important social events - a time to catch up with friends and relatives; they are times of recreation. Regional events regularly attended by Dajarra people include; (i) professional rodeos (Mt Isa rodeo) and bush rodeos (Urandangi rodeo), (ii) horse races and camel races, (iii) ‘All Blacks’ football carnival, (iv) ‘All Blacks’ women’s softball carnival, (v) the Mt Isa and Cloncurry shows, (vi) children’s events such as the ‘Crock Eisteddfod’ and regional athletics carnival.

Seasonal climatic events also influence the lifestyle of Dajarra people. For example the short-lived wet season brings on bush fruits and green grasses. It is a time to collect fruits but a time when kangaroos are in poor condition and not usually taken. The seasonal rains make travel in the black soil country difficult and bush trips to places like the River are irregular. It is a time when local creeks (for example Carbine Creek) may flow and are fished, and a time when the local waterholes (for example Mullet Hole) are replenished and visited for swimming.

Other occurrences that influence the lifestyle of Dajarra people include the cattle season, or the work season on cattle stations, public holidays and school holidays. Holiday periods are significant periods for bush trips and for travel to distant places - visiting the east coast for example. There are other events at more regular intervals that have an influence on Dajarra lifestyles such as mail days and paydays. For example on mail days people visit the roadhouse, which is the postal agency, and on paydays the shop is the centre of activity in town.

Locked gates
The anthropologist Bradley (1998:125, 131) has observed that the Yanyuwa, despite their recent history of living inland and around Borroloola, continue to look north to their saltwater homelands. In a similar way Dajarra people mostly ‘look’ in a westerly direction to their homelands. Some Dajarra people are associated with groups that have successfully established small communities or outstations and won land claims in the eastern parts of the Northern Territory. Such settlements include Urlampe Outstation (south of Tobermorey Station), Wunara Outstation on the Barkly Tableland and the Alpurrurulam community whose land was excised.
from the Lake Nash pastoral lease. However, Dajarra people have experienced difficulty in realising their aspirations to acquire land and establish outstations within Queensland.

The Jimberella co-operative and members of the Dajarra community have aspired to acquire land and have moved to overcome restrictions to access places in the region. Conversely managers of cattle stations in the region continue to attempt to regulate Aboriginal access to the country and the types of activities that Aboriginal people wish to undertake. A number of cattle stations in the region have posted signs attempting to restrict access and activities.

In recent times people have had diverse relationships with cattle station managers. Some stations do tolerate access by Aboriginal people. For example people continue to access the Georgina River at Carandotta. Some stations simply request that people give them a courtesy call prior to visiting parts of the station. On the other hand there have been heated exchanges between some Dajarra people and certain station managers. At times the gates to some paddocks close to Dajarra have been locked by the stations to prevent access by Dajarra people. For some time this prevented access to a place of religious significance called Black Mountain (see Section 5.9).

The Jimberella co-operative has aspired to secure tenure of a small parcel of land on the Georgina River at ‘Jimberella’ (see Section 6.6); the parcel of land is called ‘Jimboola’ (on the 1:250 000 Glenormiston map sheet). Members of the co-operative hold a vision to transform the property into a type of community outstation. Such an outstation would be a place that people could visit or reside at for periods of time. It would be a focus of enterprise and skills development, cultural development, and employment. It would act as a base for employment on surrounding cattle stations. People also see that it could be used as a place to ‘get off the grog’ or a place to develop and maintain artistic skills.

At one stage the Co-operative had the support of ATSIC to purchase this property. The purchase was allegedly blocked by Government agencies on the basis of lack of access to water and restricted road access to the property. It was argued that the community would not have access to the Georgina River as Carandotta Station owned the land between the property and the River. Similarly it was argued that there was no access road into the property, as access to the property is through Carandotta land. Community members perceived this to be a veiled attempt at preventing Aboriginal ownership of land on the Georgina. They argue that Aboriginal people have accessed that waterhole for years, that the previous owners (including an Aboriginal man called Byron Nathan) had accessed the property and water without difficulty, and that others including drovers had used the land between the River and the property as a public stock route.

Dajarra people, and Warluwarra people living elsewhere, continue to visit the waterhole at Jimberella and the Jimboola Lease.
For many years Dajarra people had used the Dajarra town common for various purposes; to raise goats, to keep a few horses, and to access bush resources. However the common was eventually leased to Stanbrooke Station (now called Stradbroke Station). This action meant that people could no longer keep livestock; it also significantly reduced the places where people could easily access bush resources. Members of the Dajarra community aspire to have the town common lease turned over to the Jimberella Cooperative for use by the Dajarra community. The town common would facilitate community initiatives such as market gardens, it would also provide for future expansion of the town.

In 1997 the Warluwarra/ Georgina River people commenced their formal efforts to gain recognition of their Native Title Rights. Members of the Age family on behalf of Warluwarra people submitted an initial native title application (see Figure 4.24). It is ironic that just over 100 years after Roth succinctly asserted the limited rights of pastoralists and the ongoing rights of Aboriginal people that Aboriginal people have to engage in a lengthy and politically and emotionally difficult process to have their rights recognised. By 2005 the Warluwarra were yet to have their Native Title Rights recognised by the Queensland State government. However in the early 2000s Warluwarra/ Georgina River People and two stations on the Georgina River, Headingly and Thorner had developed good relationships and had reached agreements with them.

In 1998 Ardmore cattle station was made available for sale. Numerous Dajarra people have worked on Ardmore with some Dajarra families including the Dempsey’s and Punch’s having long associations with the station across several generations in the post-contact period. The Punch family once lived near the Ardmore woolshed. The Dempsey family, some of whom also worked at the woolshed, had their ‘main camp’ on Pigeon Creek. A number of Dajarra leaders were excited by the opportunity to purchase this property. Some saw an opportunity for family groups to establish small outstations or camps across the property in a similar fashion to the days when families lived and worked on Ardmore and other cattle stations. The Indigenous Land Corporation considered purchasing the property but would not take action until the issues of overlapping native title claims that affected the top part of the property were clarified. Some seven years later these overlapping claims remain unresolved. The struggle for land continues.

CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the geographical and historical environment in which Dajarra people’s everyday experience of place is embedded. The early conflict over the waterholes in Northwest Queensland illustrated the significance of the river systems to Aboriginal people and to the invading pastoralists. Although pastoralists introduced new types of people-environment

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77 Goats were raised as a source of milk.
60 The town is running out of house blocks, this was recently highlighted in 2003 when the Jimberella Cooperative struggled to obtain four sites in town for new houses. Some community leaders are keen to start planning for future expansion and want to consider small clusters of houses on the common.
interactions they basically adopted the geography of the Aboriginal people they attempted to displace, a relationship that is further explored in the following chapters. This early conflict illustrated Aboriginal efforts to resist non-Aboriginal attempts to control and modify Aboriginal people-environment interactions and efforts by Aboriginal groups to maintain places.

Evidence of the maintenance of customary people-environment interactions in the early contact period are provided by Roth’s description of the significance of the waterholes, artefact manufacture, travel and trade, and camps and ethno-architecture. These descriptions provide a basis to understand contemporary Aboriginal people-environment interactions - the maintenance of particular people-environment interactions, the transformation of people-environment interactions, and the development of new people-environment interactions.

This chapter introduced the paradoxical situation whereby cattle stations, supported by Government legislation (the protectionist Acts) and the Queensland Police, simultaneously disrupted Aboriginal people-environment interactions and yet through their heavy reliance on Aboriginal labour facilitated the ongoing maintenance of certain interactions. At the same time pastoralists with the assistance of Aboriginal workers built and established new places that are now fully embedded in the Aboriginal geography of Northwest Queensland. Understanding the role of the protectionist Acts in the Aboriginal experience and definition of the Queensland-Northern Territory border provides an important basis for developing an understanding of the cultural differences that occur amongst Aboriginal groups on ‘either side’ of the Queensland-Northern Territory border, and the Aboriginal significance that the border holds.

This chapter introduced the way that people can maintain strong associations with certain places such as the Georgina River and other homelands and at the same time develop strong, culturally specific, relationships with new places such as Dajarra (and surrounds). In so doing it reinforced the need to understand the dynamic nature of Aboriginal people-environment interactions. It also reinforced the need to understand the way outside forces can interrupt, disrupt, or transform people-environment interactions. The operations of the State education system and changes in the operations of the pastoral industry illustrated actions and events that those operating from the model of cultural heritage embedded in current legislation (or previous legislation) are likely to perceive as relatively innocuous, yet they have had significant impacts on Aboriginal relationships with places.

The last section of the chapter introduced the reader to some of the contemporary and everyday people-environment interactions of Dajarra people. Contemporary identification with places is often complex with individuals holding strong identification simultaneously with a range of diverse places. The ongoing efforts of Dajarra people to gain easier access to country, to gain recognition of traditional ownership and to gain ownership of land illustrated the strong desire and efforts of people to maintain relationship with particular places and to enjoy particular types
of people-environment interactions. At the same time Dajarra people were seen as active participants in the transformation of their environment, including the transformation of physical properties of place. These actions of place maintenance and place transformation are thus not always mutually exclusive and in some instances are one and the same.

This chapter has provided an overview of the geographical and historical context of Northwest Queensland, and in so doing it has introduced the complex and dynamic nature of the people-environment interactions of Dajarra people. From this position it is now possible to more fully consider and understand the people-environment interactions of Dajarra people described in the following Chapters.
Figure 4.1 Dajarra people visiting the graves at Wonomo Waterhole.

Figure 4.2 Roth's (1897) sketch of a fish netting technique.

Figure 4.3 Roth's (1897) sketch of an emu hunting technique.

Figure 4.4 Roth's (1897) sketches of the preparation of grass seeds.

Figure 4.5 Roth's (1897:149) sketches of shields called miring-or-a by the Warluwarra.

Figure 4.6 Roth (1897:142-146) observed both 'fluted' and 'hook' boomerangs made of gidyea. Both were covered in longitudinal fluting.

Figure 4.7 Roth's (1897:149) sketch of a distinctive type of woomera manufactured by the Warluwarra at Roxborough called yum-ma-ra. It was also used for mixing pituri which stained the timber a greenish-yellow colour.

Figure 4.8 Roth's (1897:183) sketch of a bark coolamon used for carrying babies. The coolamon was slung over the shoulder with twine. Some coolamon were cut from coolibah trees.
Figure 4.9 McCarthy's (1939:191) map of the transcontinental trade routes of Indigenous Australia. Figure 4.10 Roth's (1897:137) sketch of a message stick which invites people from the places represented to "... come to Boulia for blankets, or a corroboree." Note the sequential ordering of places on the Georgina River, such ordering is discussed in Chapter 7.

Figure 4.11 Roth's (1897:Plate XII) sketch of the interlocking forked sticks of the primary structure of the frame to cold and wet weather shelters.

Figure 4.12 Roth's (1897:Plate XII) sketch of the timber frame of wet and cold weather shelters.

Figure 4.13 Roth's (1897:Plate XII) sketch of a bough shade attached to the entrance of a domed shelter.

Figure 4.14 Roth's (1897:Plate XII) sketch of a tree used as the primary structure to a framed shelter in lieu of the interlocking forked sticks.
Figure 4.15 Coona woolshed on Carandotta.

Figure 4.16 The Punch brothers worked with drovers near Urundangi (photograph by Memmott c1980).

Figure 4.17 Keith Marshall, his sister Jacky and mother in front of 'The 1st Cottage', one of the houses built by the D.A.I.A. in the 1960s. (Photograph by Memmott c1974.)

Figure 4.18 Self-built camps on 'Snake Gully'. (Photograph by Memmott c1974.)

Figure 4.19 A self-built camp on 'The Ridge' incorporating a caravan and an attached bough shade. (Photograph by Lindsay Bond c1980.)

Figure 4.20 The railway cottages. (Photograph by Memmott c1974.)

Figure 4.21 A view west towards the terminus of the railway and the tank that refilled steam engines.

Figure 4.22 Dajarra men shift cattle in the stock camp at Pearces Bore, Stanroke.
Figure 4.23 Map of the Queensland railway network (Kerr)

Figure 4.24 Map of the boundary (blue line) of the Waluwarra/Georgina River Native Title Claim that incorporated the Northern Territory/Queensland border and pastoral boundaries in its description (NNTT 2003).
Figure 4.25 Map of Dajarra c1950:
(1) The Junction (location of camps),
(2) Dajarra Cemetery,
(3) Mt Isa Rd.,
(4) High House,
(5) Snake Gully (location of camps),
(6) The Ridge (location of camps),
(7) The Lagoons,
(8) Pad,
(9) Railway cottages,
(10) Railway Station,
(11) Police Station,
(12) Mullet Hole (upstream from this position),
(13) Marshall residence,
(14) Dajarra Primary School,
(15) Craigie Camp,
(16) Railway line to Butru & Duchess,
(17) Boulia Rd, (18) Lethem Ste,
(19) Mark St.,
(20) Matheson St.
Chapter 5
GIDYEA FIRE AND THE OLD PEOPLE: PLACES

The last chapter introduced a number of places within an historical and geographical overview of Northwest Queensland. Few of these places would conform to the archaeological model of cultural heritage discussed in Chapter 1. There is a need to develop an understanding of the range of places experienced by Aboriginal people and the diversity of people-environment interactions or properties of place that characterise them. In particular there is a need to understand the dynamic nature of places. This chapter examines the people-environment interactions of a preliminary selection of the places experienced by Dajarra people. The aim of the chapter is to examine the place properties of relatively small-scale places and the interactions that Dajarra people have with them. Later chapters return to further examine some of these places and their broader relationships.

The chapter explores places within the townships of Dajarra and Urandangi as well as places ‘out bush’. Examples of places of contemporary people-environment interactions are examined as well as those that are characterised or known by past people-environment interactions, or places with long histories of people-environment interactions. Malpas (1999:41) argues that place is to be understood through a process of journeying, sighting and resighting. The places described in this and following chapters are my attempts to understand Aboriginal places through a process that is similar to Malpas’s (1999:41) call for “a wide-ranging, criss-crossing set of journeys over the landscape at issue.” However, it is not possible to describe all of the places of the cultural landscape, in fact to claim to be able to do so would be negligent as they are too numerous and too diverse. Nor is it possible to claim that the places described are representative of all places as there will be places and place properties which fall outside of the description and analysis of this and following chapters. The places examined in this and following chapters must be viewed as an indication of the nature of the people-environment interactions of Dajarra people. The exploration of each place commences with a description of the place followed by a reflection on the properties of that place.

The chapter commences at Keith’s camp at Urandangi for the rodeo weekend, which provides an introductory and simple example of the people-environment interactions of place. Bush resource places that display minimal yet repetitive changes to their physical properties are then visited. We enter Keith’s yard to further examine the small-scale place properties of Aboriginal domiciliary environments. A stand of gidyea is then visited to illustrate the association of particular types of behaviour with particular places. The capture of a goanna then illustrates the association of a particular event with a place. An Aboriginal massacre site that is rarely visited yet widely known is described. The enactment of patterns of behaviour around the outside of places is then considered with the examples of a sacred site and the
house of a deceased person. Rainmaking places then illustrate the identification of people with particular places and natural phenomenon. An art site near Dajarra is visited to consider the enduring presence and experience of ‘old people’ in the environment. The interactions of Dajarra people with archaeological resources and dumps are then examined. A journey in search of Henry’s grandfathers grave, and a visit to Henry’s camp at the West End illustrate the association of memory and place. Finally, mental journeys between places are followed as we travel with Joe from Dajarra back to his Gulf Country.

5.1 KEITH’S CAMP AT URANDANGI

Ashes of gidyea coal

Keith woke as we pulled up in the Holden Commodore. Darmpy dropped me off and then headed back out along the tracks to the Dajarra Road, spinning the wheels as he turned back north towards the pub. Under the full moonlight, I got my swag out of the Jimberella bus, rolled it out parallel to the others and slept with my head in the same direction, to the east.

As I woke on dawn, Keith was standing by the fire of gidyea wood he had lit to the south of the swags; the others were still in their swags (see Figure 5.1). The wood had been collected the previous night on the way into Urandangi from a stand of gidyea near Thorner Homestead. Lying in my swag, on my stomach, I looked across the ground to the sun rising on the horizon. It was the first opportunity I had to appreciate Keith’s description of Urandangi; it is flat. Later, I was to learn that although the camping area at Urandangi may be described as ‘a flat’, ‘we were camped out on the flat’- this does not mean that it is dead flat. Rather, people identify gullies and ridges in this seemingly flat landscape.

Keith’s wife walked off towards the other camps to the west of the Dajarra Road. Keith boiled the billy and cooked steaks in a fry-pan placed on the gidyea coals. The Jimberella bus had been parked to the west of the swags; it was the only screen between this camp, the road, and the camps to the west. The closest of these camps was approximately two hundred metres distant. There were few trees or other objects to conceal the activities of the camp.

Keith had camped with his wife, teenage sons and nephew; they had slept on mattresses laid side by side on a large calico. They comprised a small family group with a visitor - me. The artefactual repertoire of the camp was minimal and included swags, eskies, cooking utensils, water drum and washing dish. Other camps were of a similar size but there were also larger and more complex camps consisting of greater numbers of people and higher densities of artifact properties.

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1 This stand of gidyea was frequently visited by Dajarra people travelling to camp at Urundangi.
2 The teacher at Urandangi in 1900 failed to cope with the ‘flat’ nature of the landscape and his isolation from the world he knew. He requested a transfer to “Darling Downs, high, or mountainous lands”, and his reasons included, “the complete and penitentiary like isolation of this place from the benefits of civilization.” (Caw 22/7/1900.)
Once everyone had ‘a feed’ and a ‘pint of tea’, we rolled up the swags, packed everything into the bus and headed off for the day. Evidence of the camp was provided by the remains of the fire, the bus tracks and an area where the activities of the camp had disturbed the crust of the black soil that had begun to crumble and break down into the infamous Urandangi dust.3

The packing up of the camp contrasted with other camps, which had more obvious elements that remained constant over the weekend such as windbreaks and parked vehicles. Although these camps seemed to have a greater level of permanency they too underwent transformation throughout the weekend, including transformations to physical and behavioural properties (these other camps are described in the next chapter).

We returned to the same place in the late evening of the same day. The swags were placed in a similar arrangement. Russell, Keith’s adult son, joined the camp and slept in the bus. The following morning we packed up the camp, visited various places throughout the day including the rodeo ground, then left Urandangi in the afternoon. The remaining physical properties of the camp consisted of traces of movement left behind in the Urandangi dust, the white ash of the gidyea fire and perhaps some discarded food scraps and tea leaves.

Where is the camp? - place properties
I travelled from Dajarra to the annual Urandangi rodeo with this family group over a number of years, they did not return to camp at this place, camping to the west of the Dajarra road instead. What evidence remained of the camp? The ashes of the gidyea fire most likely blew away in the Urandangi wind or mixed with the black soil, the tyre tracks and footprints were likely to have been transformed by cattle tracks and the successive wetting, drying and cracking of the black soil. This is a place where very minor changes to the physical environment occurred. Small amounts of material were deposited at the place and negligible physical elements were removed (perhaps a little Urandangi dust). It would be very difficult for an outsider visiting this place at a later date to know that this was the place of a camp. It would take a very clever archaeologist to discover Keith’s camp at the 1996 Urandangi rodeo. Despite the lack of physical evidence of this place there is always the potential that Keith or members of his family will, at some time in the future, return to camp there. There is the possibility that at some time in the future others will choose this particular camp and there is the possibility that others had camped there at some time in the past. Case studies in the next chapter illustrate the phenomenon of people, over time, using a number of known camping places at Urandangi.

3 Urandangi is exposed to winds that lift dust from surrounding black soil flats that have very little vegetation. Urandangi may have also received its notoriety for dust in the days when large droving teams passed through on their way down the Georgina or on their way to Dajarra.
A place can exist in a ‘dormant’ or ‘potential’ state with no obvious signs of human use (or previous use) for some time. This does not mean that the place is unchanging; people may continue to interact with such a place in a passive way by talking about or thinking about it. Furthermore, the environment is continually changing, with the actions of wind, rain, sun, animal and plant species contributing to physical changes of place properties. However, the properties that make it a place, such as the flat ground, distance from other camp locations and patterns of camping behaviour, are retained and known and the place can be ‘activated’ through physical use at any time. A case study later in this chapter will illustrate a place utilised at an interval of approximately twenty years or more.

It is also possible that no-one will camp at this place again. Thus the temporary articulation as a place through camping behaviour and changes to the physical environment is ended. Once again this does not mean that the place has ended. As we shall see in further case studies, places can be maintained through passive interaction in the form of mental operations, through remembering and identification with place- ‘that is where Keith and Eenie were camped in 1996’. People can gain and maintain identification with places with which they have had minimal interaction. In the next chapter we will visit another camp at Urandangi that is strongly identified with a particular family group.

There are a number of properties of time associated with Keith’s camp. Keith and his family were camped for the annual Urandangi rodeo, a regional sporting and social event within a calendar of such events. The place was used from the beginning of the rodeo weekend, Friday evening, until the end, Sunday. The time of place use was from the evening to the morning, a place of nocturnal and morning behaviour, the family moving to other places in and around Urandangi throughout the day. Time creates a set of boundaries to this place. But time also links or relates places, for example the Urandangi rodeo follows the Mt Isa Rodeo and is preceded by the Dajarra horse sports and rodeo. The time when the gymkhana commences, influences the time to leave the camp for the day.

We can view this place bounded in time, we can map the temporal limits of certain behaviour occurring within the camp such as cooking, eating and sleeping. The nearest camps were at least two hundred metres away; this distance created a degree of visual privacy but also an ability to observe some of the behaviour of those distant. On her walk to the other camps, when had Eenie left our camp and entered the others? It is not easy to give a definitive answer to this. The answer, I believe, is that there are many properties that create boundaries to place and these may or may not coincide. And, it is possible for people to interact with a place while in another.

Keith’s camp has interrelationships with many places. Through physical properties and actions the camp is interrelated with places such as the place where the firewood was collected. Through social interaction and shared identification, this camp is interrelated with
broader units of place such as the camps to the west of the road that comprise a greater place identified as the camp of ‘Dajarra’ and ‘Georgina River people’.

This temporary camp, just one of many Aboriginal camps at Urandangi throughout historical time, illustrates a range of the people-environment interactions of place: alterations to the physical environment, the enactment of behaviour and the association of knowledge properties. It also illustrates the dynamic nature of these interactions as discussed in Chapter 2: the articulation of place with activity; the mental focusing on a place; and the internal transformations of place. This camp illustrates that a place may be characterised by minimal transformations in the environment over short periods of time. There are further examples of places that are similarly characterised by short periods of physical interaction and minimal transformation including the ‘bush tucker’ places that Susan and other Dajarra people visit.

5.2 SUGAR BAG, CONKERBERRY AND BUSH MEDICINE

You’ve got to cut the tree

Susan and her son Danny came to pick me up at the Jimberella Hall in the late afternoon. They were taking me out to have a look at some ‘bush tucker’. We drove about the town to pick up her other son, William, then headed west on the Mt Isa Road. A few kilometres past the first grid, Susan pulled up at a place on Anthony Ck where there was a tree that she knew had a ‘sugar bag’. Susan had found the sugarbag on a previous visit to this place and had burnt a patch of grass by the roadside in order to relocate it. A week earlier Susan and a Dajarra elder had talked to me about sugar bag:

S- What do you call sugar bag?
D- Our place we call it nhuwurn- that’s sugar bag, the honey in the tree.
S- Not big bees, tiny bees.
D- You’ve got to cut the tree.
S- You don’t have to smoke out the bees like the big bees. You just see where the bees are going in and out [from the tree] and they just chop it out, that doesn’t harm them.
D- and they’ll patch over the hole again in the same place.
S- That’s what Harry’s got, that bees wax, that’s sugar bag wax.

The ‘sugar bag’, was in the hollow trunk of a river red gum that overhung the course sand and pebble bed of the dry creek. Susan encouraged me to climb the tree to listen to the soft “hum and buzz” of the bees inside the tree (see Roth 1897:93). The same tree was scarred from where Susan had previously cut out grubs and it was marked by small brown holes that indicated the presence of more grubs. On the creek bank behind this tree Susan showed me a turpentine bush that would also produce grubs if you dug around the roots.

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4 The Warluwarra word for ‘sugar bag’, or small native bees’ nest of honey, is nhuwurnu (Nancarrow 2002:10).
5 Roth (1897:93) recorded four methods of locating a ‘sugar bag’: (i) by locating the small dung pellets of the bees at the base of the tree, (ii) by observing the bees active about the tree, (iii) by placing ones head against a tree and listening for the buzz of the bees, and (iv) by locating a hollow tree.
6 The Warluwarra call the ‘coolibah grub’ mawu and the turpentine grub yindirkirri. (Nancarrow 2002:10.)
After a brief encounter with a snake that threatened Susan’s sons we left the creek and drove back towards town. We turned off before the grid and drove through the Dajarra dump (west of the West End) with its scatter of cars and rusting tins. Susan pointed out a bush orange tree on the edge of the dump and then drove over closer to the hills to a cluster of conkerberry7 bushes.

Susan told me to look for the small, ripe, black conkerberries. I couldn’t see any- I could only find green berries. Susan laughed – “There, look!” We picked and ate some berries. When Susan was a child and living at the West End with her extended family, her grandmother used to take her on walks to all of the bush tucker places west of the West End. Her grandmother used to tell her that when the conkerberry bush was “black with berries”, full of black berries, it was time to leave- she would say, “come on let’s go”. Her grandmother told her that a kadaitcha8 would sing more berries onto a bush so that people would stay there until he could get them.

On the way back through the dump, Susan pulled up beside a tree she called guyamarra, the Warluwarra term for dogwood (Alectryon oleifolius) - the green leaves of this tree are used to ‘smoke out’ houses after deaths (Nancarrow 2002:17). We then went to the hill near the cemetery for some bush medicine (caustic bush) growing on the southeast of the hill. William picked a stem and daubed the milky white sap that oozed from the broken end onto a cut on his foot (see Figure 5.2).9 We drove back across the Carbine and into town.

I returned to the same place on Anthony Ck looking for grubs with Susan, Sharon and a number of children in the winter of 1998 (see Figure 5.3). Susan frequently returns to this place when looking for grubs. Susan explained how she found grubs by either (i) looking for the grub’s ‘shit’, fine brown pellets, at the base of the tree, and then looking for their mark on the trunk or a branch, or (ii) by just looking for their mark on the tree. Susan showed me how to cut away the bark and wood to reveal the hollow track the grub creates inside the tree. Once Susan had uncovered the grub’s hollow she inserted a length of wire with a hooked end into the tube. She moved the wire hook up the tube until she felt it enter the grub and then carefully drew it out. The kids watched on and laughed as Susan instructed me through the process. On another occasion Georgie showed me how to make the hooked implement by stripping a fine, green, flexible twig from a branch, the point where it had joined the branch providing the hook end (see Figure 5.4).

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7 Milson (2000:2) lists the common name of this plant as ‘conkerberry’. Roth (1897:93) recorded a similar term, kung-ga-pe-ri, and an alternative yul-boong-go, both of which he attributes to the Mitakoodi. Was Roth hearing the common name for this bush fruit? Or, has the Mitakoodi term kung-ga-pe-ri become the common name for this bush fruit? And, if this is the case, has this Aboriginal term been transformed into an English word ‘conkerberry’. Or, has an English word been transformed into an Aboriginal word i.e. the relationship between ‘pa-ri’ and ‘berry’?

8 Susan had earlier explained something of the nature of kadaitcha including their ability to travel and signs of their presence.

9 Dajarra people also use this bush medicine to treat sores on horses.
The kids watched Susan cutting grubs, played in the creek bed and ate conkerberry that were taken from bushes lining the creek. A small piece of bark was used to hold the grubs as we walked along the creek looking for more. Further along the creek Susan found a discarded cardboard drink container; she ripped the top off and used this to hold the grubs. We headed back into town to Keith’s place where the grubs were cooked on the ashes of a gidyea fire that had been maintained throughout the day.

Susan, I was close to the snake! - place properties

Although these short trips with Susan were taken because she wanted to show me some of the places she visits for bush tucker, Susan and other Dajarra people undertake similar visits to these and other places to exploit bush tucker resources including bush fruits.10

A number of factors influence the timing of a visit to exploit bush tucker resources. Some places are visited for seasonal exploitation of resources. For example, Susan visits Anthony Ck in the cool wintertime for grubs, a particular time in the life cycle of the moth. Other bush tucker places are visited at different times of the year. For example many of the places where the bush fruits such as bush orange are found are visited later in the hotter and wetter months around Christmas when the fruits are out. Return trips are made to a place when it becomes known that certain resources are available.

Places are also visited when a particular bush tucker resource such as the caustic bush or guyamarra is needed or desired; the timing of the place visit corresponding to or following a related action or event, in this case injury and death respectively.

There are social factors that influence the time of visit, for example the presence of an outsider such as myself may influence the timing of a bush trip. Bush trips or visits to bush tucker places, particularly places containing bush fruits are often timed so that children can attend, they occur after school, during weekends and on school holidays (these are also times when working parents can get out bush). Some children undertake their own bush tucker trips on foot around Dajarra. The school also holds occasional classes on bush tucker and school trips sometimes involve the collection of bush foods.

Trips to bush tucker resource places are times of recreation, entertainment and food consumption for adults and children. They are also times of enculturation. Through instruction, observation and participation, children learn about places - where resources are to be found, when they are found and the techniques for exploiting them.

There are also economic factors that influence the timing of a visit. Having access to resources such as a vehicle and ‘a fuel price’ (money to purchase fuel) can affect the timing

10 The Warluwarra call bush fruits in general katu (Breen 1971:17), also spelt as gartu (Nancarrow 2002:17).
of a visit to a particular place. Bush fruits and grubs are not consumed in the same quantities that terrestrial game and fish are, but they are no less staples in the diet and food economy of the Dajarra people.

The duration of time spent at a resource place is dependant on a number of factors, including; (i) how plentiful the resource, (ii) the length of time needed to extract the resource (in the case of the medicine a very short period of time), (iii) the entertainment being had, (iv) the time of day, (v) observance of certain customs related to exploiting bush tucker, and (vi) other activities at that place.

People visit places with the sole intention of exploiting one particular bush tucker resource as in the visit to the conkerberry bush above. On other occasions they visit a place such as Anthony Ck that has a number of bush tucker resources. A visit to a bush tucker resource may coincide with a visit to a place for some other reason. For example, a visit to the ‘Duchess road axe quarry’ may also involve gathering the conkerberry there. Another example is a well-known emu apple tree on the roadside, which people visit on the drive between Dajarra and Mt Isa. Furthermore, a place may be visited for a range of reasons including to exploit bush tucker resources.

Common to the bush tucker places described above is the characteristic of people visiting these places and extracting a resource and then leaving, in some cases consuming the resource at that place but in other cases taking the resource elsewhere. Thus obvious changes to the physical environment occur as a result of these trips such as the depletion of conkerberries or other bush fruits, the cutting and scarring of trees whilst collecting grubs, and the addition of tyre tracks and foot prints on the ground. These changes may, in time, be interpreted by others. For example, on a visit to the bore on Carbine Creek, Georgie noticed scars on a number of trees at a consistently low height, and he observed that children had been cutting grubs there because of the height of the scars above the ground. This observation instigated an impromptu and successful search for grubs. Tyre tracks are regularly interpreted by people when travelling out bush.

The exploitation of plant species and grubs involves visiting known trees that are often part of a place or named place. The actual bush tucker place (such as the tree) is often unnamed and is known or named in relation to surrounding named places. Nonetheless people possess knowledge of the exact location of various bush tucker resources. Some of these places are known and visited by many people; conversely some places are frequented and known by certain people or families. It is possible to accurately map these resources, for example, one

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11 Some places are visited for very short periods of time. If there are no resources available people might move on to another place. Some places are visited briefly and from a distance, for example, people may regularly check on the condition of a bush fruit tree as they drive past it.

12 One Dajarra person joked that they speed up when they get near this place to avoid requests to pull over.
could take a GPS (global positioning system) reading of all the known bush orange trees and map them. In contrast in later chapters we will consider kangaroo hunting which occurs in a broader place context. People regularly gain additional knowledge of bush tucker places while travelling, for example, Georgie and Henry ‘found’ a large emu apple tree whilst searching for a grave site to the south of Dajarra.

Knowledge of places is also shared through discussion with others. Experiences at place associate people and place, and are then relived and shared through narration. For example, Susan tells others the story of the encounter we had with the snake on Anthony Creek. Whereas I was almost on top of the snake, Susan’s humorous version of the encounter (which she generously shares with those to whom she introduces me) has me throwing pebbles at the snake from a distance of ten metres!

**5.3 KEITH’S YARD**

**Gidyea fire**

In Dajarra domiciliary activities were predominantly externally orientated throughout the year, with the household ‘yard’ being the principal setting for family and social life. During the cold time of year, when the south winds blow, the northern, warm, sunny sides of houses,\(^\text{13}\) together with windbreaks and external fires, became the focus of these activities. We returned to such an environment in Keith’s yard with the grubs from Anthony Creek (see Figure 5.5).

Those Dajarra buildings constructed on concrete slabs on ground acted as a large windbreak by providing protection from cold winds on their northern sides. However, other buildings on stumps have been adapted to provide warm external windbreak spaces. In the case of low-set raised houses, such as Keith’s (the floor is approximately 1 metre above ground level), the south winds were blocked by the addition of sheets of recycled sheet metal (mostly corrugated) fixed between the house and the ground. This simple addition transforms part of the house into a large windbreak (see Figures 5.6-5.7).

At Keith’s house the windbreak area was located adjacent to the internal kitchen and living areas. The windbreak addition consists of two walls (approximately 1.5 metres high); the first was built against the northern elevation of the house and the second extends the line of the western elevation of the house by approximately two metres. Both walls were made of vertical sheets of recycled corrugated metal supported by a structure of metal ‘star pickets’ (fencing pickets) driven into the ground and horizontal timber rails (recycled timber). Below

\(^\text{13}\) Some house types have the back yard as the northern aspect while others have the front yard.
the stair and lapping behind the vertical sheets was a horizontal sheet of corrugated iron. The whole structure was tied together with fencing wire.\textsuperscript{14}

From 1996 until 1999 the author observed a fire consisting of a recycled cast iron stove to be located against the western wall of this windbreak space. Other types of windbreak protected hearths in Dajarra include: (i) fire on the ground, (ii) fire on a sheet of corrugated metal, (iii) fire in recycled metal drums including washing machine drums and cut down 44 gallon drums. A carpet mat covers part of the ground surface of this windbreak space.\textsuperscript{15} Ashes and coals from the fire fell onto the uncovered ground surface. Beds, chairs and other furniture were used in the space and were regularly re-arranged. Various items were stored in the space.

People occupying the same type of house as Keith have produced similar windbreak spaces. The obvious physical similarities of all of these residential settings are (i) the identical location of the windbreak area, and (ii) the closure of the space between the ground and house. However, there are differences in the physical characteristics of these windbreak spaces such as the nature of the structure.

Elsewhere in Dajarra, people have created windbreaks that are detached from the house (see Figure 5.8). At a number of houses where the north elevation is the street-front elevation, the residents have created a windbreak/fire area at the rear of the house against the southern boundary fence. In such cases, corrugated metal sheets have been attached to the rear fence.

The creation and use of these cold time spaces continues long standing patterns of behaviour and construction. A Dajarra elder, DW, described how ‘the old people’ camped on the Georgina during cold weather:

...when wintertime comes you make a big windbreak, while your talking the lingo, they were always talking the lingo, \textit{kantamata}\textsuperscript{16} - windbreak, \textit{mangali}\textsuperscript{17} - fire. Stoke the fire up, sit down now, talking, what we gonna do? One old fella says ‘take the dog to kill the kangaroo’. Old fella takes his dog out to kill the kangaroo, carrying his bag and some have a big coolamon to put the meat in, cook it out in the bush, bring it back to the old people. I used to see people do this.

Roth (1897:107) made this observation of windbreaks attached to enclosed shelters in Northwest Queensland in the late 1890s (see Figure 5.9):

\begin{itemize}
  \item\textsuperscript{14} Dajarra people use wire in numerous jointing applications within the domiciliary environment and elsewhere including on vehicles and tools. A common wire joint is referred to as a ‘cobb & co’ or ‘cobb & co twitch’.
  \item\textsuperscript{15} Other households in Dajarra also use carpet as a ground covering in external living environments and its use was observed elsewhere including in camps at Urandangi.
  \item\textsuperscript{16} I have employed Breen’s (1971:169) orthography for this word, as it is likely that I have incorrectly transcribed this word as ‘kunamatha’. According to Breen (1971:112) the Warluwarra word for humpy is \textit{kunma}.
  \item\textsuperscript{17} A Warluwarra person informed me the word fire is pronounced \textit{manjala}, Nancarrow (2002:8) give the term \textit{manjala}, and Breen (1971:118) gives the word \textit{ma^nala}.
\end{itemize}
Though the entrance of the hut is generally made on the side opposite to the quarter whence the prevailing winds rise, a “break-wind” is often constructed on one or both sides of the door-way so as to protect not only the fire itself but also the individuals who may choose to be squatting down in the open around it. The structure itself, the wul-lo-a or yung-ko is about 2 1/2 to 3 feet high, and composed of light leafy saplings fixed into the ground and intertwined with others and grasses placed crossways.

As the low rays of early morning winter sunlight pierce cold shadows someone is at work lighting the fire in Keith’s yard while a child stands by the fireplace shivering with their arms drawn inside their top. A few puffs on the fine, grey-white gidyea ash fails to reveal the small glowing embers that sometimes remain from a previous evening’s fire, which would have been stoked. Small pieces of gidyea are gathered from the wood heap and other dry fuel such as paper or cardboard from the bin. These are placed on the ashes, a small amount of diesel poured over the top and lit with a burning piece of paper.

The start to a morning around the gidyea fire at Keith’s often involved people making themselves a cup of tea from a pot sitting on the edge of the wood stove, or near the gas stove inside, and joining other household members around the fire. Some mornings people cooked toast on ‘netting’ placed over the open stove top as school age children were harassed into preparing for school and young children were periodically directed away from the immediate heat of the stove and ashes.

Dinner and supper\textsuperscript{18} meals such as corned meat or steamed kangaroo were regularly cooked on the gidyea fire. Other foods were also cooked on the wood stove, for example Susan cooked the grubs on the ashes and hot steel of the stove (once the grubs were cooked she pulled the head and tail off and added salt before eating them).\textsuperscript{19}

Gidyea wood is slow burning, it produces very hot coals that are long lasting and it produces very little smoke. A fire may be maintained by adjusting a single piece of wood over the coals so that it slowly burns away. The fire is also adjusted to prevent sticks and coals from falling out. At Keith’s (and other households), gidyea wood is stored close to the windbreak; sticks are broken into suitable lengths for the fire by smashing them against the ground.\textsuperscript{20} In contrast to Keith’s stove, which requires small pieces of gidyea, some people burn larger gidyea logs.\textsuperscript{21}

Once the morning warmed up people used other parts of the yard or moved onto other social settings. On very cold days the fire at Keith’s was stoked first thing in the morning and maintained into the evening. On these cold days various household members and visitors used

\textsuperscript{18} Dajarra people refer to the midday meal as dinner and the evening meal as supper.
\textsuperscript{19} Roth (1897:93) observed: “…the larger varieties [of grubs], found in trees,...are usually roasted, the heads not being eaten.”
\textsuperscript{20} People occupying the same house type as Keith have their wood heap located in the same place, that is, along the western fence-line and close to the fire.
\textsuperscript{21} People refer to ‘night logs’, a single gidyea log that will slowly burn throughout the night.
the windbreak area throughout the day, with the composition of this group continually changing as household members and visitors came and went. At one point in the day, the group may consist of women and children, a short time later it may consist of women and young men and later again someone sitting alone. Furniture and sitting positions are adjusted to suit changes in the social group and climate. There is also regular movement between the internal spaces of the house, such as the kitchen, and the windbreak space.

During a July field trip, when the southerly winds eased and the weather warmed up, people used shaded daytime spaces such as the southern side of houses and the gidyea fires were no longer maintained. As soon as the southerlies came up and the weather turned cold people returned to use sunny northern spaces throughout the day. This included warm sunny spaces in domiciliary environments and public spaces such as the shop front.

Daytime activities in the windbreak space included maintaining the fire, raking or sweeping the ground clear of ashes and litter, sitting and lying in the sun (warming up), sleeping, yarning, observing and commenting on the activities of others and listening to country and western music, including Slim Dusty’s track ‘By the Fire of a Gidyea Coal’.

One of the popular social activities in domiciliary environments is narration, ‘yarning’. Narratives were almost always place-based stories; are embedded in place. Narratives were based on individual and shared experiences, and included near and distant places such as stories of the experiences of young Dajarra people including some of Keith’s children, who visited Woorabinda. Narratives rely on and reinforce shared geographic knowledge. If someone were unfamiliar with a place in a narrative, it was often located in relation to familiar places or experiences. When narrating, it was common for the storyteller to include the audience as co-narrators who added to the description of place or events and confirmed the authenticity or veracity of the story. Through story telling place knowledge was shared and maintained.

At Keith’s place, in the cool time, people tended to spend the evening inside although some evenings or part of the evening were spent sitting around the fire. Sometimes fires were used during the morning and then rekindled in the evening. On other occasions, fires were lit and maintained just for an evening.

Continual adaptations and transformations of the physical and behavioural properties of external living environments such as these windbreak areas were made. There were seasonal adjustments, diurnal adjustments, adjustments for social reasons, response to changes in household numbers, and the creative responses of the ‘ethno-architects’ who on occasions invented new design approaches (see Sections 6.3 & 6.4).

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22 This often takes the form of a detailed description of travel between places.
Tell us a yarn - place properties

For the time being I have focused the reader’s attention on windbreak areas that are sub-units, or places, within the domiciliary environment. There are behavioural and physical properties as well as time properties that relate and distinguish the various places of the domiciliary environment. For example, the windbreak and wood heap were interrelated through the behaviour of selecting and trimming wood for the fire. Food was mainly prepared in the kitchen and eaten by the fire. The windbreak was one of a number of social spaces within the domiciliary space that were characterised by seasonal and diurnal usage. Thus the warmth of the fire and protection from cold winds contribute to the boundary properties of this place - if a person moved too far away from the fire or outside of the protection of the windbreak they would get cold. Conversely when this space was too warm people used other external and internal spaces. Stories by the fire of gidyea coals took people on journeys to other times and other places. In the following chapter, I discuss the interrelated nature of places within domiciliary environments in greater detail.

The creation of these windbreaks spaces is a process of transforming the physical environment of the house to suit long-standing behaviour patterns: “...stoke the fire, sit down now...”. Although the materials, context and construction of these windbreaks differ to Roth’s observations in the 1890s they represent the maintenance of building traditions: (i) the construction of windbreak walls with framed structures, (ii) the construction of windbreak spaces on the leeward side of, and adjacent to the opening of a fully enclosed shelter, and (iii) many windbreaks, particularly freestanding windbreaks are of the height range described by Roth 75-90cm. ‘Out bush’ people make windbreaks of bush materials that closely match Roth’s description.23

The transformation of the physical environment in the creation of the windbreak/ fire areas and the enactment of particular behaviour patterns in these areas is a form of personalisation. Very little has been written concerning the personalisation of community-owned houses by Aboriginal households. The notable exception is the work of Morel and Ross (1993:11-12). However they have misunderstood personalisation by limiting it to decorative elements such as curtains and gardens added to a house by occupants. They argue that whereas non-Aboriginal people spend time and money decorating their house to create an individual image as a way of gaining social status, Aboriginal people invest time and money in relationships with others, for it is through expenditure on other people rather than on oneself that one gains social status. They are wrong in two ways, (i) decorative features can be observed in Aboriginal households (see next chapter), and (ii) whilst people do invest time and money in maintaining social relationships, people also invest time and money in creating and

23 In addition to the windbreak areas, people have utilised the principles of the cold weather shelters that Roth thought were disappearing in other circumstances. For example, when caught out bush without blankets some people have dug shallow depressions and slept in them beside warming fires.
maintaining an individual expression in their domiciliary environments. Morel and Ross have over-simplified the notion of personalisation. Personalisation occurs in Dajarra domiciliary environments in numerous ways including, (i) through the addition of decorative elements, (ii) through the addition of ethno-architectural elements (e.g. self-built windbreaks), (iii) through the enactment of certain types of behaviour in a space (maintaining a gidyea fire), (iv) through the regular occupation of a space by certain groups of people, and (v) through the meanings attributed to a space.

Dajarra people were very aware of the difference between their domiciliary environment and that of their neighbour, they also commented on the difference between Dajarra domiciliary environments and those of other townships such as Boulia. For example, we find different physical expressions of a similar adaptation to the same house type giving each house an identity or personalization - Georgie’s place is different to Keith’s. Whilst there are similar standing patterns of behaviour at the various windbreaks of the houses studied, there are also differences which contribute to personalisation, for example Keith’s household cooked in the windbreak space, Georgie’s household did so less frequently.

The creation and maintenance of gidyea fires and windbreaks contributes to the social identity of ‘Dajarra people’. Whilst many Aboriginal families living in Mt Isa maintained an externally orientated domiciliary lifestyle, they did not use fires as regularly as Dajarra people. There is thus a difference in the external lifestyles in these two towns, which some ‘Dajarra people’ and ‘Mt Isa people’ have commented on. Some Dajarra people say that some Mt Isa people look down at them because they are ‘living in the ashes’.

In transforming the physical properties of generic house designs and enacting preferred patterns of domiciliary behaviour Dajarra people transform what is ostensibly non-Aboriginal architecture into Aboriginal architecture. Since the 1970s a number of researchers have been concerned with the negative impacts of generic, non-Aboriginal designs on Aboriginal societies (see Heppell 1979; Memmott 1988; Keys 1999). Yet, the windbreaks and gidyea fires in Dajarra suggest there is an equally important investigation concerning such houses and other non-Aboriginal buildings used by Aboriginal people: how have Aboriginal people creatively transformed such buildings into Aboriginal environments and Aboriginal architecture with particular reference to place and culture?

5.4 WHERE’S THE GIDYEA BOYS?

The right time for Gidyea gum

24 Aspirations for social status are unlikely to be the key driving force in the changes that people make to their domiciliary environments in Dajarra but it is equally difficult to argue that they are a key driving force amongst non-Aboriginal people as Moral and Ross suggest.

25 They have not been designed to meet the preferred lifestyle or spatial requirements of the occupants nor the climatic conditions they encounter.
It was winter and cold south winds were blowing when I went out with John, Fatty and Drew to get more firewood. As I backed out of the driveway I asked them which way to go. John asked, “where’s the gidyea boys?” “Go out to ‘the Gap’ Steve”. At the Gap we turned off the highway and followed a track north to a stand of gidyea. The boys went for the gidyea lying around on the ground and dead branches on standing trees. The wood was broken into sizes to fit into the back of the car using the technique of smashing the timber against the ground. Once the station wagon was loaded, we returned to town where the wood was placed on the wood heap in Keith’s yard. (See Figure 5.10.)

During an earlier winter in Dajarra, I overheard Susan ask one of the girls at the front of the Jimberella store if she was going out after gum that day and I asked Susan about this ‘gum’. Susan informed me that it was the gum from the black trees, the gidyea trees, and that people eat it. Later, another person described gidyea gum as the ‘main tucker for kids’. Susan said it was the right time for gidyea gum - it was August.

A few months later I went for a drive along the Duchess Rd with Keith, Eenie, her sister and a number of children. Keith would slow down to cruise past stands of gidyea along the roadside until finally some of the yellow gum was spotted. Dean ran off to retrieve the gum and we then motored on looking for more bush fruits. Rather than search for gum in this fashion, some people go out and cut trees to promote the production of the crystal-like sweet gum and return later to collect it. Gidyea gum is eaten like a toffee, it can be mixed with water to produce a ‘cordial’ and it has medicinal properties. (See Figure 5.11.)

Stands of gidyea were visited for a number of reasons including: (i) to collect firewood, (ii) to collect timber for artefact manufacture, e.g. boomerang manufacture, (iii) to collect gidyea gum, (iv) gidyea scrub was visited when hunting kangaroo and was a preferred butcher site, (v) gidyea leaves were used for the storage of meat and to flavour meat when cooking, (vi) gidyea leaves were burnt to repel insects, (vii) gidyea were used as shade trees when camping, (viii) gidyea wood was used in customary structures, (ix) to revisit people’s stock work experience, such as a stand of gidyea where a stock camp was situated, or where fence posts were cut. Gidyea sticks drawn from woodheaps were occasionally used in fights. Thus one occasionally hears the joking, or real, threat “I’ll get a gidyea stick for you”.

I’ll get a big gidyea stick for you – place properties
Stands of gidyea are known places within the cultural landscape of Northwest Queensland. Stands of gidyea are ‘known’ in that their location is known, and thus particular stands of

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26 Most yards in Dajarra have a gidyea wood heap. Those that don’t sometimes ‘borrow’ a few pieces of gidyea from a neighbour – especially late at night! Home and Community Care workers regularly collect gidyea wood for older people, ‘the pensioners’.

27 Gidyea gum is sometimes crystal like and brittle on the outside but gooey on the inside. When a piece of gum is broken off it often reveals a gooey gum inside the tree which can be extracted with ones finger. The colour of the gum indicates its sweetness; red gum is the most sour, white gum is the sweetest and yellow gum is in between.

28 Gidyea leaves have also been used in the preparation of pituri (Roth 1897:100).
gidyea will be visited. A case study later in this chapter will illustrate that stands of gidyea although mostly unnamed can be used as known places from which other places are located, they are places of orientation. For example, in the description of travel to a particular place someone might say: “there’s some gidyea on that side just before you get to the creek”.

Stands of gidyea are also ‘known’ because there are certain behavioural properties associated with them. Thus, they can be viewed as behaviour settings, that is, when gidyea are visited, particular patterns of behaviour are regularly carried out: hunting, collection of gum, extraction of firewood and timber, camping.

People also maintain knowledge of gidyea resources - gidyea are places of extraction. The physical environment is changed through the removal of timber, the cutting of trees, the promotion and removal of gum and the removal of leaves. When exploiting these resources, people use their knowledge of previous patterns of exploitation by others, for example it may be known that large volumes of firewood were taken from a particular place so it will not be visited when collecting firewood.

Gidyea stands are also places of deposition. When butchering kangaroo, the head, forearms, skin and occasionally the lower part of the rear legs were discarded around the base of the tree used for butchering.29 Thus the physical environment of gidyea scrub was changed through the addition of new materials and the extraction of other materials.

There are various time properties associated with stands of gidyea. Stands of gidyea were visited seasonally and wood for warming fires was collected in the cool time. Kangaroos were hunted in the cool, dry, times when the grasses have dried off and sweetened and butcher sites were visited accordingly. Gum was collected at the ‘right time,’ the hot time. Another characteristic of gidyea is the flowering of poisonous pods.30 These pods are lethal to cattle. The time of visit may be economic rather than seasonal, for example gidyea wood was collected for cooking fires all year round (but mostly in the cool time). People may drive through gidyea scrub, stop briefly to collect some gum, or stop for some time to butcher kangaroos. People camp at stands of gidyea trees for periods of time. Thus the duration of a visit to gidyea scrub varies.

Stands of gidyea have a degree of predictability and reliability about them. People have intimate knowledge of these environments; they know what they can obtain and do there. In contrast there exist types of people-environment interactions that are unpredictable.

29 A common pattern observed was for the head and forearms to be left at the base of the tree and the discarded rear leg thrown clear of tree.
30 The seeds, pods, fresh shoots and older leaves of Georgina gidyea contain fluoroacetate a poison commonly known as 1080 which is used by pastoralists to kill animals such as dingoes (Milson 2000:122).
5.5 FAT GOANNA

Chasing a goanna
We were camped on the Georgina upstream from Jimberella. Heading back to the boy’s camp at ‘the Clay Pan’ from the women’s camp at ‘the Watering Place’, Mark drove over to the River to check another fishing place. As we climbed off the ute, one of the boys spotted a goanna in a tree. Some of the boys began to throw rocks and short sticks at it as the men watched on and other boys waited down the embankment at the waters edge.31 A few of the rocks, clumps of dirt and sticks hit the goanna and it started to climb down the tree. One of the men attempted to capture it at the base of the tree but smashed his hand against the tree instead of its head - it escaped to the water. A second barrage of rocks and sticks from the boys sent it back to the bank where it was grabbed by the tail and knocked on the head. The whole episode had been accompanied by a lot of banter and laughter, particularly at the failed capture and missiles which failed to hit the target.

The goanna was placed in the back of the ute; we piled in and drove off back along the track towards the ‘Clay Pan’.

It was that fat – place properties
Although some places such as certain creeks are visited for the purpose of hunting goanna, goanna are often found whilst travelling, while moving through places or from one place to another. Thus, at the time of year when goanna are active, trips on roads and tracks are irregularly punctuated by the capture of goanna.

The hunting activity, the experience of capturing the goanna, the size of the goanna- ‘a real fat one’ - and the people involved, become associated with the time and place where it occurred; they become part of the memory of that place. For example, there is a tree on the Mt Isa Rd that is known as the place where the first goanna was caught on the first trip of the new ‘Jimberella bus’. In following years, Dajarra people travelling between Mt Isa and Dajarra on the Jimberella bus caught numerous goanna.

There are other types of activity or events, including food collection, which can occur almost anywhere. The event or activity becomes associated with the place of occurrence. For example, there are numerous places along roads where vehicle breakdowns and accidents have occurred - the place on the Mt Isa Rd where ‘Sharky’ lost a wheel which continued to roll down the road and still lies by the side of the road, or the place on the Duchess road where he had to camp overnight in the cold time without blankets following an incident with the car in which he was travelling.

31 Sticks were broken into short lengths of about 600mm.
While the boys were hunting the goanna on the River they were drawing on their knowledge of the reaction of goannas being attacked as well as knowledge of particular hunting techniques. The enactment of known forms of behaviour ‘randomly’ at a place contrasts with places such as gidyea, a known resource place, where regular patterns of behaviour can be observed. There is much activity at place that could be described as random. Although such activity is random, in the sense of timing and place where it is carried out, it often draws on a repertoire of knowledge and behaviour. Even the most regular of behaviours or the most consistent of place properties are accompanied by a degree of randomness that may consist of simply adapting to the particular circumstances encountered.

The banter that accompanied the goanna hunting made the event fun. However banter is also used as a way of teaching and correcting behaviour such as hunting techniques. This form of banter is different from ‘running someone down’, which involves treating aspects of a person’s character (such as their skills) with derision.

So far I have described places whose properties are characterized by human activity in them (which have people active in them). However, there are a number of places which are widely known yet people rarely enter or visit them (at least physically). One of these places is ‘Hangman’s Bend’.

5.6 HANGMAN’S BEND

The Hanging Tree

Hangman’s Bend is a place on the Georgina River where Georgina River people were massacred by the invading pastoralists and their protectors, the police. Although many Dajarra people know about this place few have visited it. Whereas some people know the exact location of this place, most know only of its general location on the Georgina. A Warluwarra elder described Hangman’s Bend thus:

D- ... They call it Hangman's Bend, you know why? From Roxborough side, old people used to live there, a lot of old people, camping ground, and they used to take their dogs, them real old people used to take, they used to go out with their dogs, sool their dogs on big calves, sool the dogs,
S- They used to have big dogs, they used to have big kangaroo dogs, big dogs they used to have, eh-those people.32
D- Yeah, big kangaroo dogs that days, not like this rubbish what we got, half dog. That days now, this Hangman's Bend, across the river, old people used to tell us about it, we use to swim across take the bullet across in the tubs, because they were killing cattle that belonged to the station, on that side of the river.
S- Sundown side.
D- Used to swim across tubs, take the bullets on, they were frightened too, ‘hey we shouldn’t do this, they might turn around and kill us’. They had to do it, that’s why they named that place now, Hangman's Bend, because they were hanging them. They used to go to that place from Walgra, but wouldn’t know where they go. It is the other side of the river. We went down there one day to have a look at this place. One old fella and his wife, Old Kachinda, he said, “I’ll take you down there and show you that tree where they was hanging old black fellas and shooting them down, because they were killing cattle, spearing bullocks”. We went down and had a look at this tree.

32 Roth (1897:100) describes the use of dogs in hunting kangaroo.
now, just a bank there, the river there, not tree like here, big tree too, that rope they were hanging
the black fellas - and that rope was still there. I don’t know what it’s like now, still there it must
be. And Old Kachinda took us down and he said, “This is the tree here, where the old time people
was hanging, and that’s why they call this place Hangman's Bend”. That days was sought of wild
you know, kill bullock, sool the dog on them, no rifle, they gotta do something to get their feed.

Another Warluwarra woman believed this massacre was retaliation for Aboriginal attacks
against the invaders: “... the white men took the black men’s wives and wouldn’t give them
back. The blacks attacked them over it. That’s what all the trouble was over.”(Ruby DeSatge
in Rosser 1987:29.)

Lamond (1953:19) recorded a version of these events, which lacks the respect that Dajarra
people express for this place:

The pastoralists and stockmen decided to give the blacks a lesson. After reading them a lesson,
they rounded them up on the flat out from the top end of Waukaba. A boy climbed the coolibah
and hung a wooden pulley block from one of its boughs. A rope was put through the pulley. Then
the fun commenced- and the blacks enjoyed it immensely until they found there was a sting in it.
One black put a noose around another’s neck; he hauled on the rope while the noosed one danced
on air. It brought gails of laughter...

After a while, and not too long a period, the blacks realized that there was no return ticket for the
fellow who was hanged. The mob broke and rushed to the safety of the waterhole. The whites, on
horseback, tried to hold them on camp. The blacks, or those who were not laid out under the
coolibah, dived into the water.

...the water at the top end of Waukaba was red that day. The whites used their muskets on the
black ducks in the water...(Lamond 1953:19.)

Dajarra people occasionally discuss the location of the still-standing tree used in the
massacres, ‘the hanging tree’. According to Rosser the crossbar used in the massacres was
still hanging from the tree in the late 1970s (Rosser 1987:123). In the 1990s, some people
claim to have seen the chain used at the hanging tree and other physical evidence of the
hangings. However, Lamond (1953:19) claims to have taken the pulley system used in the
hangings (at a time when he was the manager of Carandotta). The answer to the seemingly
conflicting stories is that there may have been more than one hanging tree on the Georgina.

In contrast to a concern with the physical evidence of ‘the hanging tree’, some people say that
you can hear and feel ‘the old people’ at Hangman’s Bend.

**Where is that place supposed to be? – Place properties**

Amongst Dajarra people, there is a range of knowledge concerning Hangman’s Bend - from
people who have visited it, to children who do not yet know about it. This is an example of a
place where the physical location, or the physical properties of a place, does not necessarily
have to be known or experienced by all for the place to remain significant (and known)
amongst a group of people. Through the transference of knowledge properties, through oral

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33 Lamond claims to have sent the crossbar “with its history, to C.J. Brabazon, my old boss, then of Elderslie Station,
Winton (W.Q). He had a remarkable collection of aboriginal curios.” Lamond also claims to have found the bent barrel of a
muzzle-loader rifle at this place. (Lamond 1953:19.)
histories, Georgina River people have maintained this place. The maintenance of place occurs through passive interaction. Yet at the same time, some people have expressed a desire to protect this place from disturbance and to maintain the place from unwanted physical change. There is likely to be a number of Djarra people who would not visit this place because of the energies and spirits that may be encountered there. This powerful place is believed to be maintained by the spirits of the ‘old people’ who died there. A disturbance of the physical properties of place would constitute a disturbance of the spiritual properties of the place, a disturbance of the ‘old people’.

It is possible that there are numerous places where Georgina River people experienced violent acts, so why is it that particular places such as this and the other hanging place on Moonah Ck are maintained through oral history? Perhaps as a result of the intensity and scale of violence that occurred at these places, they act as synecdoches for the violent displacements of contact history.

5.7 PEOPLE AREN’T SUPPOSED TO GO THERE

The Two Sisters
There are other places that people know of but few (if any) have visited, including some of the numerous story places near Dajarra and on the Georgina River. One of the Warluwarra places near Dajarra is known as ‘the Two Sisters’. This is one of many places visited by particular Ancestral Beings in their travels. At this place Ancestral Beings interacted with each other and the environment, thereby creating transformations in the physical environment and depositing powerful energies. This place contains physical evidence of these events and energies in the form of unique hills.

Most, if not all, Dajarra people know the location of this place. The hills are visible from great distances and roads pass relatively close, so that Dajarra people regularly see this place during their travels. However, it is also widely known that this is a dangerous and powerful place. People know that you are not supposed to enter this place or disturb it. Although people will talk about this place, and freely and regularly travel around this place, they know that if they enter or disturb it in some way, they will get sick and go blind. This area has been of interest to geologists for its mining/economic potential (see Shergold & Southgate 1986:10-12). However, people recall the sickness of a man from Mt Isa who dug around this place as evidence that even ‘white men’ will get sick if they disturb this place.

Some people possess more detailed knowledge of the properties of this place and assert their status as ‘bosses’ for this place. These people claim responsibility for maintaining knowledge.

34 Veth (2003:6) observes that massacre sites are well described in oral histories yet the specific place where the deaths occurred are often not visited, people practice avoidance behaviour in respect to such places.
about this place, particularly knowledge of the interactions of Ancestral Beings with this place and the travels of the Ancestral Beings from this place to other places.

**Even white man will get sick**

Two Sisters is a place characterised by the actions and interactions of Ancestral Beings and the presence of their powerful energies within it. It is simultaneously characterised by human activity (avoidance) that occurs in relation to the place but outside of it - people do not physically enter the place, they only make mental connections with it. The place is characterised by human behaviour around it rather than within it. While spiritual beings are active in this place, the nature of the place is that there are restrictions on human activity within it. This represents a standing pattern of behaviour around a place. How close can one go to this place? Most people rarely travel close to this place. On the only occasion I came close to this place with Warluwarra people they expressed various levels of discomfort in how close they would get it. Those of the group that moved closest to the place later felt ‘sick’ which was interpreted as evidence that they had gone too far. This place is maintained by an absence of human action within it and by people continuing to interact with it from a distance by looking at it, and talking and thinking about it.

**Household response to death**

Another example where patterns of behaviour occur around rather than within a place is the behavioural response to the death of a household member. In Dajarra when someone dies other members of the household usually vacate the residence for a period of time. During this time they stay with relatives in Dajarra or elsewhere. Eventually the household may move into another residence in town. When this occurs the vacated house is usually later occupied by a different family or household group. The time that the house is left unoccupied varies. Sometimes the original household group reoccupies the house. Reoccupation is sometimes accompanied by smoking and or cleaning of the house.

Whilst the house is vacated, Dajarra people will not enter the house or yard. The standing patterns of behaviour associated with the house are discontinued, they are replaced by a pattern of behaviour of moving passed the house and of not entering the house. This takes place in combination with other mourning customs such as not using the name of the recently deceased or talking about the deceased. After some time, the patterns of behaviour may be re-established with the return of the original household and/or new patterns of behaviour may be established at the house with a new household.

**Proximate behaviour – place properties**

In this last example, people cease patterns of behaviour within a place; they move away from the place and no longer enter the place. The internal transformations of the place are suspended or ceased for a period of time. Instead, people establish patterns of behaviour about the place; they move passed it and avoid it. The place is articulated with activity- but
activity that occurs outside it. In contrast to the previous example (the hanging tree) people also avoid talking about the place and in particular they avoid talking about the person associated with the place. People suspend or change their passive interactions with the place, that is, they alter their mental attention on the place.

To date, place theory, particularly behaviour setting theory has only considered behaviour that takes place within a bounded setting. Behaviour setting theory does not accommodate cases such as this where standing patterns of behaviour occur around the outside of a place/setting. These examples illustrate patterns of behaviour that are established in relation to, but outside of a place. Where patterns of behaviour outside of a place have an interdependent relationship with that place we may think of them as ‘proximate behaviour patterns of place’. It is the behaviour that occurs outside of a place that contributes to the definition of that place. Proximate behaviour patterns, are ‘close’ to a place; they may also follow a cycle or chain of events associated with a place. Collecting gidyea firewood can be thought of as a form of proximate behaviour associated with the windbreak area of Keith’s house. The most extreme forms of proximate behaviour patterns are to be found in Aboriginal avoidance of places.

5.8 RAINMAKERS

Changing place - making rain

People can interact with a place whilst outside of it; they can also interact with environmental phenomena such as rain. In Northwest Queensland there are a number of places that are identified as ‘Rain Dreaming’ places, or ‘Rain Story’ places. Various rain phenomena including clouds and animal species associated with rain are identified with these places. At such places, Ancestral Beings interacted with the environment and with each other and certain transformative processes occurred. For example, sky phenomena transformed into terrestrial phenomena at one place. Signs of these interactions remain in the physical environment in the form of landscape features including depressions, trees, rocks and outcrops, caves and waterholes.

Certain people are identified with particular Rain Story places. For example, there are people who have bush names with meanings associated with rain phenomena. There are also people who are identified as ‘bosses’ for particular Rain Story places and ceremonies; they maintain knowledge of these places, and they are identified as rainmakers. Through the use of certain objects, songs and through particular actions these people can interact with and influence rain, they can bring rain on, and they can also stop rain.

A century earlier, Roth (1897:167-168) documented a number of rainmaking ceremonies in Northwest Queensland including the following one at Roxborough Station on the Georgina River:
At Roxburgh, a piece of white stone, a kind of quartz-crystal, the rain-stone obtained from somewhere out in the ranges, is crushed and hammered into powder. Some very straight stemmed tree is chosen—generally a blood wood tree with the butt for a long way up free from branches—and saplings from 15 to 20 feet in length are ranged all round it in the form of a bell tent, forming a sort of shed. Outside, in front of this erection, a small space of ground is cleared, a portion scooped out, and some water placed in it. The men, having been previously collected within the shed, now come out, and, dancing and singing all around the artificial waterhole, break out with the sounds and imitate the antics of various aquatic birds and animals, such as ducks, frogs, &c. All this time the women are encamped at from about 20 to 25 yards away. The men next form themselves into a long string, Indian file, one behind the other, and gradually encircle the gins, over whom they throw the crushed and pulverised stone. The women simultaneously hold koolamons, shields, pieces of bark, &c., over their heads, and “gammon” that they are protecting themselves from a heavy downpour of rain. (Roth 1897:168.)

Roth added a caveat to his description of rainmaking in Northwest Queensland that displays his scepticism of the rainmaker’s abilities to alter environmental conditions:

> It is true, when all is said and done, that as a rule rain generally follows upon these performances, but then it must be remembered that the rain corroboree is only held at certain seasons of the year, when to the elders, i.e., the more experienced, the clearer-witted, the various atmospheric phenomena afford a likely indication of its advent. (Roth 1897:168.)

‘When you see that pretty thing in the sky- that is me’ – Place properties

Roth’s scepticism is characteristic of the continuing failure of non-Aboriginal observers, operating from a framework of western science, to understand and accept Aboriginal religions and Aboriginal people-environment interactions. To the western observer the natural world operates according to laws of natural science and is not influenced by humans. This is a dichotomous view of the world where humans are separate from the ‘natural’ world. The Aboriginal ‘natural’ world is believed to be created by the actions of Ancestral Beings and as such is humanised. The Aboriginal ‘natural’ world can, and is, altered by human action. (See Memmott & Long 2002:43.)

Georgina River people do not just influence a particular natural phenomenon, they believe that they are that phenomenon, that is, certain people do not identify themselves with ‘natural’ phenomenon but as that phenomenon. This is illustrated by a man who expressed his rain identity in this way: ‘When you see that pretty thing in the sky [a rainbow] - that is me.’ Identification with rain phenomena gives people a relationship with particular places but also with the phenomena more broadly— for example, the man above is associated with places on the Georgina River but he can also see himself in the sky above Mt Isa.

5.9 BLACK MOUNTAIN

Have you been out there?

Just as people see evidence of their identity in the environment, they also see and interpret evidence of their ancestors, ‘the old people’ at places such as Black Mountain (see Figure

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35 In interviews with Warluwarra people the author has heard descriptions of ceremonial structures similar to that described by Roth, for example one man described the Rain Ceremony structure, as ‘tepee’ like.
5.12). On my second afternoon in Dajarra, while I was sitting next to Russell under Georgie’s carport, he described Black Mountain, a place to the north of Dajarra, which contains numerous artworks pecked into the rock face of a tall gorge. Russell planned to borrow the community four-wheel-drive ute so that he could take me out and show me this place.

In the next few weeks, others also told me of Black Mountain and expressed their desire to show me this place. One man told me that when you lie on your back and close your eyes at Black Mountain, you can hear the old people. People told me of other places in Northwest Queensland where they or others have experienced the same phenomenon of ‘hearing’ the old people - the sounds of people laughing and swimming in waterholes, the sounds of people talking and singing, and the sounds of people crying.36

Others described the tall cliffs and expressed their amazement at how the old people had managed to work the rock surfaces so high up. Although Murray believed there was a simple answer - they had assembled sticks as a type of formwork.

Black Mountain is one of four places identified by government cultural heritage officers as ‘archaeological places,’ that are ‘popular’ amongst Dajarra people. One of these places, the Jarra Dreaming site, or Pinnacle Hill, lies very close to the town. Although there are other places where traces of the activities of the old people can be seen, these four places are the most widely known. For many years37 Dajarra people have taken visitors to Dajarra, such as myself, to these places. Dajarra school children and visiting school children are occasionally taken to these places. (See Figure 5.13.)

At the time of my early trips to Dajarra an obstacle confronted members of the community who wished to visit Black Mountain. The neighbouring cattle station had locked the gate on the fence-line of the Dajarra common cutting the access to this place. Apparently the cattle station had locked the gate in order to protect their livestock from thieves. The locked gate and blocked access to Black Mountain angered many people, including Dajarra elders and community leaders. Members of the Dajarra community believed they should take action against the locked gate. People who were sure of their rights to access this place suggested cutting the wire fence and driving around the gate, amongst other actions was a witty suggestion that the whole community back their cars up to the fence, hook the cars up to the fence posts and pull the whole fence down (economic resistance!).

I eventually visited Black Mountain with Keith when he took a tourism consultant out there. The tourism consultant pestered Keith for a story about this place and suggested that the community make up a booklet of stories about the place for tourists. Much to the consultant’s

36 This appears, by all accounts, to be a common phenomenon amongst all Aboriginal groups.
37 At least 30 years according to Memmott (p.c. 28/12/02).
disappointment, Keith didn’t give him ‘a story’. The archaeologists Rowland & Rowland visited Black Mountain in the 1970s, and they also failed to acquire a story:

The existence of these engravings is known to many people in the Dajarra area. We hear of them from several independent sources, and were advised to enquire at the store or police station at Dajarra. We enquired at the latter, and were recommended to a local Aboriginal...and arranged for him to guide us to the site the following day... He was unable to tell us what the engravings were for or what the various symbols represented. (Rowlands & Rowlands 1976.)

When we returned to Dajarra, Russell asked me what I had seen. He described a part of the complex that we had not visited during our short time out at Black Mountain with the tourism consultant.

I recently returned to Black Mountain with a group of Georgina River people. The gate was unlocked and on the way to Black Mountain the group visited the local station manager who was working cattle with a contract mustering team consisting of Dajarra men. We parked the vehicles at the entrance to the small gorge and walked in. Black Mountain is an intense place, a place that contrasts with the surrounding environment. Spatially, Black Mountain is an enclosed space in comparison to other places in the surrounding landscape that have an ‘openness’. In comparison to other places in the surrounding environment, including the Two Sisters, the interactions of the old people with this environment are obvious to Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people such as myself. Not so obvious is the meaning of the place and the artwork. On this occasion some of the group spent time inspecting engravings and discussing their meanings. Signs in the environment were observed, including but not limited to the engravings, and that indicated that their ancestors, Georgina River people, had been at that place, that it was a place of the River people.38

This place is on the Register of the National Estate. The following entry appears in the Illustrated Register of the National Estate:

This extensive Aboriginal engraving site is located in a gorge. The engravings appear to occur on every suitable rock surface, some being executed 40 metres above the nearest easily accessible point. The motifs were pecked, that is, hammered into the rock. Figurative art is uncommon, the majority being circles, ‘spoked wheels’, spirals, grids, concentric arcs, meandering lines, dots and tracks. Red ochre has been used to infill in many engravings, the number of examples at this site outnumbering all others recorded in Australia. A long history of use of the site is indicated by the unpatinated appearance of some engravings while others are very weathered. (AHC 1981:62)

In 2001 a group of Georgina River people visited somewhere near here to complete the repatriation of skulls of Warluwarra people that had been taken from Northwest Queensland by Roth in the 1890s.

Georgina River people – place properties

38During the same trip, people identified a number of bush resources in the gorge.
For many years Dajarra people have travelled from Dajarra to visit Black Mountain, sometimes taking researchers and tourists with them. Dajarra people have acted as custodians of this place which they recognise as a place of complexity and beauty.

In comparison to many places in the environment there are obvious signs of the old people at this place. These signs, the engravings, are interpreted by people who visit this place. These interpretations are based on people’s experiences and the knowledge that they were taught by older relatives. I have also visited Black Mountain with people who do not provide ‘stories’ concerning the engravings. In the context of legal matters concerned with Aboriginal environments (such as native title), the ability to tell a story about a place is a key test of Aboriginal relationships to land; a test of the validity of claims of ownership and rights. Aboriginal people who hold knowledge about places are respected by others. It is not uncommon to hear people question claims to country by those who do not have knowledge—‘they don’t know any stories for that place’. But what of situations like this where people do not tell stories about a place yet strongly identify with the place. Is it that people do not tell a story because they do not know the story? Is it that people hesitate to tell a story? Or, are there places that are simply experienced. Knowledge of place can be expressed and transferred as stories, but knowledge of place can also be gained and transferred through shared experience of visitation and contemplation.

Properties of place can be experienced in many ways; people can see, smell, hear and feel various phenomena associated with place. Similarly, Dajarra people talk about places smelling, hearing and feeling people - they (places) can tell who is a stranger and who is not. In contrast to the focus on the historical physical properties of place that often occurs in non-Aboriginal contexts, in the Aboriginal perception of place, the sounds and presence of those before, the old people, can and are experienced in place. Thus, there is a time dimension to these places where, although people are known to have occupied a place some time in the past they are still believed to be in that place in the present. Thus the past and the present coexist. When various authors argue that memory is embedded in place, they are usually talking about knowledge properties associated with places; places help us to remember past events. However, in addition to this, memory can be alive in place and experienced in place—the sounds of the old people. People also describe how the experience of certain places out bush gives them ‘a good feeling’, a comfortable feeling.

Many people speak of their sense of awe concerning Black Mountain and the engravings. Perhaps quietness about a place may be just as significant as being able to narrate stories about a place. On the two occasions that I have visited this place with people, the visit has been of a very short duration compared to the length of time required to reach the place. Perhaps the length of time a place is occupied and the frequency of visits are in no way proportional to the meanings a place holds.
In addition to the four ‘popular’ archaeological sites around Dajarra are other places that contain signs of ‘the old people’ that people encounter whilst travelling out bush.

5.10 AN OLD CAMP

Pieces of stone
On a trip in search of Henry’s grandfather’s grave we were driving along a track close to Sulieman Creek when Henry noticed small piles and scatters of stones on ‘a flat’. Henry described the place as an ‘old blackfella’s camp.’ He said that he knew it was such because when he was young he had seen similar camps down on the Georgina. A short time later, on a trip with Harry and Henry, we came across this place again. The car was stopped so that the men could get out and have a closer look. Once again Henry said he knew this was an old camp because he had seen similar piles of stones on the Georgina when he was a child. Henry and Harry wandered off in different directions moving slowly through the scatter of stone. Harry picked up a small stone knife and observed that the old people had been making knives at this place. We took some photographs and drove on in search of the grave.

Keep driving – place properties
I went on a number of bush trips with people when evidence of the use of a place by ‘the old people’ was discovered. These places have mostly been discovered on ‘flats’, which are flat areas, usually clear of vegetation, along or adjacent to creeks. Amongst Dajarra people there exists knowledge of numerous places with artefacts of the ‘old people’ that have been discovered in this way, including places that people found whilst working on cattle stations and travelling on horseback. Some Dajarra people have expressed a desire to travel along certain creeks because they are confident that they would come across ‘old camps’ there. Some Dajarra people have been surprised by finds of stone artefacts at places that are known to have been frequently visited in recent decades because the artefacts seem to be undisturbed by the years of activity at that place and seem to have been recently deposited there. The apparent ease with which people find such ‘archaeological’ evidence along the creeks and rivers of Northwest Queensland combined with the findings of the recent archaeological investigations on the Georgina at Camooweal (ARCHAEO 2002) suggests that Border and Rowland’s (1990:72) speculation of the density of archaeological sites along the river systems of the Mitchell Grass Downs requires serious revision (perhaps the very notion of site densities requires revision). In fact, archaeologists may find the entire Georgina River system constitutes an amazing complex of places containing archaeological material.

In my experiences with Dajarra people of places containing archaeological evidence, we only spent short periods of time at the place and then drove on, or moved on, to some other place. In some instances this was because people were wary of dangers that may be associated with the place and the artefacts. For example, on one occasion a group of people was examining
stone artefacts at a place when they discovered stone items believed to be powerful which prompted them to quickly leave that place. In other cases people move on because they are out bush for another reason.

People are continually discovering places of past activity and they are continually interpreting the physical evidence of this activity. Whilst travelling with Dajarra people we have also come across evidence of more recent activity. We have come across remnants of grader (road) camps, drover’s camps, stock camps and fishing camps. People are continually interpreting evidence of the activities of others whilst out bush. For example, tyre tracks are carefully examined and interpreted: “How fresh are those tracks?” “Who is travelling ahead of us?” “Hope it is not the station manager ahead of us!” “Might be the bore man.” “Any tracks going the other way?” “What kind of car was it - a Toyota?” “No, the tracks are too narrow.” “Who could be out here?” “Has anyone been out here lately?” “Look there - they’ve turned off into the scrub.” “Someone might have been out here chasing a ‘roo’.”

It is difficult to comment on the relative value or significance that Dajarra people place on archaeological evidence. However, it is clear that artefacts and changes to the physical environment from the distant and recent past both have a role in the development and maintenance of place knowledge.

5.11 THE DUMP

Cars, cans and kimbies

At the Dajarra dump a collection of one of the key artefacts of Aboriginal lifestyles and people-environment interactions of the last fifty years is to be found- a collection of dumped cars and trucks (see Figure 5.14). People have used these vehicles to travel about the region, to travel in their country, to visit places, to travel to work, and to get at bush resources, these vehicles have contributed to experiences of place by breaking down out bush, leaving their passengers stranded or imaginatively employing their bush mechanic skills (see Figure 5.15). Other than transport people have used vehicles as shelter, screening and storage elements in camps and domiciliary environments.

Some cars develop a character; they are personalised and are given nicknames: ‘The Big V’, ‘The Old Mole’, ‘the Mole’s Daughter’, ‘Hot Lips’, ‘Hot Chocolate’, ‘the Red Car’. People remember having a certain type or model of car during a certain period of their life or when they were living or working at a particular place. For example, members of the Marshall family recall slow trips out to the Georgina River on the back of a certain truck owned by a family member. Some cars have had a succession of Dajarra owners. These dumped cars contain the stories of serial owners and many places visited.

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39 Disposable nappies.
The dumped cars at Dajarra act as a resource. Many of the cars in the dump are just shells as most of the running gear has been stripped and recycled. Some people in Dajarra have personal dumps where they stash items or materials until they need them. I travelled around town one afternoon with Shane as he visited a number of households where he was likely to find a water pump for his Holden engine. Eventually we picked up Farren who directed us out to his own dump amidst thick spinifex to retrieve a suitable water pump. On another occasion I travelled with some men to get a muffler from a vehicle that had been stashed out bush. A bushfire through the dump area in 2001 uncovered a number of these little dumps.

Car bodies, car parts and other contemporary artefacts remain out bush and remind people of others: of other people, of other times, of events (including accidents) and experiences.

Front end loaders – place properties
Images of the Dajarra dump are unlikely to excite cultural heritage ‘practitioners.’ They are even more unlikely to excite most archaeologists (although perhaps there are some with an interest in ethno-archaeology who would appreciate these images). However they should interest both of these groups. After all, places that contain deposits of artefacts are one of the most represented types of places on cultural heritage registers. Just as stone, bone or shell artefacts are traces of Aboriginal history, so too cars and other contemporary artefacts at the Dajarra dump. What information about the history and lifestyle of Dajarra people would an archaeological investigation of the Dajarra dump, including the town’s rubbish buried by front-end loader, reveal?

Some Dajarra people take great interest in the deposits or dumps of material from the last 100 years or so. These dumps might contain useful items such as iron bars, pieces of sheet metal or rare items such as the demijohn that Joe found. These dumps might also contain items that remind people of the way they or their older relatives used to live; part of a pack saddle, kerosene tins, tin match boxes, part of a carbide lamp, old car parts, old bottles. One of these dumps, possibly containing material from railway workers, exists at the base of a Dreaming place close to Dajarra. Numerous items that people have collected from these dumps have been passed on to the museum in the old Dajarra Post Office.

Artefacts in the environment are one of the most obvious signs of place. Dajarra people employ various aspects of the physical environment in their knowledge of place, the location of structures, the location of bores, the direction of tracks, the location of watercourses, hills and vegetation and old structures: timber, steel and wire yards, windmills, remnants of stone and timber buildings, and the tent fly posts of old camps. (See Figure 5.16.)

40 Other items such as furniture are also recycled from the dump.
41 A large ceramic bottle with a small neck and small handles at the neck.
5.12 SEARCHING FOR HENRY’S GRANDFATHER’S GRAVE

An old windy track through gidyea

A series of trips I made with Henry in search of his grandfather’s grave further illustrate the way people interpret places and the association of memory and place.

Henry was keen to find the grave of his grandfather who had died in the same year that Henry was born. Although Henry had not visited the place in thirty years he remembered its general location near Wonomo Waterhole on Buckingham Downs. Henry remembered frequently travelling past this place whilst working on Buckingham with an older relative. He recalled travelling between two bores on an old windy track (as opposed to a graded track along a fence-line). The track entered some gidyea and the grave was situated close to where the track crossed a watercourse within the gidyea. There was an old hut situated near one of the bores.

Two vehicles left Dajarra on the first of three trips in search of this grave. In one vehicle, travelled Henry his mate Mick and myself, whilst in the other vehicle two of Henry’s cousin sisters, Mick’s wife, Mick’s brother Ted and his wife and children. Henry was the only one in the group who knew the location of the place.

We arrived at the bore at Wonomo and headed south on a track towards a second bore. The track passed through gidyea followed by a flat, which Henry did not remember. There was no sign of the old hut at the second bore. Mick suggested the station might have graded new tracks. We returned to Wonomo searching for the old track and cut across to an outcrop so that Henry could get an overview of the country. We stopped to visit the grave of the Wonomo killings. Whereas it was the first time that some of the group had been to this place, Henry had been in a stock camp at the yards on the east side of the waterhole and Ted had camped there with a group of men while working on the construction of the Dajarra-Boulia Road. On the way back to Dajarra a wild pig was spotted, chased and shot. While inspecting the pig one of the men expressed his lack of experience with pigs and asked the others if he should check the fat as people usually do with kangaroo (see Section 7.5). The pig was transported back to Dajarra on a bed of leaves.

Henry planned to talk with two men when he returned to Dajarra: Gary who had recently graded the tracks on Buckingham, and Harry who Henry believed would have ‘a good memory’ because he worked on Buckingham for many years. Harry and a young relative of Henry’s who had recently worked on Buckingham were able to help him with information about the location of the grave and the location of the bores on Buckingham respectively.
Henry organised a second trip to the grave with his relative Georgie and myself (Georgie’s young daughter also came with us).42 With the new information we headed to a different bore as a starting point and approached on a different track. Henry and Georgie both knew the track well and warned me of the subtle and dangerous turn off from the highway. As we drove along the track Georgie remembered a deceased friend who had often brought them out this way hunting kangaroos. They would follow this track to the east looking for kangaroos and loop back to Dajarra on the Boulia Road. This was the first time Georgie had been out here since the man had passed away. Georgie had worked with the same man and Sharky, moving cattle through this country by following the bores to the east. Georgie pointed out one of their stock camps at some gidyea near Steele’s Tank. Georgie and Henry commented on the country as we drove along; a large emu apple tree adjacent to the road; the distant views to the north-east and south-west that this ‘high-country’ offered; and the excellent quality of the fat cattle that rested near one of the bores. We joked whether one of the beasts would fit into the little Subaru wagon for the trip back to Dajarra! We came to the bore and found the frame of the old hut but we could not locate the old track or a gate in the fence-line that Henry remembered. A search of the fence-line failed to locate the old track.

Harry came out with Henry and myself on the third trip. Harry asked me to slow down near the bore, as he wanted to locate the old hut and gate. We also stopped to have a look at the scatter of stones mentioned above. This time we found evidence of the old gate (the posts were lying in long grass). The men located the gidyea scrub and we turned off the fence-line into the scrub with a watercourse to one side. As we travelled through the gidyea the men observed the stumps of trees, which indicated that someone had cut fence posts out of this stand of gidyea. Eventually Harry got out of the vehicle and walked through the gidyea until he located the old track. Once he found the track he followed it back into the gidyea towards the watercourse where he located the grave. It was the first time that Harry had been back to the grave since 1968. We spent a few minutes at the grave taking photographs and returned to the car. (See Figure 5.17.)

On the return trip to Dajarra, Harry and Henry briefly talked about Henry’s grandfather. They discussed the ‘old times’ when it was more common for people to die out bush due to transport and communication difficulties. The men talked about the country; people who had worked out here such as boundary riders and the changed nature of the vegetation. We laughed and joked after I hit the brakes as a startled turkey made an attempt to get inside my window.

Henry later built a new steel post and rail fence around the gravesite to protect it from cattle.

Old mates and country – place properties

42 As mentioned earlier children are regularly taken on bush trips.
This search for Henry’s grandfather’s grave illustrates a communal repertoire or ‘pool’ of experiences and place knowledge that exists amongst Dajarra people. This pool includes diverse experiences and knowledge properties of place. Dajarra people are aware of the diversity of place knowledge that is distributed amongst the members of their community. As a group, Dajarra people do not necessarily share, or have in common, or have general access to all of the knowledge and experiences within the communal pool (although there is some knowledge and experiences of place that are commonly shared); rather, what they share is knowledge of the ‘pool’ itself. It is common for Dajarra people to consult others (to access the pool), in the way that Henry did, when they require specific place knowledge. Access to this information is dependant on the state of social relations between people. The use and application of the pool of knowledge extends to many aspects of people’s lives. For example, if someone wanted some help fixing a particular problem with their car there are a number of people in town who could be approached, and just as the above example illustrates when people require knowledge about particular places they approach others who are known knowledge holders for those places.

I have previously mentioned that people often share their knowledge of place through narration - Georgie’s experiences in the stock camp with his mates for example. Bush trips such as these stimulate memories of people and experiences in place. These memories and stories are also shared through the experience of visiting the place - this is particularly relevant for people, including children, who visit a place for the first time. People are remembered in relation to particular places, and people are remembered when their burial place is visited – e.g. Henry’s grandfather. People are also remembered when places of shared experience are visited – e.g. George’s mate.

Trips such as this do not simply replicate memories of past events and people; they also involve new people-environment interactions and the development of new meanings: the discovery of new places - the stone scatter and the emu apple tree; the rediscovery of places-locating the grave site; the sharing of experiences in place- hunting the pig, finding the grave, just missing the turkey, making observations of the environment. Visiting existing places involves the development of new place memories and new stories to tell.

Henry’s and Harry’s memories of the grave site placed it within a cattle station geography and natural environment which they knew through experience - a network of bores and of tracks between bores and a system of creeks and stands of gidyea. However, while the natural environment was recognisable, the cattle station geography had significantly changed: the track they had followed was no longer used and was replaced by a new graded track along the fence-line; the gate that linked the hut with the old track had been dismantled. In this case these changes to the physical environment meant that it took more time to find the grave than Henry had expected. Cognitive maps of place had to be updated, revised and extended.
5.13 HENRY’S CAMP AT THE WEST END

Corn meat and gidyea fire

On the second day of my first visit to Dajarra, I was taken across Carbine Creek and shown the housing at ‘The Ridge’ at the West End. I returned a few days later, by myself, and like a cultural heritage architect or archaeologist, I naively searched for physical evidence of the West End town camps that I had seen in Memmott’s photographs taken in the 1970s. I thought there might be a chance of finding remnants of a camp, a remnant windbreak, perhaps some sheets of corrugated iron, or evidence of hearths. As an outsider I walked back across the Carbine that day disappointed; I could not see any trace of the camps. The built (physical) environment of the West End had changed. To the outsider there were no signs of the West End camps; they were gone.

When I first met Henry in 1996 he was living at his cousin’s daughter’s house in town, in Dajarra. Between 1996 and early 1997, he resided at a number of places for short periods of time including with relatives at Urlampe community in the Northern Territory, with relatives in Mt Isa and Dajarra, and he made a number of visits to hospital in Brisbane. In 1997, Henry spent about four weeks in a two-bed room at the Princess Alexandra Hospital (Brisbane) that had no direct visual access to the outdoor environment. Shortly after returning from this hospital visit, Henry built a camp at the West End with assistance from his cousin’s son (see Figures 5.18-5.21). I had incorrectly assumed that the West End, as a place of self-constructed camps, was finished just as Memmott had done in the 1970s. Henry’s camp made me realise the dangers of assuming that a place is finished, no longer exists, or does not exist, simply because evidence of its use cannot be observed (see Stanner 1965:207-208).

Henry’s camp consisted of an external living environment built around a bloodwood tree located to the west of Dalerie’s house (his cousin sister). A second-hand caravan to the west of the tree and another to the south of the tree formed western and southern walls to this environment. A tall windbreak wall joined the corners of the two caravans and extended the line of the southern caravan towards the east. Sheets of corrugated iron and timber were used to close in the gap between the base of the caravans and the ground. Some Dajarra people had used caravans at the West End in the town camp days including one of Henry’s uncles. Henry used the western caravan for sleeping and cooking during weather that prevented the use of the external living environment. The southern caravan was used for storage.

A low eastern wall provided protection from the wind and a degree of privacy from nearby residences whilst also permitting visual and verbal communication with the occupants. This wall and the southern tall wall were constructed of corrugated metal sheets fixed to a
structure of timber rails and star pickets. A recycled kitchen bench (with the sink connected to a drainage pipe) was situated against the eastern low wall. A low wall of corrugated metal sheets fixed to star pickets marked the northern edge of this space. This was the windbreak wall of a cooking fire. Henry filled the rectilinear space, formed by the windbreak walls and caravans, with a load of course creek sand, creating a soft floor surface that was comfortable to dwell on and easily maintained.

The space around the bloodwood tree offered views to other locations at the West End. For example, as Henry lay on a stretcher bed in the afternoon shade of the western caravan he could watch the West End track and the highway. In so doing it was possible for him to maintain awareness of the movements of West End residents and to some degree the movements of people who lived in town. With excellent protection from the cold southerlies and a northern orientation this was a good place to be during cool weather. This space also worked well during hot weather particularly in the late afternoon. Henry later improved the shade of the camp by constructing a steel frame between the western caravan and the tree and covering it in shade cloth.

The cooking fire and an associated sitting area were located to the north of this rectilinear space. Furniture around the fire included small drums, a tractor tyre, a couch and individual seats (with the exception of the tyre, this furniture was regularly moved between the two spaces of the camp). At the edge of this space was a line of raked debris, a heap of gidyea firewood and a 44-gallon drum that was used as a rubbish bin. A pit toilet was located to the west of this set of living environments.

During one trip to Dajarra I stopped at Henry’s camp for a few nights. The following is an indication of the daily activity of the camp: *In the morning Henry and I packed up our bedding, stored it in one of the caravans and then cleaned away the dishes and garbage from the previous evening. Sharky wandered over to the camp from his house carrying his enamel mug. When he arrived he motioned to me for a smoke. He growled at me as I went to use my lighter; “Can’t you see the hot ashes there. I’ll be – white man has gotta use their lighter when they can see there are hot coals. You would never make it in a stock camp if you carried on like that Mona.” He cracked up laughing. We shared the cigarette as he went about stoking the gidyea fire and put the billy on to boil. He made tea. Sharky often came across to help Henry around the camp. We joked and chatted over mugs of tea as Henry worked on his cassette player and finally got some country music playing. The three of us left the camp and drove into town together.*

On another occasion I visited Henry late in the afternoon. The daughter of a cousin sister, Tanya, was sitting with Henry who was resting on a bed against the western caravan. Tanya had just raked the space and rearranged some of the furniture. When Dalerie arrived home,
Henry sang out to her for some water. Dalerie brought over a bucket of water and lit the fire to make a ‘cuppa’ (cup of tea).

On another afternoon when I visited the camp, Henry had a large piece of corned meat slowly boiling on the fire with cabbage and potato. In the evening others joined the camp for a feed and a yarn. Some people stayed out by the fire; others sat under the tree and some used cars at the periphery of the space as ‘furniture’. A few Slim Dusty tunes were played on guitar. When the last of the visitors had left we rolled out our bedding on the bed frames, Henry’s against the western caravan and mine against the southern. I fell asleep to the sound of the bloodwood leaves rustling above in the evening breeze.

During one of these visits Henry commented that he was enjoying the ‘openness’ of his camp after being cooped up in hospital for so long. Some of those who visited the camp, many of whom lived in town, commented on certain aspects of the camp they enjoyed: a sense of freedom; social privacy; quietness; sitting around the fire and cooking on the fire; the quality of light; being under the tree and under the stars- being out in the open. Henry and visitors to the camp also recalled ‘the West End days’.

Early in 1998 Henry successfully applied for the tenancy of a house in town. He moved one of his caravans across the Carbine and placed it against the western side of the carport of his new house.

**Shifting caravans – place properties**

At the beginning of this chapter I discussed the possibility of places lying in a ‘dormant’ state for periods of time. This camp at the West End illustrates the articulation of place with activity following a period of relative dormancy. The place was activated by the construction of the camp and the daily activities associated with the camp - cooking, sleeping and groups of people talking. The place was articulated by transformations in the physical environment: the placement of caravans, the building of walls, the importation of creek sand and firewood, the ashes of the hearth, the raked earth and probably a deposit of beef and kangaroo bones that had been tossed to the outside of the camp. Despite obvious differences such as the use of caravans instead of domes and the use of imported materials instead of bush materials, this camp works in the same way as the cold weather dome and windbreak environment described by Roth. Thus camps such as this not only display the maintenance of architectural elements such as windbreaks they also display the maintenance of architectural environments, in this case a cold weather environment.

Just as Keith and his family had left their camp at Urandangi after the rodeo, Henry left his camp when he obtained his rental house. Both places were no longer articulated by activity. However, in contrast to Keith’s camp that left minimal signs of occupation, Henry left behind
one of the caravans and other physical remains of his camp. Four years later you could still ‘see’ some of the properties of Henry’s former camp.

On one of Henry’s visits to Brisbane (prior to the construction of the camp) he visited the University with me to have a look through Memmott’s collection of photographs of Dajarra. Henry selected a number of the photographs that he wanted copied. During a visit to Henry’s camp he asked me to get these photographs from a suitcase stored inside one of the caravans. He shuffled through the images to one of the panoramic shots of the West End from the 1970s. ‘Here look’- he pointed out the tree where he was camped- there was a camp there (the camp of Georgie South)!

I had really failed to ‘see’ the West End- it was taking me time to understand the properties of this place. Although this particular place at the West End was currently identified with Henry, ‘Henry’s camp’, people who had previously camped here were also identified with this place. Henry’s camp contributed new meanings to an existing place. This place had been maintained by passive mental interactions with knowledge properties of place and it had been maintained through the constancy of elements of the physical environment- the old bloodwood tree.

5.14 JOE’S YARD TO GARAWA COUNTRY

The yard and the country

*I went around to Joe’s place for a yarn. When I greeted Joe he said, “You might have come at the wrong time; my wife’s leaving for the Territory.” Nonetheless, he invited me into the yard and we sat on a railway sleeper that was against the house and propped on car wheel rims. It was warm out of the wind with our backs to a sheet of iron and the low August sun in our face. Joe’s wiry haired dog, ‘Ticky’ came and sat at our feet. (See Figure 5.22.)

Joe’s daughter and son-in-law came to pick up Irene to take her to Mt Isa where she would catch a bus into the Territory. When they left, we went inside to sit in Joe’s room. We drank coffee out of stainless steel pints (cups) as Joe showed me spears, coolamon and woomera he had made. Joe scoffed at the technique of Olympic javelin throwers who hold their ‘spears’ half way along the shaft, he said that if they really wanted to throw the javelin they would need to use one of his woomeras! He toked on his pipe and looked up, “What do you reckon?” “That’s right”, “Yeah -That’s what I reckon” and we ‘cracked up’ laughing.

Joe is from the southern Gulf country.43 His mother’s mother had identified as Waanyi and his mother’s father as Garawa. Joe’s father was an Englishman who spent time as a policeman before taking up Calvert Hills station, on the headwaters of the Calvert River. Joe and Irene were both born on this station. Joe first travelled to Dajarra with droving teams as a teenager in the early 1940s. When Joe’s father died his father’s brother sold the property. Joe

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43 The country surrounding the Gulf of Carpentaria.
returned to Calvert Hills from a droving trip to find the property in the hands of new owners. Joe later moved to Dajarra as his daughter was living there.

**I would like to show you my country one day – place properties**

Over the years that I have visited Joe at his house we have discussed a range of Aboriginal issues (and life issues in general) and he has shared some of his life history with me. During these sessions Joe has taught me some of the history and resources of his country as well as of the country around Dajarra.

When sitting with Joe whether it was in the warm part of his yard, or by his cooking fire, or beneath his shade trees, or inside his room, he has taken me on journeys in time and space to places that I do not know and to places that I have not had an opportunity to visit. In addition to talking about his experiences in place, Joe has marks on his body that remind him of places. He has scars and damaged bones that tell of the times and places where he was injured while working cattle (see also Baker 1999:113-115). Joe has also taken me on journeys back to places we have visited together. He recalls the day we spent cutting and shaping didgeridoos on a creek towards Duchess, and he jokes with me (and everyone else) about the time he took me hunting down near Sulieman Creek and made me carry a kangaroo ‘a mile’ back to his panel van- “move fast Steve, he’ll get heavy”.

People can be grounded, literally, in a place but can travel, through thoughts and words, to other places. One of the ways that places are maintained is by sharing knowledge of them with others. Joe shares stories of place with his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, some of whom have also lived in both the Northern Territory (Borroloola) and Queensland (Burketown and Dajarra). Joe also shares his knowledge with visitors such as myself, and school children from Dajarra and Mt Isa whom he teaches on occasions.

Joe’s family regularly return to their country and some of his children still live in the Gulf communities. During one of these trips in 1999 Joe made a video of his life history whilst travelling between the Gulf and Dajarra. There are other Dajarra people who, like Joe, come from distant places, maintain relationships with those places and are still identified with those places. These people simultaneously maintain close relationships with Dajarra and are identified with Dajarra. While some of these people regularly visit their country, others do not have the opportunity to return ‘home’. Nevertheless, people maintain their place relationships whilst distant from them.

**5.15 THE JIMBERELLA STORE**

To end this chapter we return from the physical and mental journeys made to ‘the Gulf’ from Joe’s yard, we push over the low chain wire fence at the edge of his yard and walk along the
dirt road towards a place that is part of the ‘everyday’ experience of most, if not all, Dajarra people - the Jimberella Store. (See Figure 5.23-5.24.)

**They’re down at the front of the shop**

The walk towards the store from Joe’s yard takes you past another significant social space in the community, the Jimberella Hall, and the pub which has a couple of early customers. Three kids (cousins) pass me at the front of the old post office each carrying a plastic bag of groceries in one hand and brightly coloured ice blocks in the other; the older two wait on the corner for the youngest to catch up. Sitting in the shade at the front of the shop are a mix of men and women, young and old from various Dajarra families. Some of the older people are sitting on the seats while a group of young men sit on the rails at the corner of the verandah. One of the men greets me: “What now Steve” - I join them on the seats. Although it is mid-morning, small patches of the concrete and earth in front of the store are still wet from the cleaning session earlier in the day.

I observed a range of social interactions at the shop a selection of which have been compiled below:

**On a Friday, a payday the shop is busy.** A young man says he is waiting for the mail truck to arrive so that he can get his cheque and head off to Mt Isa for the weekend. Another informs him that the mail truck had come early and was most likely half way to Boulia by now. They head off towards the roadhouse that acts as the postal agency. Some of the group sitting in front of the shop discusses the upcoming Urandangi rodeo and the events of last year’s rodeo. The date of the rodeo is checked on one of the many posters and community notices in the shop window. A blackboard at the entrance to the store wishes a Dajarra woman a happy birthday. Inside, the shop assistant is dealing with a person purchasing food-stuffs while the manager is assisting someone paying a bill with an EFTPOS transaction.

A car pulls up at the front of the shop and a group of people pile in with groceries. Sharky crosses over to the store with two others: “Light Mona”. He produces two ‘smokes’ from his shirt pocket and hands one to me: “Did you tell these people about the flat tyre? One white man drove straight over the sharpest rocks. Anyone could see the rocks there - couldn’t you turn the wheel Mona? We were out near Bronco Dam there.” A child tugs on the clothing of a woman, “Aunty, have you got two dollars?” She shakes her hands signaling she has nothing to give. “Uncle, have you got two dollars?” The request is ignored. An older man grumbles, “Here-BOY,” and hands the kid a ‘gold’ coin.

The attention of the group sitting in front of the shop is drawn to a man who attempts to discreetly leave the pub with take-away alcohol. With encouragement from the group a person sings out- “Where’s the party?” He ignores the call and keeps walking and those at the front of the shop laugh. Some of the group works out the identity of the ‘captain’, that is,
the person shouting the alcohol (which is not always the person purchasing the alcohol). I get a request: “Draw Mona,” and pass the last half of a cigarette to Farren.

A car pulls up at the petrol bowser in front of the store. The car is loaded with swags and other gear. “When are you heading out that way?” “Might be after dinner some time, we are just waiting for those boys to fix two spares. Any patches down at your place?” “Plenty in the shop!” On his way back inside after filling the vehicle with fuel, the store manager closes one of the doors. The shop is about to close for lunch. “Come on Monaghetti we’ll go for a walk down this way and see what those guys are up to.”

‘Have you got a soft drink price?’ – place properties
The Jimberella store, a community owned store, has an obvious economic function of providing goods for sale and financial services such as cashing cheques and receiving bill payments. These functions shape patterns of behaviour within the store that are known and predictable. In addition the store, particularly the front of the store, is an important social space in Dajarra, ‘the meeting place’. It is a place of social interaction, a place where groups of people sit together and discuss issues, events, news, community notices and participate in the banter of social interaction. A part of this social interaction is of an economic nature - sharing food or money with people, pressuring people to share, or else ‘hitting someone up’ for a ‘loan’ or ‘a price’. (See Peterson 1993.)

The Jimberella Store is unique as it is a place that is visited by all of the sub-groups within the community. It is also unique as the front of the shop is one of few places in Dajarra where you find mixed social groups interacting- young and old people, men and women, different family groups, different sub-groups. For example, people who do not regularly interact with each other elsewhere in Dajarra (in domiciliary spaces for example) may interact in front of the shop. At the same time that one finds social interaction between different groups of people at the shop, one also finds distinct groups of people occupying the space such as family members occupying one of the seats, or a group of young male friends occupying the verandah. Although the storefront is a social space, not everyone necessarily participates or engages with this social setting, for example some people enter and leave the shop with minimal interaction with this space and the people occupying the space. Some people may avoid the place altogether if they know that certain people are occupying the space. For example, it might be a person with whom they are in conflict, or it may be a person whom they owe money.

There is distinct time properties associated with the shop as a social place. The opening and closing hours determine when people occupy the place. The place is busiest on paydays. The time of day and time of year contribute to this place. In the afternoon on a hot day one is unlikely to find many people gathered in front of the store; similarly on a very cold morning one is unlikely to find people in front of the shop although one might find some catching
sunlight behind the low wall of the store driveway which provides protection from the southerly winds. Thus the place properties change at different times of the day, different times of the week and different times of the year. The verandah and the chairs provided by the community, support the social activity of the space.

The nature of this public/social space is known by all of the community. People are aware of the patterns of behaviour associated with this place. Thus people describe it as ‘the meeting place’ and members of the community encouraged me to visit this place during early trips to Dajarra, as they knew it was a good place to meet people.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have taken the reader across Northwest Queensland to visit a selection of places that I visited, mentally or physically, with Dajarra people. This quick trip has introduced the diversity that characterises the people-environment interactions of this community – e.g. the gidyea fires of temporary camps and the enduring presence of the old people in places.

The chapter commenced with the description of a place temporarily articulated by the activity of a small family group, which transformed the physical environment in minimal, almost unobservable, ways. There are other places of the Dajarra community that are similarly characterised by minimal people-environment interactions; places that are occupied for short periods of time, places with minimal transformations in the physical environment and places with minimal forms of activity. It is difficult for visitors to find these places by looking for them; they have to be shown them or informed of them. It is important to realise that just because no activity is observable in a locale, or that physical evidence of activity is not observable, one cannot assume that a place does not exist in that locale, nor that a place no longer exists, or that a place will not exist at some point in the future.

In cutting grubs and collecting gidyea we learnt that people maintain knowledge of the location of numerous resource places that are often unnamed. As with the first example, these places are also visited for short periods of time and these are places of minimal transformations in the physical environment. However, in contrast to the first example, these are places that are easily observed, they often possess transformations in the physical environment that are observable, and they are places that are regularly and repeatedly visited. One of the ways that people learn about places is by visiting them with others and learning the people-environment interactions that characterise them - it is through visiting resource places that children develop their knowledge of them.

By the fire of gidyea coal in Keith’s yard we learnt of places that are created through customary transformations of the physical environment, in this case the creation of a cold
weather domiciliary environment. In Keith’s neighbours’ yards we learnt that groups of
people may share and maintain building traditions (transformation of the physical
environment). This place taught us that in addition to the physical, behavioural and time
properties of place boundaries there exist physiological boundaries to place. This windbreak
space taught us that places can be personalised (or identified) by the types of transformations
to the physical environment that are made, the patterns of behaviour that people carry out and
the meanings that people attribute to an environment.

In stands of gidyea trees we learnt of standing patterns of behaviour associated with particular
environments. These patterns of behaviour are commonly known and regularly carried out,
thus making it possible to predict the activity of someone who visits a stand of gidyea. In
contrast, the capture of a fat goanna teaches us that people draw on a repertoire of behaviour
in relation to the circumstances of a place, such behaviour is carried out by chance or
randomly rather than being interdependent with the environment and predictable. These
‘random’ events can create new places and they can add new meanings to existing places.

In listening to people talk about Hangman’s Bend we learnt that places can and are
maintained through knowledge properties. Events at places may be remembered for many
years and even generations. Knowledge of the actions of Ancestral heroes in places is
remembered across generations. Although places can be maintained by knowledge properties,
this does not mean that the physical environment is no less important, in fact, there are many
examples of physical environments that are never visited to which people express strong
attachments and a strong desire to protect from disturbance.

In the cases of the ‘Two Sisters’ and the households of the deceased, we learn that the actions
of people around places can contribute to places as much as actions or properties within
places. Places can be maintained by the actions around them or the thoughts focused upon
them. There may be little evidence (if any) of this form of maintenance within the place itself.
We also learnt of the powerful properties of some places and the necessity for people to
interact with such places in the correctly prescribed manner in accordance with community
rules and values. Story places such as those of the Rain Men inform us of the mutual
relationships and mutual interactions between people and places.

In visiting Black Mountain we experienced the impressive transformations of the physical
environment made by the ‘old people’. We also learnt that memory in place can be
experienced - people can feel and hear manifestations of those people from the past. People
know of places by experiencing them, children learn about places by visiting them with
others, and they learn about place-specific activities by doing them. The changes that the old
people made in the physical environment can be observed and interpreted, similarly more
recent changes in the physical environment of places are observed and interpreted.
At the West End we found that places may be used (articulated with activity) at long intervals. Although such places may exist in a seemingly dormant state, at least physically dormant, they are maintained through knowledge properties and the relatively permanent existence of key physical characteristics (the memory of a camp and the bloodwood tree of that camp respectively). Even places that appear physically dormant are not unchanging, as they are subject to the changes of the natural environment.

In searching for a grave we learnt that places hold memories. Visiting places stimulates memories. People learn about place by listening to others share their memories of that place. Not all people have the same experiences of place or knowledge of place, instead amongst Dajarra people there exists a diversity of place experience and place knowledge. As a group of people, the Dajarra community possesses a ‘pool’ of place knowledge and experiences of place. Within this pool are places that are more or less commonly known and there are also places that are known by only a few people or individuals. Many of the places we visited informed us that amongst a group of people there may exist a diversity of knowledge concerning a place that is commonly known. Accessing this pool of place knowledge is subject to social relations and rules.

Sitting with Joe in his yard we learnt that some people identify and are identified with several geographically distant places- a yard in Dajarra and Aboriginal country in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Mental journeys from Joe’s yard reinforced the notion that people can maintain places whilst distant from them. However, just because people can maintain places from a distance does not mean that physical relationships with places are unimportant. For Joe it is important to return to his country from time to time and although Joe could talk to me about his country he really wanted to show me his country, to take me there.

We concluded our survey at the Jimberella store where we met up with a group of people for an hour or two before the store closed for lunch. At the store we encountered a place that is visited and known by the whole community. This is a venue for casual meetings - an important place of social interaction. Although the store has closed, people will be back when it reopens to carry out the same cycle of activities, the predictable standing behaviour pattern.

This selection of places makes clear a diversity of people-environment interactions - new interactions, recurring interactions and old interactions. All of the places described are part of the lifeworld of the Dajarra community - the Jimberella store is an Aboriginal place just as much as the Black Mountain engravings are. I will return to discuss this diversity later in the thesis.
This chapter was predominantly concerned with sixteen places, yet during this ‘quick trip’ approximately sixty further named places were mentioned in the text. This suggests something of the interrelated nature of places that will be explored in the following chapter.
Figure 5.1 Keith’s camp at Urundangi for the rodeo weekend, September 1996.

Figure 5.2 William picking caustic bush.

Figure 5.3 Susan cutting grubs on Anthony Ck watched by Sharon and her daughter and young cousins.

Figure 5.4 Sketch of the wire tool (below) and twig (above) used for extracting grubs.

Figure 5.5 Windbreak and gidyea fire at Keith’s house.

Figure 5.6 George’s house without windbreak.

Figure 5.7 George’s house with windbreak added to the western end of the northern elevation.

Figure 5.8 Freestanding windbreak and gidyea fire in Joe’s yard.
Figure 5.9 A plan of a domed shelter and attached windbreak based on Roth’s (1897) description. (1) Fire, (2) windbreak made of saplings, (3) dome, (4) prevailing cold wind.

Figure 5.10 Gidyea trees on Carandotta.

Figure 5.11 Gidyea gum in a stand of gidyea at the Dajarra aerodrome.

Figure 5.12 The entrance to the gorge at Black Mountain.

Figure 5.13 Kangaroo tracks leading towards an axe quarry near Dajarra.

Figure 5.14 Car at the Dajarra dump.

Figure 5.15 On the Boulla Rd fixing Kenny’s car using the foil from a packet of cigarettes.

Figure 5.16 Remains of the frame of Jack Logan’s camp on the Georgina River.
Figure 5.17 Henry’s grandfather’s grave.

Figure 5.18 The northern living area of Henry’s camp. Note the line of debris raked clear of the space.

Figure 5.19 The sand floor of the north orientated living area of Henry’s camp. The caravan and walls to the left of the image block cold southerly winds.

Figure 5.20 A view over the low eastern windbreak wall to the house of Henry’s cousin sister. The low wall to the left is the windbreak to the cooking fire.

Figure 5.21 Windbreak and cooking fire of Henry’s camp.

Figure 5.22 Joe Clarke at home in Dajarra in 2005 with a brand new hat purchased with compensation received for years of unpaid work while ‘under the Act’.

Figure 5.23 The front steps of the Jimberella Store.

Figure 5.24 The store is closed.
In the previous chapter a small number of places and their properties were examined which provided an indication of the range of place experiences, or people-environment interactions, of the Dajarra community. Whilst it is possible to focus attention on particular places in this manner, places are not usually experienced in this way; they are not experienced in isolation. It is also rare for people to talk about a place without making reference directly or indirectly to some other place. In fact it is difficult to write about a place as a bounded, discrete, unit. There were a number of instances in the previous descriptions that alluded to the connections or interrelationships of the places discussed to other places. Each of the places discussed belongs to a complex of interrelated places. In contrast cultural heritage regimes treat places as if they are ‘islands’ within the cultural landscape (see Memmott & Long 2002:53). Cultural heritage legislation is premised on the notion that it is possible to isolate places from the broader environment, for example, cultural heritage agencies have registers of individual places such as Black Mountain. Therefore, there is a need to develop an understanding of the relationships between places.¹ The aim of this chapter is to illustrate the interrelated nature of places.

A selection of the places discussed in the previous chapters is revisited in order to consider the complexes of which they are a part. The chapter commences on the Georgina River and the journey back to the camp at the Clay Pan with the goanna. This is followed by a visit to another water place that has a relationship with Dajarra, ‘Cat Dam’. From Cat Dam we return to Dajarra to explore the places within Keith’s Yard. We then go back ‘across the creek’ to explore the interrelationship of places at the West End. From the West End we return to the Georgina and visit camps at the Urandangi rodeo. The chapter ends down river from Urandangi at a place that is in some ways ubiquitous in Dajarra, Jimberella. In a similar pattern to the previous chapter this exploration of place complexes contains a description of the place followed by a reflection on the properties of that place.

6.1 THE CLAY PAN

The goanna at the Clay Pan

When we arrived back at the camp at ‘the Clay Pan’ some of the boys went fishing while others watched Mark and Richard prepare the goanna for cooking (see Figures 6.1 & 6.2). The men dug a shallow, elongated pit under the afternoon shade of a tree located away from the cooking fire of the camp. A gidyea fire was prepared in the pit. As the wood burnt away Mark gutted the goanna, which he rested on a piece of cardboard. Using a razor blade he

¹ Malpas argues “…a characteristic feature of any ‘place’…is that the elements within it are both evident only within the structure of the place, while that place is itself dependent upon the interconnectedness of the elements within it – as it is also dependent on its interconnection with other places – and, consequently, the idea of place is itself the idea of a structure that must resist any analysis that reduces it to a set of autonomous components.” (Malpas 1999:39.)
made an incision below the head of the goanna, on the belly side, through which he cut and tied the throat. He made a second incision near the back leg through which he removed the ‘guts’. Wire was used to ‘stitch’ (close) up the incision. As Mark worked away jokes were made concerning his skill as a ‘surgeon’ using razor blades, wire and pliers.

Richard singed the goanna on the fire then removed some of the ashes and the burning sticks from the hole. The goanna was placed in the hole, covered with a layer of ash and hot sand and the remnants of the burning gidyea logs placed on top and left to slowly burn away.

While the goanna was cooking, tea was made on the cooking fire and we all cooled off in the River. Further along the bank lay the ashes of a fire where I had sat talking with the men the previous night. Some of the boys had started a fire at the base of a dead tree. The tree burnt through, fell over and continued to burn. This fire illuminated the immediate bank, the water and the opposite bank. A fire stick was dragged away from the burning tree to make the smaller warming fire that we sat around. This log was propped on sand so that the burning end sat just above the coals, as the end burnt away the fire was stoked by sliding the log forward. The men talked about the quietness and peacefulness of the River; they felt relaxed while ‘fishing’ partly because they were away from the intensity of social relations in town for a few days (where ‘you see the same people every day’).³

We returned to the cooking hole after about an hour and a half. Richard removed the ashes with a shovel to reveal the goanna; it was tested by sticking a twig into the meat- it was ready. The goanna was dug out and the ashes then dusted off with a bunch of leaves from the shade tree. The goanna was laid belly up and Mark’s ‘surgical’ work examined - it had split open. The men removed some of the meat before the boys moved in and took it over to the shaded food table adjacent to the cooking fire. They cut up the meat added salt and sat around the camp eating. One of the group sulked beside the River because he missed out on some of the thick tail meat.

**Fires at the Clay Pan- place complex properties**

It is possible to identify a number of place complexes within this example. The first of these place complexes is comprised of the place of the goanna capture and the camp at the Clay Pan. These physically distant and separate places are interrelated through behavioural properties including the sequence of behaviour from the time the goanna was spotted until the time it was consumed and the remains discarded. Thus the place of capture and the camp are physically non-proximate places that are interrelated through (proximate) behaviour. This sequence of behaviour (or activity) was initiated by the random event of spotting the goanna. There are more regular and predictable behavioural properties that relate these two places, for example they were (and are) both visited for fishing.

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² Dajarra people used this method of burning through the base of dead trees at other places.
³ Getting away from regular patterns of behaviour.
Another interrelated place exists which is the place(s) between the goanna capture and the camp. This includes the track and the places travelled through. The place between also includes the waterhole of which these places are both a part. Although the two places are distant, they are not isolated; they are connected by the places between them.

‘The camp’ itself was a place complex comprised of a number of interrelated places including: (i) the sleeping areas out in the open away from the trees, (ii) the cooking fire area shaded by trees, (iii) the ground oven, (iv) the adjacent waterhole (and illumination and warming fires), and (v) toilet areas. In contrast to the complex discussed above the camp is a complex of adjacent places. They are sub-units of the one place, the camp.

On the last night of this trip, the women shifted their camp to the Clay Pan from the Watering Place. They set up camp about 500 metres away from the men, a distance at which one camp could be seen from the other but not the activities within the camp. The Clay Pan was now temporarily articulated by a second place, the women’s camp. The interactions and interrelationships between the two camps that had existed over the preceding days (while the women were at the Watering Place) were now brought closer and within the one place. The two camps were now interrelated places within the ‘The Clay Pan’.

We travelled back to Dajarra early so that some of the group would meet their appointments with visiting health workers at the Dajarra clinic. Just as activities related the place of goanna capture and the Clay Pan, human actions create interrelationships between Dajarra and the Clay Pan. These are long standing interrelationships with a history of people travelling between Dajarra and the Clay Pan (and other camping places on the Georgina) and the various experiences of these journeys. When we arrived at Dajarra people asked where we went and where we camped. Conversations and the sharing of knowledge properties of place contribute to the interrelationship of places. On the last night at the Clay Pan we witnessed a brilliant ‘shooting star’ that illuminated the environment like a bolt of lightening. The same phenomenon was seen by people in Dajarra. People can share place experiences while in distant places.

Another water place with a relationship with Dajarra that is characterized by regular visitation is Cat Dam.

6.2 CAT DAM

Everyone knows where Cat Dam is!

We were travelling from Dajarra to Cat Dam on the Mt Isa road and I asked Shark how far we were from the dam to which he replied; “I’ll be - white man doesn’t even know where Cat Dam is. Even Selina knows where Cat Dam is.” Selina is his young daughter who was 2-3
years old at the time. Dajarra people visit Cat Dam frequently and it is close to the Dajarra-Mt Isa road from where it is clearly visible and the water level can be checked as you drive passed. There is even a cattle station sign on the short track from ‘the bitumen’ into the dam announcing ‘Cat Dam’. Everyone (all Dajarra people) knows where Cat Dam is - even young children.

Thiess Brothers (contractors) built Cat Dam at the headwaters of Split Creek, a tributary of the Georgina, while they were constructing the new Mt Isa road in the 1960s. The dam has two deep holes that hold water within a larger basin that forms a shallow pool after good rainfall. When Cat Dam is full it is one of the largest bodies of surface water near Dajarra. This dam is one of a number of water places close to Dajarra that are popular places for short day trips- they are good places to ‘sit down’. Other places include Sulieman Ck (on the Boulia road), the Wills River (on the Duchess road) and other cattle station dams. (See Figure 6.3.)

A trip to Cat Dam might involve leaving Dajarra in the late morning or early afternoon and then returning to Dajarra after a few hours or close to sunset. A line of trees along the northern edge of the dam shade an area that is regularly used during these day camps, these trees also provide fuel for cooking fires. Day trips might involve a single car-load of people (perhaps a small family group); they can also involve larger groups travelling in four or five cars. At the dam these larger groups often split into smaller social groups such as mixed groups, groups of men or women, groups of women and children, and groups of children.

Cat Dam is in many ways a ‘recreation’ place involving activities such as ‘bush cooking’, joking and telling stories, swimming, children’s play, fishing, and partying (drinking). In addition to the activity of the ‘day camp area’, activities take place in and around the dam. During these trips people also share observations of the surrounding environment; perhaps the sighting of an emu coming down to the water in the late afternoon or the sighting of a familiar vehicle travelling along the highway- “Didn’t they go up (to Mt Isa) to get their tax return money?” Conversely, people travelling along the highway make observations of the condition of Cat Dam (height of the water) and any cars that may be there- “Who’s that sitting down there?”

During one of these trips to Cat Dam a fire was lit and the billy boiled. Henry cooked up some yellow belly that he had been given in Boulia the day before. The fish was caught at Parapituri, a popular fishing place on the Georgina near Boulia. ‘Rib bones’ and ‘johnny cakes’ were also cooked (see Figure 6.4). After a ‘feed’, a blanket was laid out and a card

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6 It may be that dams are popular for swimming as they hold water throughout the year whereas local waterholes dry up. It may also be that they are safer than waterholes some of which are notoriously dangerous because they are inhabited by dangerous beings and have swimming restrictions. Such restrictions are discussed in Section 6.6.

7 People maintain knowledge of the vehicles belonging to family and friends and others in the region such as station managers the publican etc.

6 ‘Johnny cakes’ are made from a dough of self-raising flour, water, salt and milk powder. This dough is turned into small flat shapes and cooked on a hot plate or netting (wire mesh) placed over ashes.
game that had been interrupted in Dajarra was resumed. With the knowledge that a woman (probably the keenest fisher in Dajarra) had recently caught perch in the remaining dam water one of the women walked off with some children to fish from the shaded dam wall.

Dajarra people also visit Cat Dam at other times and for other reasons. Some people travel out to Cat Dam to hunt kangaroo in the late afternoon/early evening on the flat country to the south and east of the dam. This is one of a repertoire of places that are visited from Dajarra to hunt kangaroos. Differences between hunting and ‘recreational’ visits to Cat Dam include the timing of the visit, the duration of the visit and the behaviour undertaken, the size, age and gender of the group. Some Dajarra people have also visited Cat Dam while working stock for cattle stations. The diversity of recent and more distant experiences had by Dajarra people at Cat Dam are recalled and shared through narratives.

**From Parapituri to Cat Dam - place complex properties**

There are a number of places within Cat Dam including: (i) the highway, (ii) the entry track, (iii) the dam (which has two deep ‘places’ within it), (iv) the dam wall, (v) the day camp area, (vi) the rock outcrop, (vii) the flats visited for hunting. Cat Dam is a complex of places. It is also a part of other place complexes. It has interrelationships with other places through shared, overlapping or intersecting properties.

The dam is on ‘Stradbroke country’ (within the Stradbroke Pastoral lease), and it is of economic importance to this station as part of the complex of dams and bores that water their stock. Cat Dam is identified, by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, as part of the place complex of Stradbroke station. The pastoral industry has contributed to this place by maintaining the physical properties of the ‘dam’ that are also transformed by the actions of cattle.

Although the dam was initially created by transformations of the physical environment made by a construction company, and although it is part of the industry of Stradbroke station, it is Dajarra people who most regularly visit this place and articulate it with activity. The experiences and activities of Dajarra people at this place create and maintain relationships between Cat Dam and Dajarra, and between Cat Dam and other places. Cat Dam is part of a complex of water/recreation places that are frequently visited by Dajarra people. Cat Dam is also part of a repertoire of kangaroo hunting places and a repertoire of fishing places that are visited by Dajarra people and from which resources are taken back to Dajarra (the Clay Pan and Parapituri are amongst this complex of fishing places).

There are Dajarra people whose experiences at Cat Dam include pastoral activities, social activities, recreational activities and economic activities. There are many places in Northwest Queensland where Aboriginal properties of place and properties of place derived from the pastoral industry intersect and overlap. It is common for Dajarra people to recognize the
existence of these overlapping properties of place, cattle station geography is not distinct from Aboriginal geography rather it is embedded in it. It is noteworthy that there is an intensity of these overlapping properties at water places as it was an intensity of overlapping properties of place that lead to the conflict over water discussed in Chapter 4.

It is possible to trace interrelationships between Cat Dam and a number of other places through the yellow belly. I don’t know how common it is for a yellow belly caught at Parapituri to end up on the hot plate at Cat Dam, but it is common for fish caught (by Boulia or Dajarra people) on the lower Georgina (Parapituri), or on the Diamantina, to end up in Dajarra (via Boulia). Saltwater fish caught by relatives of Dajarra people who are living or working in the Gulf of Carpentaria also makes it onto the dinner table at Dajarra (via Mt Isa). This is another example of distant places that are interrelated, sometimes temporarily, through sequences of behaviour. It involves a sequence of behaviour associated with methods of exploitation and consumption and it involves social interactions. Amongst these social interactions is sharing behaviour and reciprocity. Someone in Boulia gave Henry the yellow belly that he in turn shared with a group of Dajarra people at Cat Dam. The exchange or sharing of resources, including bush food resources such as fish and domestic resources such as home-grown fruit, exists at a regional level (between Boulia and Dajarra people for example), within a community (between Dajarra people) and within sub-groups of a community (within a family group for example).

People share resources under varying circumstances. When they have an abundance of a resource (if they caught a sack of fish for example). If it becomes known that they have an abundance (if someone opened a full packet of cigarettes in front of a group of people for example). If they are asked or pressured into sharing the resource (“Where’s all the fish they reckon you caught down the River? They reckon you got a freezer full. When are you going to drop some around at my place?”). Sharing depends on the relationship with the other (“They come to me asking for fish- when do they bring me a fish back from the River?”). People share resources to repay others. People share resources to enact respect, generosity or sympathy for someone. Some people say that prior to the use of refrigerators and freezers people shared more, for example, if someone came back from the River with a sack full of fish, they would share the catch around the camps at the West End.

From Parapituri to Boulia, Boulia to Dajarra, Dajarra to Cat Dam, to be a little facetious, if an archaeologist was to dig and sift (with a fine mesh (see Ross 2001)) at Cat Dam near the cooking area, I wonder what kind of information they would ‘discover’. If they were to find the bones of the yellow belly, would they come to the conclusion that it was caught in Cat Dam?
This place is also part of three place complexes that are lineal in nature. Firstly, Cat Dam is one of numerous places on the Mt Isa road. Within this complex it is one of the more widely known named places. As it lies on Split Creek, Cat Dam is part of the Georgina River system, also a place complex that is ‘lineal’ in nature. Although Cat Dam and Parapituri are distant they are physically related through this system. A fish from lower down that system was brought up to Cat Dam via another lineal place complex, the Boulia-Dajarra road. A characteristic of these interrelationships between distant places is the movement of people between places. Cars are critical to this movement and the contemporary maintenance of the relationships between people, the relationships between people and places and the relationships between places (remember the cars back at the Dajarra dump).

Cat Dam lies within another place complex, it is part of the numerous places and place relationships of Warluwarra country (and at the time of writing it was within the boundaries of the native title claim of the Warluwarra/ Georgina River people). This place complex includes Warluwarra Story places close to Cat Dam that are not so widely known.

From the regional and local place relationships of Cat Dam we return to Dajarra and the place complex of a house.

6.3 KEITH & EENIE’S HOUSE

Keith and Eenie’s house exemplifies a small-scale place complex consisting of a number of places with standing patterns of behaviour and with overlapping properties. One of the places within their yard is the windbreak area with its gidyea fire. In Dajarra, there are places (rooms) within the external living environments of yards just as there are rooms (places) within the internal living environment of a house.

‘Down the back of Keith’s place’

We start at the empty house block down the back of Keith’s place, standing around a red Torana with a group of men, talking, laughing and listening to country music crackling on the car stereo, stars arcing to the horizon, half moon above, red dust, pebbles and old broken glass below cold feet, the red glow of another cigarette. (See Figures 6.5, 6.6 & 6.7.)

This is one of a number of places in Dajarra where groups of men, including Keith’s sons, occasionally gathered. Cars are a feature of diurnal and nocturnal men’s social groups and although this place was irregularly occupied it was often while cars were being repaired. The open area facilitated work on cars; the removal of engines, the storage of parts and the testing of repairs - especially on unregistered cars. Those working on cars were often accompanied by others who shared conversation, sporadically assisted with the repairs, shared mechanical knowledge or learnt ‘bush mechanic’ skills through observation. During

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7 A Holden sedan.
this social interaction cars were used as furniture\textsuperscript{8}, screens\textsuperscript{9}, storage\textsuperscript{10} and as a source of recreation\textsuperscript{11}. As a socialising area this place was sufficiently removed from surrounding domiciliary environments that it permitted a ‘freedom’ of behaviour and conversation. This place was also used as a pathway between places.

**‘Under the neem tree’**

*From the car bodies, engine blocks and gear boxes stored along the back fence Keith’s yard is entered through a wide back gate. A neem tree\textsuperscript{12} dominated this back part of the yard and it provided a shaded area that was the principal setting of daytime activities during hot weather. Behind the neem tree was a flat roofed shed/shade constructed of recycled steel and timber with a corrugated metal roof. Bike parts and other objects were stored on the roof just as objects were stored on the roofs of bough shades at the West End (and elsewhere in Aboriginal Australia). The shed, fruit trees and other objects including a caravan and vehicles also contributed to the shaded environment. As this area was removed from the house it was exposed to cooling breezes. This part of the yard was regularly raked free of debris, and during the hot time it was sprayed with water creating an evaporative cooling effect. These actions created a compact floor surface free of dust whereas a thick bed of grass was maintained in other yards.*

This cool, shaded place was the focus of regular activities including daytime sleeping, yarning in family and other social groups, playing card games, eating meals, children’s play and vehicle maintenance. Those sitting or lying on bed frames in this position of the yard could observe movement along the street to either side of the house and anyone approaching the front steps of the house could be observed in the gap beneath the house (outside of the windbreak area).

The group occupying this space changed throughout the day with members of the household coming and going and members of other households visiting. At times, most noticeably around meal times, only household members occupied this domiciliary environment. In contrast, other domiciliary environments in Dajarra regularly had visitors throughout the day. Social interaction influences behaviour and the places people occupy and so too climate; in the hot, dry climate of Northwest Queensland the need for shade influences which parts of a domiciliary environment people occupy. The shade of the neem and fruit trees supported

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\textsuperscript{8}People sat on bull bars, bonnets and boots, they sat in cars, they leant on cars while standing and used cars as back rests while sitting on the ground.

\textsuperscript{9}Cars are used to block winds, they are used to screen social groups from others and they are used to create shade.

\textsuperscript{10}Items that might be stored in a car during social interaction include personal items such as a hat, and resources such as drinks, food or cigarettes.

\textsuperscript{11}Cars were brought close to social environments so that their stereos could be used in association with social groups. The repair of cars is a form of recreation, for example on one occasion the sound of a V8 coaxed back into life by a bush mechanic stimulated comments from a group of men further down the road who anticipated the car cutting out and hooted, laughed and joked around when it did. One of the group joked that he would make his car sound louder, “Yeah they’re right—wait until I get a muffler off one of Billy Fell’s old trucks for my car!”

\textsuperscript{12}Although neem trees are native to India, some Dajarra people take advantage of their medicinal qualities by using the leaves as a type of bush medicine, for example children with itchy skin can be bathed in water with neem leaves.
and elicited the behaviour that regularly occurred in this part of the yard at the same time the behaviour continually transformed and maintained the place. (See Figure 6.7.)

‘The clothesline’

Between the neem tree and the back of the house was an ‘open’ area. The eastern edge of this space was used to store various items including cars. The central part of the space was a grassed area with a clothesline. Social groups irregularly used this open, grassed area which was obviously used for drying clothes, but it was also occasionally used as a place to butcher kangaroos by hanging them from the clothesline or placing them on a steel stretcher. Bones were thrown to dogs kept in the eastern part of this area. The grass in this area indicates irregular use whereas the western half of this open space and other parts of the yard that were used more frequently had dirt and sometimes carpeted floors. To the west of the clothesline was an area used to park cars, for children’s play, as a place to catch morning sunlight, as it was exposed to cooling breezes at night it was sometimes used as a place for meals, socializing, and as a place to sleep. The cars parked in this area acted as windbreaks and privacy screens. Wood and other items including bins were stored along the western fence-line.

In the hot time some members of this household slept in the open part of the yard, which was free from overhanging branches (a source of ‘itchy grubs’) and it was exposed to cooling breezes. This space was also screened to the east and west by other trees and objects. Beds were arranged to capture breezes and in anticipation of early morning shade.

‘Back steps’

An interrelated space adjacent to the windbreak and gidyea fire was ‘the back steps’. The steps were occupied by individuals and groups of people for short periods of time and provided a place where people could participate in the activities inside and outside the house. The steps also provided a vantage point from which to observe activities in adjacent yards. Next to the steps was an external laundry used for the washing of clothes. Kangaroo stomach and intestines were occasionally cleaned in the laundry tub - this involved pushing digested grass out of the organs and then rinsing them clean.

The front yard

The activities of this household were focused on the back yard but the front yard and small south-orientated verandah, facing the main street, were also irregularly used. In other households, particularly those with north-orientated front yards, the front yard was frequently used and in some cases, the ‘front yard’ was the focus of domiciliary behaviour. At Keith’s house the dominant feature of the front yard was the regularly maintained garden with its flowerbeds, pots and garden gnomes! (See Figure 6.8.)

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13The adjacent toilet and bathroom may have influenced the irregular use of this part of the yard.
Transformation of the yard

This yard, or external living environment, was characterised by continual transformations. Some transformations were made in response to diurnal changes: a trampoline may be used by children in the middle of the yard during the day and then repositioned and used as a bed during the night; the movement of shade may be accompanied by the movement of furniture. Other transformations were related to seasonal changes such as the occupation and patterns of behaviour of the cold weather environment of the windbreak, or the hot weather environment of the neem tree, and the transformation of the physical elements of these environments including the rearrangement of objects and furniture.

Transformations were made in response to social conditions such as changes in household numbers, the use of the yard by different groups and the movement of people between the places of the domiciliary environment- from the kitchen across the yard to the neem tree, out to the back of the yard, inside to watch a video in a ‘bedroom’, back to the kitchen etc. Whereas at times up to fifteen people slept at this house, during the day only a small group of people might be found occupying the domiciliary environment as others had moved to other places in Dajarra.

Some transformations were the creative responses of the ‘ethno-architect’ in reconfiguring the physical environment such as redesigning and modifying a windbreak wall or adding a shade structure. One of the most obvious transformations in this yard over a number of years was the repositioning of a caravan. Some transformations were regular maintenance activities such as the storage of items on the fence-line, the raking away of dust and debris, the burning of long grass on fence-lines, and the watering of plants, grass and dirt floors. Many of these maintenance activities and transformations were carried out in contemporary camp situations, and were carried out at the West End town camp (see Memmott 1996:12). People did not simply ‘use’ this yard space, they were continually interacting with it and modifying it. This type of use and interaction was common across Dajarra households. (See Figure 6.9.)

Inside watching the rodeo video

Whereas external living environments are often easily and rapidly transformed in response to changed conditions, internal environments are less easily changed. Nonetheless internal spaces in Keith’s house were also regularly transformed. Diurnal changes associated with the internal living environment included people using the living space at different times of the day for different functions. For example, the living room was used for watching television throughout the day then in the evening it was transformed into a sleeping space with the rolling out of swags and then the packing up of swags in the morning.

The internal living environment of this household was characterised by an abundance of decorative elements that contributed to the personalisation of the space (see Figure 6.10). These elements included (i) sporting trophies and ribbons won by household members, (ii)
photographs of household members and relatives, (iii) paintings by household members and
others, (iv) artefacts including didgeridoos made and painted by household members and
others, boomerangs, and stone artefacts, (v) clocks and calendars, (vi) mats and printed fabric,
(vii) craft items made by household members, (viii) bottles. Many of the ornaments in this
house held an association (or memory) between people and place. These items and the
furniture were regularly rearranged. The selection of ornaments and their arrangement imbue
the space with Aboriginal identity. Not all houses in Dajarra displayed the same intensity of
ornamentation yet many displayed a similar style of ornamentation. Ornaments contribute to
the personlisation of a space and they contribute to the Aboriginality of place.

Who is in the house? - place complex properties

While sitting out under the Neem tree it was not unusual for someone to ask, “Who’s inside?
Anyone inside?” The house, an enclosure was only one place within the place complex
recognised and identified as Keith and Eenie’s place. This place complex, a domiciliary
environment, was comprised of at least thirteen interrelated places or sub-units; (1) the
associated block down the back, (2) the neem tree, (3) the fruit trees, (4) the shed, (5) east
fence-line and storage, (6) west fence-line and storage, (7) the mid part of the yard (clothes
line area), (8) the windbreak, (9) the back steps, (10) the laundry area, (11) the rainwater tank,
(12) the internal environment of the house, (13) the front yard.

The places within the external living environment of this house are as important as the places
(or rooms) that comprise the internal environment of the house. These places were physically
adjacent and bounded as a place complex by the fence-line of the yard; they were also
bounded by knowledge properties as they are identified as parts of ‘Keith and Eenies place’.
Just as we moved from the cars out the back, through the shade of the neem tree, along the
edge of grass and dirt to the west of the clothesline, through the house and into the garden of
the front yard, the occupants of this house were continually moving between and interacting
with the places of this yard.

Far too often those responsible for the provision of housing in Aboriginal communities have
focused on one place within the place complex (or domiciliary environment) of Aboriginal
households- ‘the house’. The places within this yard, and the external living environments of
other Dajarra households make it clear that equally important considerations are (i) a
preference for externally orientated lifestyles and behaviour, (ii) the creation of a range of
places outside of the house that support this lifestyle- the creation of external living
environments, and (iii) the relationship between internal and external living environments.
How can the design of a ‘house’ positively contribute to the external living environment?
The regular transformations and maintenance activities in the external living environment of this household were also characteristic of the camps at the West End.\textsuperscript{14} From Keith’s yard, a discrete place consisting of a number of interrelated places, we cross the Carbine and return to the West End to Henry’s camp and the photograph he requested from Memmott’s collection (see Section 5.13).

\section*{6.4 ACROSS THE CREEK}

\textbf{Henry and George South}

When Henry pointed to the location of his camp in the 1970s photograph of the West End he told me to inform Memmott that he was camping at ‘Georgie South’s camp’ (see Figures 6.15, 6.16, & 6.17). Georgie South had camped around the same bloodwood tree for a period of time in the 1970s.\textsuperscript{15} While some people, including Henry, identified this place as ‘Georgie South’s camp’, Henry also became identified with this place and it became known as ‘Henry’s camp’. This is a simple example of multiple layers of identity or meaning associated with one place.

Henry’s camp had some similarities with the ethno-architecture of Georgie South’s camp: (i) constructed around the bloodwood tree, (ii) cooking fire to the north and living areas to the east of enclosures, (iii) windbreak walls constructed of corrugated sheet metal, and (iv) toilet to the west of the camp. Two marked differences between the camps were (i) Henry’s camp consisted of tall structures whereas Georgie South’s consisted of low structures, and (ii) Henry’s camp consisted of an external living environment built around the tree whereas Georgie South’s camp consisted of an enclosed shelter around the tree.\textsuperscript{16} Despite these differences, in its location, physical properties and activities Henry’s camp re-articulated an existing place and was, to some degree, the manifestation of the memory of Georgie South’s camp. In the previous chapter it was argued that memories in place can be experienced - the sounds of the old people - this example suggests that memory of place can be manifested by transformations in the physical environment and articulated by activity in place.\textsuperscript{17}

\textit{‘My island home’- ‘The West End days’}

The experience of Henry’s camp provided an insight to the way that some Dajarra people ‘see’ (experience) the West End as a place complex comprised of places identified with individuals and groups of people. There are numerous places at the West End, like Georgie South’s camp, that are not obvious yet remain as part of this place complex through the maintenance of knowledge properties. Places also remain as part of the place complex

\textsuperscript{14}O’Connell (1987) observed similar dynamic characteristics in the domiciliary environments of Alyawarr camps.

\textsuperscript{15} Prior to this camp Georgie South had camped elsewhere at the West End. Henry later took me to another camp of Georgie South’s camps at Needle Bush Hole on Jayah Rocky Creek (to the west-northwest of Dajarra).

\textsuperscript{16} In the 1890s Roth documented structures on the Georgina constructed around trees including ceremonial structures built around bloodwood trees (1897:106, 165, 168). Other camps at the West End were also associated with particular trees. One man created a shade structure at the West End by building a frame around a tree and then growing vines over the frame to produce a day time shade structure.

\textsuperscript{17} Henry’s camp was later used by Tommy who built a shed and goat yard around the same bloodwood tree.
through continuity in the physical environment, for example the bloodwood tree central to Georgie South’s camp remains and became the focal point of Henry’s camp followed by Tommy’s goat yard. Although the physical environment is inherently dynamic, the bloodwood tree is growing, it is the consistency and predictability of change within the physical environment that contributes to the maintenance of this place.

When Henry and others move through the West End, they move amongst and through numerous places; places where people were born, places where people lived, places where children played, and places where people danced. Another experience at the West End assisted my understanding of this place complex.

I was ‘sitting down’ with a group of men in the shaded southern yard of a house on ‘the Ridge’, one of the men became emotional whilst listening to the song; ‘My Island Home’. This man took me out of the yard (followed by the rest of the group) to an area where we had a clear view of most of the West End, he then pointed out the places where various people camped at ‘The Ridge’ and on ‘Snake Gully’ in the 1970s, ‘the West End Days’- this was where they (the group I was with) ‘grew up’.

This man’s actions taught me something of the strong attachment that some people have with the West End as ‘home’. This man described what Henry had shown me with the assistance of an old photograph - a complex of places. The various places where families camped are still known and identified with those families. That is, people retain knowledge of the sociospatial pattern(s) of the West End.

‘They moved up to The Ridge then’
The sociospatial pattern of the West End transformed over time. Such transformations were first noted by Memmott who observed a lineal arrangement of humpies at the West End in 1973 and a more scattered arrangement in 1974 when some of the humpies had gone ( Memmott 1996:17). Some of the social changes that occurred which may have influenced transformations in the settlement pattern include: (i) individuals and groups moving into town, (ii) individuals and groups moving back out to the cattle stations to work or to other regional centres such as Mt Isa, (iii) changed circumstances within one of the camps such as the arrival of additional family members or visitors, (iv) individuals and groups shifting from one camp location to another, from ‘Snake Gully’ up to ‘The Ridge’ for example. Some people are identified with a number of camp locations at the West End and just as Henry had

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18 This song, by the Aboriginal group ‘Warumpi Band’, expresses a man’s attachment to and longing for his saltwater home and activities of that place that he remembers. (Warumpi Band 1987.)

19 Even the location of Memmott’s camp from his brief stay at the West End is remembered by some people.

20 It is possible that the initial lineal arrangement of humpies was influenced by the (i) the lineal arrangement of Aboriginal housing in town, and (ii) the experience of huts and shelters supplied on cattle stations for Aboriginal workers which were often arranged in a lineal fashion.
re-occupied Georgie South’s camp some people occupied places that had been used by others.\textsuperscript{21}

At the West End people had the ability, or freedom, to control (to define) their sociospatial relationships. People also had the freedom to modify or transform these sociospatial relationships in response to changed circumstances. Henry’s camp was a contemporary expression of this kind of freedom. In 1974 Memmott was concerned that a threat by authorities to destroy the West End town camp would remove this freedom and impose new sociospatial patterns.\textsuperscript{22} Despite the urgency of Memmott’s concerns self-constructed camps remained at the West End until the early 1980s. (Memmott 1996:11-18.)

\textbf{Tin sheds}

Within the West End sociospatial pattern, the camps themselves were place complexes-domiciliary spaces comprised of a number of places. The lifestyle of the town camps was predominantly externally orientated. One of the defining physical characteristics of the external living environments of the domiciliary space was the ground, which was maintained by the regular raking away of debris, the regular wetting down of dust and consistent occupation (see Figures 6.11 & 6.12). These actions produced a compact and clean floor surface that was marked by a line of debris at the edge of the space. The maintenance activities of camps were extended beyond this edge with the periodic firing of surrounding grasses to repel reptiles and insects. These external living environments were also shaped through the use of windbreaks, shade structures, fires (cooking and warming) and enclosures. (Memmott 1996:11-18.)

The enclosed forms included self-built ‘tin sheds’ or ‘humpies’ that were mostly small rectilinear buildings of corrugated sheet metal over bush-timber frames, caravans, tents and cars. These enclosures were utilised as much for the properties they contributed to the external living environment, such as shade and screening, as the internal environment they provided. During bursts of cold southerly winds fires were maintained in the external living environment to the north of these structures and some people heated the internal environment at night with gidyea coals placed on a sheet of corrugated metal.\textsuperscript{23} The physical environment of these camps was regularly transformed in relation to changing social and climatic conditions. All of the architectural types described by Roth were present in these camps, (i) wet weather and cold weather enclosures (the domes being replaced by rectilinear structures),

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21}In his work on Alyawarr settlements O’Connell (1979:109-119) similarly observed transformations in sociospatial patterns occurring at the intra- camp level and inter–camp level.
\item \textsuperscript{22} The local government authority issued demolition notices on the town campers in Cloncurry in 1972 and by 1973 the Cloncurry camp was gone. At the time there were concerns that the Council would apply the same process to the Dajarra town camps (Memmott 1996:19). A number of authors have been concerned with the implications of adjustments in sociospatial patterns that Aboriginal people were required to make when they occupied permanent housing sites in settlements (see O’Connell 1979, Stoll et al 1979, Memmott 1990).
\item \textsuperscript{23} Roth documented the use of fires within cold weather domes: “…On completion a big fire is kindled inside in the corner opposite the door, with the result that by sundown, when the embers are removed, the place is quite warm enough to sleep in.” (Roth 1898:106.)
\end{itemize}
(ii) shade roofs, (iii) windbreaks, and (iv) open camps or external living environments. (Memmott 1996:11-18.)

Other features of the domiciliary space of the town camps included: timber food benches for the storage of utensils and food stuffs; steel stretchers and makeshift beds used outdoors for daytime sleeping and at night when hot; the storage of water transported to the camps in drums; rubbish drums; and firewood heaps. (Memmott 1996:13-17.)

‘The Opera Houses’
In the early 1980s, the architect Lindsay Bond was engaged to design houses to replace the self-built camps at ‘the Ridge’. He aspired to design houses that reflected the spatial properties of the camps. Four houses were constructed consisting of one major internal room, bathroom, storeroom, verandah / living area and external laundry. Unlike the self-built dwellings these houses (i) were raised off the ground level, (ii) were all identical, (iii) were designed located and built by a third party, and (iv) the tenants rented. The irregular form of ‘the Opera houses’ contrasted with the rectilinear nature of the self-built enclosures of the camp and houses which were built ‘up town’ at the same time. The most regular criticism of these houses by occupants is that the roofs do not catch sufficient water to fill rainwater tanks. However, additions to the houses by occupants suggest that the design did not provide an environment that supported patterns of externally orientated domiciliary behaviour. Occupants transformed the ‘Opera Houses’ with the addition of windbreaks, shade structures and cooking fires (including ground ovens) (see Figure 6.13). While some of the occupants of the West End Camps such as Georgie’s mother moved into the new ‘Opera Houses’ others moved from the Ridge to camp at Snake Gully.

In the 1990s, two additional single bedroom houses were constructed at ‘The Ridge’ where domiciliary lifestyles continued to be externally orientated.24 External living environments utilised by people included verandah spaces, shaded grassed spaces and windbreaks with associated cooking and warming fires. Fences and lawn grass maintained within yards defined the boundary to these domiciliary spaces with long grass or no grass beyond the fence. In the 1990s fire was employed by Dajarra people to ‘clean up’ the West End.

The ‘Opera Houses’ and the two new houses at the West End replaced the dynamic sociospatial pattern of the West End with a fixed spatial arrangement. People can only change this sociospatial arrangement by moving house but housing availability restricts such movement. Nonetheless there is evidence of people forming social units at the West End. For example, when Henry was camped at the West End in the 1990s his relatives occupied three of the five houses on ‘The Ridge’. Despite their fixed nature the houses at the West End to some degree share a spatial arrangement that reflects the spacing between the self-built

24 These are of the same typology as houses constructed in town in the 1990s.
enclosures of the camp. This spatial arrangement contrasts with the closely spaced houses on the rectilinear grid in town.

Some people not only remember places within the West End but also the various sociospatial patterns of the West End over time. However, not all Dajarra people experience the West End in the same way. For example, children who grew up ‘in town’ in the 1990s have a different experience of the West End to their parents who had experiences as children at the West End in the 1970s. These people, in turn, have different experiences to those of older Dajarra people who have experienced the West End since the 1940s or 1950s. Despite differences in the lived experience of the West End, some people experience the West End through the stories of others - children learn of their parents and grandparent’s experiences at the West End for example. In the late 1990s early 2000s the West End continued to be a popular residential place due to its social separation from the town (it is quiet) and ‘The Ridge’ being on high ground is free from flooding and is exposed to good breezes.

**Shanghai’s and mungaroo**

When people like Susan or Georgie recalled the time when they were camped at the West End they have also remembered bush tucker places they visited in the vicinity of the West End (see Section 5.2). For example, when the mungaroo\(^25\) shoots dried out, ‘big mobs’ of children would sit along ‘The Lagoon’ on Carbine Creek digging up the mungaroo bulbs and storing them in milk tins. The mungaroo were then cooked ‘in the ashes’, cooled, and the shells then removed by rubbing the bulb between ones hands. The old people used to shake the bulbs in a coolamon to let the wind take the black shells away. Children also hunted along the Carbine with shanghai (see Figure 6.14). In addition to their own trips children followed their parents and grandparents to various bush tucker places around the West End. Game such as kangaroo and wallaby were tracked down on foot and hunted with kangaroo dogs and rifles. As there was no refrigeration, meat was often ‘shared up’ amongst the camps.

**The River and West End**

Another dimension of the West End place complex is the performance of corroborees at the West End. People would sing and dance on the flat near ‘The Ridge’, and near the ‘Lagoons’ on the creek. There were public corroborees and private/ gender specific corroborees. These were the same songs and dances as those performed at corroboree places on the Georgina River. People from different country affiliations attended some of these dances at the West End, for example Kalkadoon living at the Pensioner Camp walked across to the West End to attend. There was a tradition of East Arrerntic groups and Georgina River people interacting in ceremonial/ dance activity on the Georgina and this continued at the West End. A Dajarra man described one of these events:

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\(^{25}\) Wild onion or *dintja-dintja* in Warluwarra (Nancarrow 2002:17).
They used to paint up in the creek and they would come up in the dark singing. They would come out from behind a windbreak. There would be men, women and children watching. The kids would stoke up the fire so that they could see better. Two fires- one on each side. The audience would sit in a line, in front of them and at either end were fires, the dancers danced in between these fires. The windbreak is on the other side of the dancing area. The windbreak curves around, and the dancers gather behind it before coming out from the sides of the windbreak. There would be 6 or 7 blokes dancing, they would be singing in Warluwarra. (HS 6/6/2000.)

‘Take me back across the creek’- place complex properties

The West End is both a place complex and a place within other place complexes. As a place complex the West End is comprised of sub-units of interrelated places such as ‘The Ridge’, ‘Snake Gully’, The Lagoons’ and places where people danced Georgina River corroborees. These places are identified as part of the West End, they are physically close and they are related through patterns of behaviour. ‘The Ridge’ and ‘Snake Gully’ are also comprised of sub-units of place, these being camps or domiciliary environments (and later houses) that are clustered or positioned in culturally distinct sociospatial patterns. The domiciliary environment(s) of individual camps are yet another scale of place complex with constituent places including enclosures, shades, windbreaks, hearths, rubbish areas, woodheaps and open external living environments.

The West End is identified as a place that is part of the complex of Dajarra town camps that includes the nearby ‘Pensioner Camp’. For many years these town camps were the dominant Aboriginal environments of Dajarra and important centres of Aboriginal lifestyles in Northwest Queensland more broadly. Each of these camp places was identified with particular social groups there was movement and interaction between them. This complex of socially distinct town camps was in contrast to the town itself, which was dominated by non-Aboriginal people until the 1960s.

The West End is also identified by Dajarra people as one of many places within Dajarra (a place complex). Other places in this complex include the ‘Town’ and Carbine Creek. ‘Town’ and ‘West End’ are closely interrelated yet distinct places within this complex. These places are distinguished by different histories of Aboriginal occupation, they are physically separated by Carbine Creek and they are spatially and socially different. The social distinction between town and West End has transformed over time with the town itself becoming an Aboriginal environment. A distinct social characteristic of the West End in the 1990s was the small households of predominantly single people and couples (and occasionally small families) that occupied the one-bedroom houses. In contrast, larger households mostly occupied the houses in town. People continued to move physically between ‘town’ and the West End, they also moved mentally between the ‘West End days’ (town camp days) and today. The continual movement ‘across the creek’ creates and maintains interrelationships between these places. The movement and actions of people also
created a strong relationship between the West End and a number of bush tucker places that supported the town camp population.

The West End is closely interrelated with more distant places such as the Georgina River, ‘the River’, which is a place complex that includes Urandangi, The Clay Pan, the Watering Place and Jimberella. The interrelationship between the Georgina and the West End was created and maintained in a number of ways. Firstly, the West End developed from being a destination for a series of forced migrations from the Georgina to a residential base for Georgina River people, it became a ‘home’ and centre for Georgina River people in parallel to important residential places on the River and the River itself. This duality was reflected in knowledge properties with people, in time, simultaneously identifying with the Georgina and the West End (or Dajarra). Thirdly, for many years people regularly travelled between the Georgina and the West End which were focal places in the lifestyle of Georgina River People. Another interrelationship was created and maintained through the performance of Georgina River corroborees at the West End. These performances represent the enactment of place specific behaviour in another place or the transference of place specific behaviour from one place to another. These performances not only brought the Georgina to the West End but they also maintained the Georgina whilst distant from it. Thus a place can be maintained through the performance of certain types of behaviour associated with that place whilst distant from that place and in another place. In the previous chapter it was argued that a place can be maintained whilst distant from that place through passive interactions in the form of mental operations - no doubt while at the West End the River was thought of and talked about as it is in Dajarra today. Lastly, The Georgina River people shaped the West End with domiciliary behaviour, architecture and sociospatial patterns that they brought with them from the Georgina and cattle station camps.

The West End illustrates that a place may also be ‘complex’ by way of the multiple (and/or different) transformations and experiences that have occurred within it and the memory of these transformations and experiences. Georgie South’s camp and Henry’s camp (and later Tommy’s goat yard) illustrated the coexistence of multiple place properties within one place. This is illustrated at another scale by the various sociospatial patterns of the West End over time. The multiple transformations, experiences and places of these sociospatial patterns are remembered and coexist with places articulated by contemporary activities. This complexity is a product of the dynamic nature of people-environment interactions. As a place, the West End is in an ongoing process of creation. Places are not necessarily made in one definitive process, that is, places are not end products of a particular process, the process is often ongoing. In the case of the West End the persistence of the transformed physical environment of camps, such as remnant architecture, has not been critical in the maintenance of this place. You can’t see remnant architecture of the Town Camps. However, you can see the Town Camps because they have been maintained by a relative stability in natural physical properties.
and the maintenance of knowledge properties. Yet the maintenance of architectural traditions, or culturally distinct ways of transforming the physical environment, does contribute to the maintenance of this place - people continue to employ similar techniques of transforming the environment.

From the West End I return to the annual Urandangi rodeo to further examine the camps of Aboriginal people from Northwest Queensland and the eastern Northern Territory. In these camps we see recent examples of people enjoying the same freedom to define sociospatial relationships that they or their relatives did at the West End, and that ‘the old people’ did in their camps on the Georgina and we see the use of the same architectural traditions.

6. 5 CAMPS AT THE ‘DANGI

All the campfires

I first experienced Urandangi through stories I heard in Dajarra in situations such as lounging under the neem tree in Keith’s yard, drinking with the boys under Georgie’s carport, or sitting with groups of people in front of the shop. People described Urandangi as it normally is, with about twenty people living in a few houses near the pub and at the Marmanya Aboriginal community and then the dramatic transformation of the township at rodeo time with the influx of hundreds of people camped out on the black soil. In strong contrast to the spacing of houses in Dajarra, they described big camps identified with key individuals and spaced at distances of hundreds of metres. People also described some of the social interactions that occur over the weekend including people moving between camps visiting friends and relatives and events at the Urandangi pub. The following is a description of my first experiences at Urandangi with Dajarra people.

I travelled to Urandangi with George, his wife and children and Georgie’s mate Russell (George’s wife’s cousin brother). We came around a bend in the dirt road and in the distance you could make out the bright lights of the ‘Dangi pub and in George’s words “all the campfires” - that was it- Urandangi. We turned off the road and followed tyre tracks to a clump of trees and the camp of George’s mother, his sister and her children who had travelled from Mt Isa. They had a fire beside a tree that supported one side of a high food table made of a piece of sheet metal that was supported on the other side by steel star pickets.26 George introduced me to his family and soon after the ‘Jimberella Bus’ from Dajarra arrived to drop off George’s cousin Kenny (his mother’s sister’s son) and his wife.

From George’s mother’s camp we crossed the Dajarra road to a big camp several hundred metres distant that was identified with Kenny’s brother ‘Ranko’ and his wife Shirley. There were a number of fires in this camp of extended family (approximately fifty people) who had travelled from Dajarra, Uurlampe and Mt Isa. The darkness that surrounded the camp was

26 Steel star pickets are commonly used as support posts to wire fences on cattle stations.
broken by the soft firelight of other camps, the closest (30-50metres away) being a camp of Shirley’s relations (approximately 10 people). Russell and Georgie greeted friends and relations in the camp and introduced me (‘gave me a break’) to those I had not met.27 We left the camp on foot with a big group of ‘Dajarra boys’ for the lights of the pub that glowed through dust lifted by the movement of vehicles and people.28

At the edge of the illuminated space at the front of the pub the group paused to greet others who watched the activities of the pub verandah from a distance. We then joined the ‘big mob’ on the verandah and in the bar where people met up with friends and relatives, people talked and joked, some people drank, and others struggled for space to dance. At one stage people reeled back as a brief altercation broke out between two women. A Dajarra man told me to ignore the row, as it had nothing to do with Dajarra people. When it was time to ‘have a camp’ (sleep) I looked south towards the darkness of the camping area and realised I had no idea where Keith’s camp was (and my swag) (see Section 5.1). Farren asked his brother to drive me out there.

The following morning Keith’s family visited a household at Marmanya and then returned to the rodeo ground where people watched and competed in the range of horse sports and athletic events of the gymkhana (see Figures 6.18 & 6.19). This was a social environment where Dajarra people interacted with friends and relatives from various camps in the same space as other Aboriginal people (Alyawarr from Lake Nash for example) and non-Aboriginal people.

During the middle of the day I went down to ‘the River’ with Russell and George for a bogie (swim/bath). The deep, shaded channel and cold, shallow pool provided relief from the hot wind and black soil dust. Refreshed we headed back to the rodeo ground with hot wind streaming through the car windows and fresh dust clinging to our damp clothes. On the way we pulled up at the pub where a few Lake Nash men came down from the verandah to greet George and Russell and they stood around the car yarning and joking.

In the evening I returned to Ranko’s camp with Keith and his family (see Figure 6.20). To celebrate a birthday some of the people from this camp had cooked meat and vegetables ‘in the hole’ (ground oven) and prepared dishes such as ‘cabbage stew’ that warmed in pots next to billies on the edge of the fire. People sat around talking, joking and eating as kids ran around with torches playing. Later, we drove to the pub where we parked next to others

27 A similar process of moving about camps greeting relatives was documented by Roth (1897:134). He provides a brief account of people arriving at the camp of relatives they have not met for some time and describes men greeting each other with handshakes and mothers upon meeting their daughters again, crying and rubbing heavy sticks over their heads until their daughter intervenes.
28 Some of the men informed me how to behave at the pub. They said not to worry about the men from the Northern Territory side but if any women came up to talk to me I was to walk away because they might be ‘promised’ and they might have brothers or a promised husband watching and they would ‘come for me’. It was fine for me to talk to the women from Dajarra because I knew Dajarra people.
watching the action from the opposite side of the road. I joined Russell and the boys at the open air ‘disco’ at the back of the pub where the Dajarra people mostly stayed together. At the end of the disco I returned with Keith to camp at the same place as the previous night.

In the morning, on the way to the rodeo ground, we visited the camp of Keith’s sister in-law who had travelled to Urandangi from Mt Isa. She commented that in Mt Isa children sometimes asked her who their relatives are, at Urandangi she can say to them, “look around, your relations are camped all around you”. We left Joan for the rodeo where the ‘Dajarra boys’ helped each other prepare for their rides and competed against non-Aboriginal stockmen from the Georgina River stations. (See Figure 6.22.)

The camps
This brief account of my initial experiences at Urandangi has introduced a number of places; the rodeo ground, the pub, Marmanya, a waterhole on the Georgina, and a number of camps of varying size and composition that comprise ‘the Dajarra camp’. These places and others not visited during this trip, including the old dance Hall, the School, the places where Dajarra people camped in the 1970s, the places where the Lake Nash Alyawarr camped in the 1980s, and Dreaming places, comprise a place complex - Urandangi.

Over the rodeo weekend at Urandangi, ‘the Dajarra camp’ was a place complex characterised by distinctive sociospatial patterns created by ‘Dajarra people’ who camped about each other in the same area each year. The people in this camp were either closely related or had a shared experience of living together at Dajarra (including the West End) though some now reside elsewhere. At times Marmanya and Lake Nash residents joined relatives in ‘the Dajarra camp’ and some Dajarra people camped elsewhere including with relatives at Marmanya or in town.

The ‘Dajarra camp’ was spatially distinct and separate from the camps of Lake Nash Alyawarr or Arrente people from communities further down the Sandover and Plenty Highways which were usually located to the north of the Dajarra camp and on the Headingly road and the camps of non-Aboriginal people from cattle stations. The location of the Dajarra camp on the southern side of Urandangi and on the Dajarra road suggests the locational principles described by Roth (1897:134) may have been at work, that is, of people forming a camp on that side of an established camp in the direction they travelled from. There also appears to be a type of social accretion involved in the location of the Dajarra camp. Ranko’s camp was usually the first camp to be established at Urandangi and it always occupied a prime location close to the rodeo grounds and toilet facilities. Other’s arriving at Urandangi such as Shirley’s relations would then set up their camp in relation to this camp.

The extended family camps within the Dajarra camp usually consisted of a key family group or key family member, other family members, and close friends (for example a car load of
young men may join the family camp of the driver). These camps displayed another level of social accretion whereby individuals or groups of people join an extended family camp. For example, in 1996 and 1999 on arrival at Urundangi George parked his car at Ranko’s camp.\textsuperscript{29} In 1997 George, his wife and children camped with his wife’s mother’s sister and when George’s brother and mother arrived at Urundangi they joined George and his family at this camp.

The other major camp type were the camps of unmarried men ranging in age from teenagers to men in their early thirties. These camps contained related men and unrelated men or close friends. These camps were predominantly used for sleeping and storing gear with other spaces visited by the group throughout the day.\textsuperscript{30} Such a camp in 1998 consisted of two car-loads of young men (approximately 10 men) from two family groups who travelled from Dajarra to Urundangi together and camped together near the camp of one of the family groups.\textsuperscript{31} Although there was intermarriage between their families the men were not directly related. A smaller example in 2001 was a camp of two brothers and their cousin brother. Younger men (including younger brothers) joined this camp for social interaction and to share resources, such as a goanna cooked in a ground oven, but slept elsewhere.

Within the Dajarra camp there was a repertoire of consistently used camp locations defined by coolibah and gidyea trees that were used for shade, storage and as supports to temporary structures. Between 1996 and 2004, some of these places (camps) were occupied by the same core group. In contrast other places were consistently used but by different groups and some family groups used different places each year. Despite differences in the settlement pattern of the camp each year, a number of family groups maintained similar sociospatial relationships with one another although the distance between their camps changed. For example, between 1997 and 2001 the camp of Keith’s family was located between Ranko’s camp and the Bismark’s camp however during that time it moved closer to the Bismark camp. Over the rodeo weekend groups of people are identified with the place they occupied but previous occupants and previous sociospatial patterns are also recalled.

This repertoire of regularly used camp places was emphasised by the experience of camping in an unusual place:

\textit{In 2001, I arrived at Urundangi with two Dajarra men and as we drove from the pub towards the camp, one of the men expressed his surprise at the small number of campfires and hence

\textsuperscript{29} The establishment of a camp is often as simple as the minimal action of parking a vehicle at a particular place, or locating a swag. These are simple, yet common actions of placement in Northwest Queensland that establish identification and relationships with a place and with other people.

\textsuperscript{30} These characteristics seem to be similar to O’Connell’s (1979:108) observations of Alyawarr camps: “men’s households are generally organised on grounds of age and social maturity rather than kin criteria, and as a result, often have members with close social and economic ties in different parts of the settlement.”

\textsuperscript{31} O’Connell (1979:108) found amongst Alyawarr camps “the economic insecurity of most unmarried young men makes it essential that they camp near their parents or other close relations.”
the small number of camps. “Where will we camp?” - the lack of camps seemed to make
difficult the positioning of our camp. Before we reached the camping area the police pulled
our vehicle over for a random check.32 The driver asked the police, “Where are all the
camps?” (Where is everyone?). Misunderstanding the question the officer replied, “You can
camp anywhere you like.” As we drove off it was decided to camp in the middle of the race
track close to the finishing line, an area that was known to be the focus of the horse sports the
following morning! The following evening we camped on the fence-line of the rodeo ground!

These unusual camp locations were a source of amusement for the occupants of the camp and
other Dajarra people. However these alternative locations also had advantages, as they were
both free of vegetation whereas the area usually occupied by Dajarra people was covered in
long grass that year, and the distance of this camp from other camps provided a degree of
social independence or privacy.

**Between camps**

A feature of the sociospatial arrangement of the camps at Urandangi is the contrast of the
distance, or spacing, between these camps with the spacing of houses within settlements such
as Dajarra. Whereas the domiciliary spaces of households in Dajarra adjoin one another and
houses are spaced as closely as 4-8 metres, at Urandangi the distance between camps ranged
from 30-300 metres. At these distances visual surveillance and non-verbal communication
could be maintained between camps yet the camps generally retained aural privacy although
shouting carried between close camps. (See Figures 6.21 & 6.24.)

There was a preference for clear visual surveillance of other camps. This was illustrated by a
situation where a person moved a car to provide late afternoon shade to a camp but received
complaints from others in the camp as the new position of the car blocked their view of other
camps. Whilst occupying a camp the activities of other camps were often a source of interest
and entertainment- people sometimes provided humorous commentaries to the activities of a
distant camp, sometimes people provide the voices to distant social interactions that could be
seen but not heard. People interpreted the activities and even conversations of those distant
based on (i) familiarity with the behaviour of the person at the time (standing patterns of
behaviour), (ii) knowledge of the personalities involved, and (iii) knowledge of the current
social climate. Watching social interactions is as important as participating in social
interactions, in fact watching and being watched are part of participating in social
interactions. Clear visual surveillance and distances between camps also allows people to
adjust behaviour and conversation as others approach.33

32 One of numerous random checks carried out by the Police over the rodeo weekend.
33 This preference for visual surveillance seems to parallel the observations Biernoff (1979:176) made of Nunggubuyu
preferences for spaces with clear vision of the surrounding settlement: “This satisfies the emotional needs of being aware of
one’s immediate physical and social environment, of entertainment and interest in the doings of members of one’s own
community and of not being caught napping by some untoward event...”
Some of the camps at Urandangi consisted of a number of nocturnal domiciliary groups or sub-camps that were most evident in sleeping positions. Nocturnal domiciliary groups included; couples, nuclear families, large family groups and single men. In some instances there was very little distance (or a subtle distinction) between the nocturnal domiciliary groups of a camp. In other cases nocturnal domiciliary groups were located 5 to 10 metres apart. These sub-groups were not always obvious during the day when camps were transformed by people forming other types of social groups within the camp, often with visitors from other camps, and by people moving away from the camp to join other social groups at other places. Furthermore, there was often very little physical evidence of these sub-groups as camps were transformed in the morning with the packing away of swags. (See Figure 6.23.)

A feature of evening and morning behaviour at the rodeo camps was the movement of individuals and groups of people between camps. Just as George met up with his mother and sister, on arrival at Urandangi people often moved between camps greeting and visiting friends and relatives. Over the remainder of the weekend people continued to visit relatives and friends, and participate in social activities- perhaps spending time joking, yarning (telling stories), commenting on events, sharing a meal and a drink, playing card games, and then moving on. Social groups converged at camps before moving on to other places (for example the group of men who walked to the pub together). Most people left the camps for the activities of the rodeo grounds and returned later in the afternoon.

Camp architecture
The temporary camps that Dajarra people generate at Urandangi are characterised by minimal (architectural) transformations of the physical environment. Following the selection of a particular camp location (or shade tree) the common and often the first architectural transformation that people make at camp places is the creation of a domiciliary space or external living environment by clearing the ground of debris. This may simply involve throwing aside larger items or brushing the ground with one’s feet. Other’s rake the area to be occupied with bunches of leaves or with garden rakes (carried to Urandangi specifically for this purpose), or they scrape the ground surface with a shovel. An interesting variation on this process occurred when a group of people arrived at Urandangi after an afternoon downpour that had turned the surface of the black soil into clay. One of the men from this camp cleared a domiciliary space by scraping off the thin top layer of clay until he reached a layer of dry soil. One year a group of people organised for a back hoe that was active in the area some time before the rodeo to scrape their preferred camp-site clear of long grass.

Another architectural transformation common to all camps was the placement of gidyea woodheaps and the placement and maintenance of gidyea fires. Gidyea wood was commonly

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34 In his studies in Eastern Arnhem Land Biernoff (1979:160) observed, “Family groups were defined in part by those who slept together.”
collected a few kilometres south of Urundangi on the Urundangi-Dajarra road. Utensils were sometimes stored on top of wood heaps adjacent to cooking fires. Fires were used for illumination, cooking (including the use of ground ovens or cooking holes) and body warming. During the day there was minimal physical evidence in the landscape of some of the camps because people had moved away from the camps, moved vehicles away from camps, or packed up the camp for the day (perhaps some swags remained stored at the base of a tree). It was in the soft light of early evening as people returned to camps and fires were stoked that the locations of camps were most apparent - ‘all the campfires’.

Characteristic of camp behaviour in the morning and evening was ‘bush cooking’ over gidyea fires and the sharing of food with members of the camp and visitors (see Figure 6.25). \(^{35}\) Single men returned to their parent’s camp or the camp of some other relative for a meal, or they joined the family camp of other single men. Two meals commonly prepared were corned meat (beef) and damper (or bread) (these were sometimes prepared in advance back at Dajarra) and grilled meat and bread or damper. Dajarra people, particularly those who grew up in the West End, often say that they ‘grew up’ on meat and damper.\(^{36}\)

Most camps had a table to store common food items such as sugar, tea, milk powder, bread, flour, salt, pepper, sauce, margarine, golden syrup, and utensils such as enamel mugs and plates. Some had a bench constructed on site or a portable table while others simply used eskies or car bonnets as temporary food tables. Meal times were characterised by movement between the cooking fire and the food table as people took tea from the billy or a piece of meat from the hot plate and returned to the food table to add other foods to their meal or sugar and milk to their tea. Water drums were another feature of camps with water transported from the bore on the Carbine at Dajarra, the public tap near the ‘Dangi pub or from the Georgina.

The positioning of swags, and the positioning of vehicles to be used as screens, shade walls or furniture also transformed the physical environment of the camp. Vehicles positioned in a north-south direction provided afternoon shade and morning shade. For example in Ranko’s camp a truck was often parked in this fashion and shaded a food table from afternoon sun. Swags were sometimes placed along the western side of vehicles in anticipation of early morning shade. Vehicles were also positioned in an east-west direction to protect camps from southerly winds. Vehicles were the most obvious element of camps; from a mode of transport they became objects or elements in the architecture of the camp. Cars signified the identity of camps and people joined camps by parking their car there.

Camps were also transformed by the construction of minimal and temporary built forms such as windbreaks, roof structures and the use of existing elements such as shade trees. In some

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\(^{35}\) Some camps fed large numbers of visitors.

\(^{36}\) One woman believed that people were getting sick because they were no longer eating these meals.
Chapter 6 - All the Camps Fires.

camps the common windbreak consisting of sheet metal fixed to star pickets with wire was constructed. Shade structures were sometimes constructed at camps, including roofs of tarpaulins suspended from trees and flat roofed bough shades on bush timber frames. Enclosed shelters used for sleeping and storage in camps included tents, caravans, and cars. Some people used domed tents that were of a similar height to the domed shelters that Roth observed on the Georgina River. Most camps made use of shade trees which were also used to store items and utensils. Trees were sometimes used as supports to simple structures; this is something that Roth (1897:106) also observed in camps in Northwest Queensland.

All the cars, all the fires and all the people- place complex properties

The temporary camps at the annual Urandangi rodeo continue the long history of large groups of Aboriginal people gathering, interacting and camping together at this place. The Dajarra camp is one of the largest contemporary camps of Aboriginal people on the Georgina River (on the Queensland side) with other large camps situated on popular fishing holes further down the River.

The Urandangi rodeo is one of few situations in Northwest Queensland where a large Aboriginal population has the freedom to establish, define and modify culturally distinct sociospatial patterns outside of the constraints of settlement plans and housing. This is the kind of freedom of cultural expression that Memmott (1996) identified in the West End town camp and prompted him to defend the existence of that camp in the 1970s.

One level of this cultural expression is the formation of the ‘Dajarra camp’, a camp comprised of people who share identification as Dajarra people- ‘DJ mob’. This sociospatial unit or social group is observable at other regional situations and events where Dajarra people express a shared identity by occupying spaces together. The Dajarra camp is an example of a mutual identification between a group of people and a place. The occupation of the camp by Dajarra people creates an interrelationship between Dajarra and the camp and an interrelationship between Dajarra and Urandangi, one of many ways that these two places are interrelated.

The extended family camps that comprise the sociospatial pattern of the Dajarra camp are similar to those of the West End. This sociospatial pattern is a physical expression of the social relationships that operate within and across the Dajarra built environment and social relationships that occur across the region. At Urandangi these social relationships are more readily expressed (as they were at the West End) by people joining particular family camps and by the positioning of camps in relation to one another. There is a dialectical quality to this sociospatial pattern in that although the various camps are distinct and distant there is movement and interaction between them. Groups of people establish distance between themselves yet cross that distance physically, visually, or socially. People are regularly in-between camps. The location of camps within the ‘Dajarra Camp’ is not simply a product of
social relationships; these locations are also shaped by the characteristics and opportunities of
the physical environment, in particular the shade trees. Places are a product of people-
environment interactions, so too place complexes.

For a short period of time each year (2-3 days) Dajarra people articulate this place with social
relationships that generate interrelationships between camps/ places. When people return to
Dajarra, Mt Isa or Urlampe this sociospatial pattern is no longer visible at Urandangi. However the social relationships that generated it continue in these other places and the
repertoire of regularly used camp places remain.

This complex of camps is articulated each year with a new sociospatial pattern that displays
similarities with the sociospatial pattern of previous years. This consistency and the difference
from year to year is a characteristic of people enjoying the freedom to define sociospatial
arrangements. It is a reminder of the dynamic nature of people-environment interactions.
Sociospatial arrangements, place complexes, are maintained and modified by the actions of
people.

The Urandangi camps are temporarily transformed or articulated by groups of people enacting
consistent patterns of behaviour and producing consistent architectural transformations. Such
transformations are often made quickly and temporarily; they involve minimal or negligible
transformations of the physical environment, and they may simply involve carrying out
patterns of behaviour within the existing and naturally occurring physical properties of a place
(the most obvious signs of these camps in the landscape are ‘all the cars’ and ‘all the
campfires’). Outside of these times of occupation very little evidence remains of these
architectural transformations (see Section 5.1). Thus, there are places that do not possess
permanent architectural forms but are places of regular and consistent architectural
transformations. 37

These examples support Memmott’s notion of a ‘minimalist camp architecture’. From his
observations of Aboriginal travellers’ camps, including that of an Alyawarr camp in mulga
scrub, Memmott produced the following definition of architecture:

Architecture as a selected, arranged and constructed configuration of environmental
properties, both natural and artificial, in and around one or more activity spaces,
combined with patterns of behavioural rules, to result in human comfort and quality of
lifestyle. (Memmott & Go-Sam 1999:237.)

The architecture of the camps displays the maintenance of Architectural elements and
environments on the Georgina described by Roth and the architectural elements and
environments of the West End camps. Dajarra people have commented on the similarities

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37 For further discussion of temporary and minimal Aboriginal architecture see Memmott & Go-Sam (1999:237).
between the camps at Urandangi and those at the West End, these include: the foods consumed; the territorial dichotomy between camps; social spacing and social privacy between family groups; regular surveillance of other camps and of people moving between camps; rubbish discarded to the edge of domiciliary spaces; transportation of gidyea firewood to the camp and the creation of gidyea fires, hearths and ground ovens; transportation of water to the camp and the storage of water; the use of windbreaks and shade structures; knowledge is retained of the location of previous camps.

To end this Chapter we head about 70 kilometres downstream from the late nights, dust and temporary camps of the Urandangi rodeo, to Jimberella on Wakabi waterhole. Warluwarra, East Arrernte and other Aboriginal people have made many journeys between Urandangi and Jimberella, and they continue to do so (see Section 7.5). Journeys, physical and mental, between Jimberella and Dajarra are frequent and there are constant reminders of Jimberella in Dajarra. Jimberella not only has interrelationships with these and other places but it is also complex in itself with a range of place properties.

**6.6 JIMBERELLA**

**On the ridge at Jimberella**

We were camped on the northern end of ‘the ridge’ at Jimberella, next to the ‘sheds’ that Byron Nathan built. Byron owned the small property (162ha) at Jimberella for about 15 years from the mid 1950s. There had been some talk in Dajarra of death adders lurking around the limestone outcrops on the ridge so some in the camp had set up their swags off the ground; Henry was sleeping on a steel stretcher he had brought with him from Dajarra, Ted, Peggy (Henry’s cousin sister) and others slept on the back of trailers and Susan, Merley and a group of children slept together on a large calico.

I woke during the night to watch the full moon lower towards the western horizon, the air was crisp and cool. The limestone ridge glowed white/grey in the moonlight, so too the black soil where Nathan had grown lucerne and vegetables between the ridge and the tree lined bank of the River. Immediately below the ridge were the yards where Nathan held goats that he kept for milk and tanks that held water pumped from the River. Some Dajarra people worked with Nathan building his plant at Jimberella. People often camped on the ridge because in comparison to the riverbank it is exposed to cooling breezes and it is relatively free from mosquitoes.

In the soft light and cool of early morning the fire was stoked with wood that had been collected from some gidyea at the southern end of the ridge and stored close to the hearth. The ridge at Jimberella is a popular camping place and this was clear from the volume and spread of ashes around the hearth from previous fires. Some of the hot ashes were removed from the fire with a shovel and placed to the side to create another ‘fire’ for cooking toast.
'Netting' (wire mesh) was placed over this bed of hot ashes as a grill to hold bread. (See Figure 6.26.)

Swags were rolled and Susan, Merley and the kids headed back to Dajarra. Once the shade on the ridge disappeared the rest of the group moved down to the River. We drove passed the sign on the track leading up to the ridge that reads: ‘Private Property, No Admittance Without Permission’. The current owner does not occupy or use Jimboola and apparently lives in Mt Isa - no notice was taken of the sign, and it seems that it never is (although some people contact local station managers when visiting the River). Close to the River the track runs along the netting fence that once protected Nathan’s vegetable garden.

Ted parked the Toyota under the shade of a large coolibah tree that is a popular day camp place on the bank of the waterhole. Many people have camped under the shade of this tree. A gidyea fire was lit on top of an existing hearth to the south of the tree. Previous occupants had erected a typical sheet metal and star picket windbreak over the hearth and someone had left cooking utensils hanging from the tree. (See Figure 6.27.)

We went down the bank to collect water. This perennial waterhole is approximately twenty-five kilometres long, it is one of the most reliable waterholes on the Georgina and it is said to be very deep. Older people say that they have never seen the waterhole at Jimberella go dry. It is also believed that springs fed by a complex of subterranean limestone features replenish the waterhole during dry periods. The water itself has a milky appearance (perhaps due to the limestone) yet people say it is ‘good water’ (good drinking water). Other parts of the Georgina have clear but ‘poor water’ (non-potable). When people were camped on other parts of the Georgina such as Black Gate (10km upstream) they travelled to Jimberella on a bush track to draw water and then carted it back to their camp. Some people cart water back to Dajarra from Jimberella.

Water was drawn from the River for the billy. Someone had placed a sheet of corrugated metal over the crusted, black soil formations and the soft boggy mud created by cattle on the waterline. Lignum and other plants grow along parts of the waterline. Older people used to cook one of these plants in the ashes to eat. Fresh water mussel shells lay about the bank and up near the hearth and coolibah tree. George once told me that you would never go without a feed on the River because if you couldn’t catch a fish or get a ‘roo you could always cook up a feed of mussels. You can ‘curry’ them or simply cook them in the ashes. On another trip to the River, Mark recalled that as kids, if they were hungry and whingeing for food, the old people would cook up a feed of mussels dipped in flour.38 Once the kids had chewed away on the leathery, fried, mussels the old people would ask them if they were still hungry and the

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38 Kangaroo meat and fish are sometimes cooked in a similar way. The flesh is rolled or dipped in flour until it is coated and it is then fried.
kids would say ‘no’ because the mussels were so hard to eat. Using your feet it is easy to feel for the mussel shells in the soft clay of the riverbed and a heap of shells can be quickly gathered by a small group of people (see Section 4.3 and Roth 1897:93-96).39

Some people do not swim at Jimberella, because they do not want to disturb a powerful Ancestral being, ganmarri40, the water snake or rainbow serpent, who inhabits the waterhole and whose presence is widely known, respected and feared amongst Dajarra people. The ganmarri is believed to be responsible for drownings. We took it in turns to have a bogie at a concrete stand that once held a mechanical pump on the waters edge, downstream from the coolibah tree. Some people use this stand as a safe place to bath by standing or squatting and taking buckets of water from the River which they poor over themselves (it also has the benefit of being free from the cattle trodden mud on the waters edge).

Warluwarra and East Arrernte people maintain stories of ganmarri’s adventures in the River at Jimberella, at a number of places close to Jimberella and elsewhere along the Georgina. These adventures include encounters with other beings. It is not my place to recall the nature of this Dreaming and other Dreaming stories in detail. What is of importance is that the waterhole and surrounding country, through the Dreaming are infused with intense properties of place. The actions of Ancestral beings including ganmarri transformed the environment in and around Jimberella sometime in the past, these transformations are visible today at places in the form of swamps, large rocks, rock outcrops, caves, sinkholes, small depressions, hills, trees, and gullies on the river bank. The actions of the Ancestral beings at different places created interrelationships between places that are recalled in Dreaming Stories. Through ganmarri’s actions a complex of powerful Story places are interrelated. Some of these places are not physically close and in some cases ganmarri travelled between places below ground in the complex of limestone caves.

During our stay at Jimberella Henry took us (Ted, Peg and their children) to visit one of the places associated with ganmarri near the River. Henry had not been to this place for many years and had first visited it on horseback. Once again Henry used his knowledge of cattle station geography, knowledge of fence-lines, tracks and bore locations, to help him find his way to this place (see Section 5.12). Ted and Peggy had not been to this place but had been to similar places associated with the same Ancestral being and looked for similar environmental signs including the type and colour of vegetation. Once Henry found the place we left the Toyota and he showed us around on foot. We spent a short time at this place before returning to the camp at Jimberella.

39 There are two Warluwarra words for freshwater mussels mimangu and nguwiyi (Nancarrow 2002:21).
40 This is the Warluwarra word for rainbow serpent or water snake (Nancarrow 2002:6). According to Roth (1897:153) kanmare is the term for water snake in the Boulia District.
Ganmarri continues to inhabit the waterhole at Jimberella and continues to interact with the environment. People have seen and experienced ganmarri’s presence at Jimberella and elsewhere on the Georgina. Some people have seen ganmarri’s large body on the surface of the water, others have experienced signs of ganmarri’s presence including certain types of movement in the water, such as waves and wash and powerful winds that travel along the River. Stories are recalled of people fleeing the banks and holding onto trees to avoid being sucked into the water by these strong winds. There are other signs of ganmarri, for example some people recall the time a fishing net that had been placed across the River returned with a large hole made by ganmarri. The continuing presence of ganmarri determines or prescribes the correct behaviour in place, especially in relation to the waterhole. Some Dajarra people have spoken of their concerns regarding non-Aboriginal people who interact with the River in a manner that disturbs ganmarri.

Similar concerns were held by northern neighbours of the Warluwarra, the Indjiladji, regarding a proposed design for a new bridge over the Georgina River at Camooweal. The Indjiladji were deeply concerned that the footings of the bridge piers would pierce the limestone bed of the Georgina thus disturbing the duwanhi. In response to the Injiladji’s concerns the Queensland Department of Main Roads redesigned the bridge to reduce the number of piers that landed within the River and they redesigned the pier footings as massive pads that sat on top of the limestone.

Although people fear and respect ganmarri some people do occasionally swim in the River at Jimberella. For example, when Henry was a young man he was working cattle on the other side of the River in the vicinity of Bannockburn Creek when there was a corroboree at Jimberella. Henry rode over to the River on horseback and swam across to attend the corroboree at Jimberella. He later swam back across the Georgina and returned to work on the ‘sundown side’ of the River.

‘For our dances and our corroboree’

Jimberella is one of a number of places on this part of the River where corroborees were performed. There is a place at Jimberella that is the ‘corroboree ground’. Big ‘Rain’

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41 The first reference to ganmarri in the Northwest Queensland literature appears in Roth (1897:153): “… doctors obtain their powers through the instrumentality of Kan-ma-re a huge supernatural water-snake with a mane-like head of hair. He it is who drowns people…”. Roth described people enacting particular types of behaviour in response to the presence of ganmarri including talking to it and not entering the water. He also described the susceptibility of strangers to the powers of ganmarri (Roth 1897:160). The non-Aboriginal stockman/ bushman Bill Harney described a bullock being taken by ganmarri lower down the Georgina at Glenormiston and the fear this created in the stock camp (Harney 1946:79-80). Merlan (1998:48-52, 54-59) has described the presence of the rainbow around Katherine including an account of the local council killing a rainbow and removing it from a limestone sinkhole (cave) in Katherine’s main street. About the same time Katherine was severely flooded and another rainbow was observed to the east of the town. Merlan (1998:56) describes the rainbow “… as of the earth and water, as the monitor of events, as a force that often makes itself felt in the form of rains and winds and even floods.”. See also Radcliffe-Brown’s (1926) overview of accounts of the rainbow serpent amongst Aboriginal groups across Australia.


43 The term ‘corroboree’ is used by members of the community and it may include both public dances and restricted ceremonies.
corroborees were held at a place close to Jimberella. Although Warluwarra people strongly identify with Jimberella, a number of East-Arrernte people are recognized as having close association with the Rain places here.

Warluwarra and East-Arrernte people gathered at Jimberella to participate in corroborees and ceremonial activity. Some people would first meet up at Urandangi before travelling down to Jimberella together. Other people attended corroborees and participated in dances including a number of Wakaya men who had grown up on the Georgina. On some occasions non-Aboriginal people from the cattle stations visited corroborees on the River (Byron Nathan’s father, a non-Aboriginal man, was speared to death at a corroboree (Ruby De Satge in Rosser 1987:31)).

The last big Rain corroboree is said to have been held on the River near Jimberella sometime in the late 1950s. Dajarra people talk about the loss of the old people who knew all the songs as a factor that contributed to the cessation of corroborees on this part of the Georgina. Two of the key East-Arrernte men passed away circa 1962 (Breen 1994:1082). The mass migrations to Dajarra that commenced around this time may have also contributed to changes in the pattern of corroborees on the Georgina (although it must be remembered that Dajarra people continued to visit the River after this time). A decade earlier people seemed very active with corroborees. In 1949 the manager of Carandotta wrote to the Department of Native Affairs indicating that a big corroboree would be held when Belia received his “King of Carandotta” breastplate (see Section 4.4):

...there is to be a big corroboree here with all the Georgina blacks assisting. This is to be the nature of a coronation ...you can be assured that if you send Belia the uniform he will be wearing it at the next Urandangie Races, & “letter sticks” will be sent out in all directions to bring the blacks together for the biggest corroboree the river has seen. (Carandotta Station 1949.)

Many of the people who witnessed or participated in corroborees on the Georgina, including those held at night at Jimberella, were young at the time. A Warluwarra man Billy Wilde remembers corroborees at Jimberella when he was about 13 years old:

Around 1958 or 1959 still as a kid I got to watch and learn the many traditional and ceremonial dances from people near and far. I got to see the Rain Dance corroboree performed at Jimberella and a corroboree at McKellar’s Hut...These times were special to

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44 Roth’s report of Wakaya teaching Kalkadoon people Rain Songs at Carandotta suggests a history of Wakaya participation in Rain business on this part of the Georgina (Roth 1897:122, 168). Were the Wakaya that Roth observed part of the eastward migration of the Wakaya to the Georgina as the frontier pushed west, or, is there a longer history of Wakaya interaction with ceremony on the Georgina?

45 According to Ruby De Satge (in Rosser 1987:31), the spearing was in revenge (‘pay-back’) for the ‘stealing’ of Aboriginal women.

46 The letter from the Carandotta manager to the Department of Native Affairs reveals disparate attitudes concerning the king plate. Whereas Belia had been expecting a gold plate and special clothing, the plate was not gold, the short chain was lengthened by the station with dog chain, and the special clothing had not arrived at the time of the letter.

47 These extracts were taken from a copy of a letter from Carandotta Station to the Acting Director of Native Affairs Brisbane dated 19/3/1949 (Carandotta Station 1949) which was in the possession of Belia’s grandchildren.
me as I got to learn and understand my culture and tradition....About one or two years later we then attended a traditional ceremony dance at old granddad’s ground. These were done at Black gate and Tommy’s Hole...Looking back and remembering these sacred moments I believe that we need to look at ways to protect these grounds, as they are part of our culture and our tradition...(in Newsletter from Waluwarra Aboriginal Corporation 2002:7-8.)

**Fishing at Jimberella**

*Back at the hearth in the shade of the coolibah, not far from where Henry, Ted and Peggy and others had participated in corroborees, four different cooking fires were going. The original fire was used to boil a billy and it was used as a source of fire and ashes for the other cooking fires. Fire-sticks were removed from the initial fire to create a second fire that was used to boil corned meat in a large pot. A hole was dug in the ashes and a camp oven with a damper placed inside. Hot ashes were again removed from the initial fire and placed in the space between the camp oven and the edge of the hole. More hot coals were removed to make a bed of hot ashes used to cook ‘Johnny cakes’.*

While the food slowly cooked away we fished with ‘hand lines’ from the hot Georgina bank. We used the common bait of a slice of uncooked corned meat. The line I was using had no sinker, so Henry showed me how to improvise with a lump of dried mud. As we sat in anticipation of a bite, a flock of pigeons took it in turns to cautiously drink from the opposite bank. Some Georgina River people have special fishing techniques that include smoking the fishing line, talking to the River, repeating special Warluwarra words and singing special songs in language. We had no success in hooking ourselves a yellow belly or a black bream, and headed up the bank to the shade of the coolibah and a feed of ‘Johnny cakes’.

On our return to Dajarra from Jimberella I was asked about the trip and in particular if we had caught any fish. I joked that we caught fifty fish. One response was that we must have used ‘a square hook’ (a net), another response was the immediate request for a share of the catch! It is questions and social interactions such as this that keep people informed of the availability of bush resources, and of particular events. It is interactions such as this that keep people informed about places and it is through such interactions that places are maintained.

Fishing trips, or ‘bush trips’ to the Georgina River and Jimberella occur throughout the year, however they are particularly popular when the fish are biting. Sometimes people head out to the River, and Jimberella, just for the day. For example, on our way down to Jimberella we visited Black Gate where Ted’s mother, sister, brother in law and niece were fishing, they had come out to the River earlier in the day and returned to Dajarra late in the afternoon (a round trip of about 270km). People also camp at Jimberella and other places on the River for various periods of time, on weekends, during school holidays and Easter and Christmas breaks. The biggest camps on the Georgina (outside of the rodeo camps) are at Easter time

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*Plastic reel holding monofilament fishing line.
(March/April). Henry describes Easter time as a good time on the River as the weather is cool. At Christmas time (December - January) people are cautious of travelling to the River for fear of being rained in, or trapped on the River by boggy black soil.

Community organizations in Dajarra occasionally organize trips to the River for groups of people such as fishing trips for ‘the pensioners’ (older members of the community). Groups of people have travelled to Jimberella in the Jimberella Bus. At other times small groups of people travel out to the River, such as the group of 3 adults and 3 children that I was with at Jimberella (the group had included another 2 adults and 9 children), or the small group including Ted’s mother fishing at Black Gate. At times such as Easter, big groups of people travel out to the River and camp together.

Regular activities at contemporary camps on the Georgina include; fishing for yellow belly and black bream, hunting turkey, kangaroo and wild pigs, collecting fresh water mussels and other bush foods (bush banana for example), collecting firewood, collecting water from the River, bush cooking, maintaining fires, yarning and visiting places.

**Every Christmas we went back to the Georgina**

In contrast to the timing of most of the contemporary trips to the River, when Dajarra people were heavily involved in the cattle industry it was Christmas time, during the station Christmas break, when big groups of people returned to Jimberella and other places along the Georgina to camp. Some people travelled from camps on the Georgina River Stations, such as Carandotta (21km), Coona Woolshed (25km), Walgra (approx. 50km), Lake Marian and Urandangi (approx. 70km), and Kallala (approx. 55km). Others made longer journeys from Headingly (approx.100km), Dajarra (135km) and Mt Isa (approx. 220km). Family groups travelled together, some recall travelling with horses and old buggies, others remember travelling on the back of old trucks and people remember groups travelling out to the Georgina on the back of a Jimberella co-operative truck in the 1970s. The journey from Dajarra in old trucks was slow and often involved a break, a dinner camp, at Cunnamulllya Bore.

Christmas was an important time when all of the Georgina River families came together and camped as big family groups between Jimberella and Black Gate. Some of these camps were located on limestone outcrops and low ridges as black soil flats and clay pans, which are usually popular camping locations, could be inundated and become boggy. Some families built bough sheds and erected tents for the long break.

During the Christmas break people spent time moving between camps visiting friends and family and generally socializing, and they spent time fishing and collecting other bush
They also travelled to places to participate in corroborees, and to participate in a variety of ceremonial activity including healing ceremonies. There was regular movement between camps, on foot, in buggies, and later in trucks and other vehicles. For example, Ted remembers families camped at Jimberella walking or travelling on the back of old trucks to McKellar’s Hut (approx. 1 kilometre) for corroborees held at night. There are people who were born on the River during these Christmas camps.

Although Dajarra people continued to form big camps on the River during the late 1990s and early 2000s, the big Christmas camps during station breaks that were typical of the mid 20th century seem to have dwindled in the 1970s (this may have coincided with the changes to the cattle industry that occurred at this time).

In the late afternoon we drove up to McKellar’s. We passed the ‘corroboree ground’ and pulled up near another big coolibah tree on the riverbank. Peggy said she can still remember all of the old people sitting around under the coolibah tree, and wondered if you slept at McKellar’s if you would hear the corroborees of the old people in the same way that you can hear the old people at other places (see Figure 6.28). We looked around the limestone retaining wall of McKellar’s hut then moved up over the ridge to the camp of Peggy’s relations. On the way to the camp we passed the remnant timber frame of an old bough shed (the camp of the Logan family), and at the camp of Peggy’s relations we inspected old truck parts, tins, and the limestone windbreak of a hearth.50

Bushed on the River

On our journey back to Dajarra from Jimberella, Henry and the others decided to visit another place on the River called Garden’s Hole. As we were driving there a Headingly Station vehicle came upon our group, it was the bore man. He asked what we were doing, “We’re bushed mate,” (we are lost) was the reply. “Where are you heading?” “Dajarra”. The bore man explained that when he saw the caged trailer on one of the cars he thought that we were ‘pigging’ and that is why he pulled up to question us.51 He gave us directions back to the Dajarra road. Having spent a few days with Henry and the others on the River and hearing some of their history which is centred on the River it seemed bizarre to be asked what we were doing there and it also seemed bizarre to be getting ‘directions’ back to Dajarra from a bore man who may have only been on Headingly for a few years.

Healingly is owned by the Australian Agricultural Company (AACo) and it is an amalgamation of three properties, Headingly (purchased in 1916), Walgra (purchased in 1965) and Carandotta (purchased in 1985). AACo owns cattle stations in the Northern Territory and Queensland and it one of the largest beef cattle companies in Australia. The

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50 People recall stations such as Carandotta giving them supplies including meat for the Christmas Break.
51 To date no other literature has documented the use of stone in the Aboriginal architecture of the Georgina River.
52 ‘Pigging’ refers to the hunting and live capture of feral pigs using dogs. Some piggers have damaged station property and have thus created a bad reputation for all piggers, including traditional owners who go pigging.
interest of the AACo on the Georgina are commercial, it is concerned with the numbers of
cattle that can be turned off from this property per year. (AACo 2003.)

Jimberella is within Carandotta Station. In order to reach the banks of the Georgina at places
like Jimberella, Dajarra people must travel through Carandotta, through property ‘owned’ by
AACo. It seems that the Headingly station manager is generally accepting of people visiting
the River and some Dajarra people give him a courtesy phone call to inform him of their
intention to visit places on the Georgina. Others just visit places on their country, like
Jimberella, as they always have, without informing anyone other than family and friends
(members of their social group).52 While many Georgina River people recognize the
economic interests of cattle stations, they maintain their rights to access their country and
their places and in so doing it is often Georgina people who most regularly visit places within
cattle stations and articulate them with activity - not the station owners.53 Roth (1901:6) held
a similar attitude, he believed that while pastoralists might have economic interests in the
pastures, Aboriginal people hold rights to visit places on their country including the
waterholes (see Section 4.4).

Aboriginal families of the Georgina River have not only maintained the Aboriginal geography
of the area, but they have also maintained the cattle station geography of the Georgina. Some
of the non-Aboriginal people who work the cattle stations only do so for a relatively short
period of time; managers and workers such as the bore man come and go - they might move
on to another of the AACo’s properties for example. Because there is a turn over of managers
on the big company owned stations, some Aboriginal people provide a sense of time to events
in their life history by recalling who was the manager of a station at that time. In contrast to
many non-Aboriginal station workers Aboriginal families of the Georgina have worked these
stations and visited places on these stations throughout their lives.54 Whereas AACo has
owned the pastoral lease of Carandotta for 17 years, some Georgina River families follow a
succession of relatives who have worked Carandotta since the late 1800s (some of whom are
descendants of Story places within Carandotta). It is as if the cattle station geography exists
independently of the station ‘owners’ and it is Georgina River people who are the ongoing
caretakers of that geography.

The Jimberella Bus.

When we were camped on the ridge, sitting around the fire, Susan asked some of the young
kids if they knew where they were, or if they knew the name of the place where they were
camped. They were not sure. Susan told them the place is called Jimberella. One of the kids
was surprised and replied that it could not be called Jimberella because that was the name of

52 It is common for Dajarra people heading on a bush trip to inform others of their plans.
53 Many Dajarra people were heavily involved in the pastoral industry, they ‘grew up’ with the industry, they know the
industry, and they understand the economic interests of the industry.
54 There are a small number of non-Aboriginal families, particularly on family owned properties such as Thorner and Kallala
that have long-term relationships with stations and other families such as the Wrights that have a long work history in the
region.
the bus in Dajarra, ‘the Jimberella bus.’ Susan explained that this was the place the bus was named after.

The naming of the Aboriginal housing co-operative ‘Jimberella’ in 1974 is another significant way that place properties from the Georgina were transferred to Dajarra (see Section 6.4). People represent the Dajarra Aboriginal community on the Jimberella board and others work for Jimberella. In addition to the Jimberella bus, there is the Jimberella truck and the Jimberella tractor and the community has named a number of architectural environments after Jimberella. The houses of the co-operative are known as the ‘Jimberella houses’ in contrast to government and privately owned houses. Buildings purchased and built by the community are named after Jimberella; ‘the Jimberella Store’, ‘the Jimberella Hall’ (both in Dajarra) and ‘Jimberella House’ (Mt Isa). Jimberella House is located opposite the Mt Isa Base Hospital, it is used by Dajarra families (and other Aboriginal people from remote communities) who are visiting relatives in hospital and by Aboriginal people who are visiting Mt Isa for medical treatment. Some of these environments, such as the store, are buildings (places) that were built and owned by non-Aboriginal people but have been transformed into Aboriginal environments or Aboriginal architecture through their identification with Jimberella (they are also transformed by the association of particular types of activities with them).55 Through the identification of places, organizations, people and things with Jimberella, Dajarra people are reminded of their Georgina River identity whilst in Dajarra, Mt Isa and elsewhere and younger generations are taught and reminded of their identity, of their links to the Georgina, in their daily experiences. Because of the interactions of the Jimberella Co-operative with other Northwest Queensland and Eastern Northern Territory communities others are reminded of the identification of Jimberella with Dajarra, or the relationship between Dajarra and Jimberella. For example, Jimberella House in Mt Isa is simultaneously identified with Dajarra, ‘DJ mob’ and Jimberella (the Jimberella Co-operative).

Feeling good out on the River

In the previous chapter I argued that although people can maintain places whilst distant from them this does not mean that physical relationships are unimportant (see section 5.14). This is certainly the case with Jimberella and other places on the Georgina. Although Dajarra people have transferred properties of place from Jimberella to Dajarra, people continue to visit Jimberella (some more often than others) and some people have expressed a strong desire to continue to visit and experience Jimberella. A number of Dajarra people would live at Jimberella if they could (see Section 4.6). Some people have said that when they are at Jimberella they feel good because they can feel their Ancestor’s spirits around them and others have described Jimberella as a peaceful place. Dajarra people know and maintain places by experiencing them (see Section 5.9).

55 This provides further insight to the question posed in the previous chapter: How have Aboriginal people creatively transformed such buildings into Aboriginal environments and Aboriginal architecture with particular reference to place and culture?
Jimerella -place complex properties

One dimension of Jimerella as a place complex is that this place is ‘complex’ by way of the long history of interactions that Warluwarra and East Arrernte people and other Aboriginal people have had with it and the multiple transformations and experiences of these interactions. How many fires have been lit on the hearth under the coolibah tree? How many different hearths have been created and maintained at Jimerella? All of the campfires, all of the dances, all of the songs, all of the Christmas camps, all the yellow belly and black bream caught, all the mussel shells, all of the journeys from Jimerella to other places and return journeys from other places to Jimerella, all of the people that have drunk water from this place, all of the old people, all of the stories, all of the memories embodied in this place. There are many places that, like Jimerella, are complex because they contain an intensity of overlapping and intersecting place properties.

Another dimension to this place complex and its intensity of place properties is the close relationship of people and Ancestral beings within this place. Jimerella is transformed by the ongoing interactions of Ancestral beings with the environment and there are signs of these interactions. At the same time Jimerella is transformed by the ongoing interactions of people with the environment. These human interactions are influenced by the enduring presence of the Ancestral beings at Jimerella and humans come close to the presence of the Ancestral being who shaped the place and other places in the area.

Jimerella provides another example of a complex of sub-units of place; the waterhole, the waters edge, the river bank, the bathing place, the coolibah tree, the limestone caves, the ceremony and corroboree grounds, the vegetable garden, the ridge, the hearth on the ridge, the track. Jimerella is also a place of a range of human activities, from fishing and camping to participation in corroboree and ceremony.

Earlier examples in this chapter illustrated places that were interrelated through the movement and actions of people. The movement of people between Jimerella and other places including Dajarra has established and maintained interrelationships between these places. Similarly, the movement and actions of Ancestral beings has also established relationship between Jimerella and other places. Repeated visitation (physical or mental) to Jimerella from Dajarra maintains the interrelationship of these places and the simultaneous relationship and identification of Dajarra people to both the River (Jimerella) and Dajarra. Children are introduced to these relationships by visiting Jimerella with older relatives. The transference of place properties, particularly behavioural and knowledge properties, from Jimerella to other places also contributes to the interrelationship of Jimerella with those places and the maintenance of identification with Jimerella whilst distant from it.
Jimberella is a place complex that is interrelated with other places and is thus part of other place complexes, complexes of fishing places, complexes of corroboree places, complexes of Dreaming places, and complexes of residential/camping places. It is also a place within the cattle station geography of Headingly Station. Jimberella is part of a place complex defined by the ‘boundary fence’ of Carandotta, which is in turn within the boundary of Headingly Station.

Stone tools have been found lying on the surface of the soil on the banks of the Georgina at places like Jimberella. The banks of this and other perennial waterholes in the region provide a ‘treasure’ for archaeologists seeking material evidence of past occupation. If someone interested in material culture, such as an archaeologist, pottered around on the banks of the waterhole near the shady coolibah tree that is popular for day camps, what would they find? They might find some stone tools, they might find mussel shells recently cooked in gidyea ashes and others that were cooked some time in the past. They might find the bones of kangaroo, cattle, ‘turkey’, yellow belly and black bream; perhaps they will find stainless steel fishing hooks and nylon fishing line. They might find a horseshoe from a droving team that moved along the River in the 1900s or a wheel nut from a car; they might find bullet shells and cigarette butts, bottles, lids, flour drums and tobacco tins. They might find evidence of objects and materials associated with corroborees and ceremonial activity. Jimberella continues to be used by Georgina river people, and no doubt objects continue to be discarded or possibly lost there. Archaeology can confirm what Dajarra people already know - they have occupied Jimberella for a very long time. Archaeology may also be able trace some of the activities that people have enacted at Jimberella through time. But what can it tell us about the nature of this place and the interrelationship of this place with other places? Archaeology might tell us where the stone tools were quarried or made, it might tell us where the tobacco tin was produced. However, there are no archaeological tests that can detect the presence of ganmarri, the spirits of the old people, all of the dances and songs, and the strong feelings that people experience when visiting this place. Archaeological techniques will not detect ganmarri’s adventures in and around Jimberella, the experiences of other Ancestral beings and the experiences of people, both recent and of the past. Archaeological techniques will not find people walking from Jimberella to McKellar’s hut, nor will it discover water carted from Jimberella to other places. The interrelationships between places are discovered through experience of those interrelationships and through being taught about those interrelationships by the people who maintain them (enculturation).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has taken the reader through a small selection of place complexes in order to illustrate the relationships between places which Dajarra people experience in their everyday lives. The chapter commenced with the description of the capture and subsequent preparation of a goanna that revealed a simple characteristic of many place complexes - human action
creates relationships between places. At the Clay Pan, at Cat Dam, in the relationship between the West End/Dajarra and Jimberella, and in the camps at Urandangi we learnt that physically distant (non-proximate) and separate places can become interrelated through sequences of events, or patterns of behaviour, that bring the distant places ‘close’ (proximate behaviour). Such behaviour includes methods of resource exploitation, sharing and consumption. Human action also maintains interrelationships between places. Both random and predictable (or regular) sequences of events and activities can interrelate places. In Keith’s yard we learnt that a place complex may be comprised of a range of places that fulfill a range of functions with each place characterised by different patterns of behaviour. People learn of existing place complexes by participating in the activities that interrelate places.

The examples in this chapter illustrated the strong role that physical human movement, or travel, has in the creation and maintenance of interrelationships between places. In some instances there is a dialectical quality to interrelated places, such places may be distinct and distant yet they are brought together by the movement of people between them. In many cases people learn of the existing relationships between places by moving between those places themselves. New movements between places create new relationships. Yet at places like Jimberella we learnt that human movement between places is not always essential to the creation or maintenance of the relationships between them; the actions or movements of Ancestral beings also create and maintain relationships between places. There are some place complexes where the actions of humans and Ancestral beings come close; they intersect, overlap and are intertwined. In such places we learnt of complex interrelationships not just between places but also between the human and Ancestral dimensions.

Distant places are interlinked by the physical relationship of the places between (rivers, roads). The examples in this chapter illustrated that physical properties can contribute to the boundary of a place complex. In some cases an apparent continuity in the physical environment contributes to the maintenance of place complexes. In moving about the camp at the Clay Plan, in wandering about Cat Dam, in moving through Keith’s yard, in moving about the old camps at the West End and contemporary camps at Urandangi, in moving about at Jimberella, and even in sitting around the cooking hearth by the River at Jimberella, we learnt that physically adjacent places can form sub-units of one, often named, place. We also learnt that one place complex may be a sub-unit within other place complexes.

In travelling between the Clay Pan and the women’s camp at the Watering Place we learnt of properties that create interrelationships between places that are of short duration (though they may follow a long history of such relationships). At Jimberella and at the West End we learnt of longstanding interrelationships. In Keith’s yard, at camps at Urandangi and Jimberella we learnt that places within a complex may be used at different times, and people may interact with a number of places within a complex in a relatively short period of time. We also learnt
that temporal properties and climatic properties generate interrelationships between places. A further time property is that some places are complex because contemporary actions intersect, overlap and coexist with layers of past actions.

The events at the Clay Pan, the West End and the River introduced the strong role which mental movements – thoughts, narratives and the sharing of knowledge properties - often have in the creation and maintenance of interrelationships between places. This chapter also illustrates that knowledge properties, such as the identification of people with a camp or household, can contribute to the boundary of a place complex. In visiting places such as Henry’s camp at the West End we learnt that a place may be complex because it holds multiple and intricate layers of identity and meaning. The knowledge properties of some place complexes do not have physical counterparts that are readily observable by the uninformed. Yet knowledge properties are often highly important in the maintenance of place complexes. We also learnt that memory in place can be manifested by transformations in the physical environment. People often learn of the interrelationships between places through narratives.

In Keith’s yard, at camps at Urandangi and the West End we learnt that places within a complex may be used by, or identified with, different social groups. In the various camps visited in the chapter we learnt that social relationships generate place complexes (sociospatial patterns) and they contribute to the maintenance of the relationship between places. Consistent social relationships can generate new and temporarily articulated place complexes. Some places are complex because they have been articulated with multiple sociospatial arrangements through time. People retain knowledge of these layers of place generated by social relationships.

In this chapter we learnt that not only are places dynamic, but so too are place complexes. At the Clay Pan and at the West End we learnt that the properties that interrelate two places could be transferred to a new place to create new interrelationships. We learnt that a place specific property could be transferred from one place to another thus establishing or reinforcing relationships between those places. We learnt that people choose to modify the relationships between places and this is one way that the interrelationship between places can change over time. We also learnt that the relationships between places could be transformed (in the most extreme cases destroyed) through the influence of outside forces.

Lastly, we learnt that some places are complex in nature due to the coexistence of multiple properties within one place. At certain places there is an intense tripartite interaction between humans, Ancestral Beings and the natural physical environment that results in a complex of multiple intersecting, overlapping, intertwined and interrelated places and place properties. Thus places may be complex by way of the multiple (and/or different) transformations and
experiences that have occurred within them and the knowledge of these transformations and experiences.

In moving through and between the small selection of the place complexes that Dajarra people experience in their everyday lives we learn of a key repetitive property of place - places are inherently interrelated. The case studies illustrate that such interrelationships may involve one or a combination of behavioural, physical or knowledge properties. Following Malpas (1999:39), it is clear that investigations of places must “resist any analysis that reduces [them] to a set of autonomous components”. The interrelated nature of places has significant implications for cultural heritage legislation – it is very difficult to separate or isolate individual places. The following chapter further explores the relationships between places by examining place complexes that have a distinctive lineal nature.
Figure 6.1 Preparing the goanna at the Clay Pan.

Figure 6.2 Sketch plan of the camp at the Clay Pan showing the afternoon shade of the trees: (1) riverbank, (1a) nocturnal illumination fire, (2) food table and daytime living area, (3) cooking/illumination fire, (4) sleeping area, (5) cooking hole, (C) car.

Figure 6.3 The popular day camp area at Cat Dam.

Figure 6.4 Shark makes tea as 'Johnny cakes' cook on the hot plate at Cat Dam.

Figure 6.5 Approaching the back fence of Keith's yard.

Figure 6.6 The shade of the neem tree (front), shed roof (behind), caravan (left) and fruit trees (right). Note the use of carpet as an external floor surface.
Figure 6.7 Sketch plan of Keith and Eenie’s yard:
(1) back gate,  
(2) fruit trees,  
(3) caravan,   
(4) carport,  
(5) shed/ shade roof,  
(6) neem tree,  
(7) pine trees,  
(8) cooking hole,  
(9) wood stove/fire,  
(9a) windbreak,  
(10) play equipment (trampoline),  
(11) wood heap,  
(12) edge of dirt floor & grass,  
(13) clothes line,  
(14) rainwater tank,  
(15) car,  
(16) laundry,  
(17) kitchen,  
(18) living room,  
(19) front yard,  
(20) bird cage,  
(21-23) dog  
(24) vegetable garden  
(b) bed,  
(c) chair,  
(1) tap.
Figure 6.8 The front of Keith’s house.

Figure 6.9 Keith’s windbreak with the fire repositioned to the north and the western wall extended.

Figure 6.10 The living room of Keith’s house.

Figure 6.11 Plan of part of the Bismark camp at the West End by Memmott (1996). North is to the left of the image.

Figure 6.12 A view from the west of the Bismark camp at the West End (photograph by Memmott 1974).

Figure 6.13 In the 2000s tenants added an enclosed shelter with north orientated shade to one of the houses designed by Bond. In the foreground is a large cooking hole.

Figure 6.14 George lets go with his shangai as others watch on at ‘the high house’. West End (photograph by Memmott 1974).
Figure 6.15 A view from the south over the camps at 'Snake Gully' (SG) (left of image), the 'high houses' (HH) and camps on the Ridge (R) (right of image). Georgie South’s (GS) camp and associated tree is visible in the foreground at the right of the image. (Photograph by Memmott c1974.)

Figure 6.16 A view from the south over 'Snake Gully' (SG) (left of image), where the 'high houses' stood (HH) and houses on the Ridge (R). Henry's camp (HD) and associated tree is visible in the foreground at the right of the image. (Photograph by Long 1998.)
Figure 6.17 Georgie South’s camp at the West End (photograph by Memmott 1974).

Figure 6.18 Michael & Allen Rankine competing in a rescue race at Urandangi.

Figure 6.19 Dajarra women compete in the tug-of-war at Urandangi.

Figure 6.20 Ranko’s camp at Urandangi 1996. Note the cooking hole, the use of a caravan with an attached bough shade, and the use of a tree as a support structure.

Figure 6.21 A view north from Joan’s camp to the camp of Henry (her mother’s brother’s son) and beyond to the camp of Shirley (her mother’s brother’s daughter) and Ranko.

Figure 6.22 ‘Otto’ Dempsey coming out of the chute at the Urandangi rodeo.

Figure 6.23 The Bismark family camp at the Urandangi rodeo comprised of a number of nocturnal domiciliary groups. Each of these groups was located close to a shade tree.

Figure 6.25 The Age family camp at Urundangi. The vehicles were used for sleeping and as screens to the external living area of the camp.

Figure 6.26 Early morning on ‘the Ridge’ at Jimberella.

Figure 6.27 Day camp in the shade of a coolibah on the waterhole at Jimberella.

Figure 6.28 The large coolibah on the eastern bank of the Georgina at McKellar’s Hut.
The preceding chapter considered the human experiences, actions, mental operations and physical properties that interrelate places within place complexes. Distinct types of place complexes are those that are lineal in nature. In this study such complexes are simply referred to as lineal place complexes. In the literature they are also known as lineal cultural landscapes, cultural routes, cultural itineraries and systems of settings. Most studies of such complexes are concerned with travel or trade routes. Travel and movement are strong elements in the people-environment interactions of Northwest Queensland. Some place complexes are lineal in nature, as they are comprised of contiguous places whose physical relationship is linear, while others are lineal in nature because they are experienced or remembered in a lineal sequence and others are a combination of these properties. Many of the people-environment interactions of Dajarra people involve this type of place complex. They include journeys such as those between Dajarra and Mt Isa on the single lane Diamantina Development Road and the Dreaming places and travel routes of Ancestral heroes that are traversed along the way.

To further develop an understanding of the diversity of places experienced by Aboriginal people in Northwest Queensland this chapter examines a selection of lineal place complexes. The chapter commences with ‘pads’, paths between places, in Dajarra and out bush. From the movements of people and animals along pads, the paths of Carbine Creek and the Georgina River are then followed and the lineal place complexes that are created and maintained by the actions and travels of Dreamings are considered. From these movements the Mt Isa-Dajarra Road, a travel route introduced by non-Aboriginal people which is now significant in the Aboriginal geography of Northwest Queensland is considered. From these physically observable and established lineal place complexes, an example of a temporary lineal place complex created through the enactment of an established sequence of behaviour is considered through the example of kangaroo hunting. A journey to the Urandangi Rodeo is made to examine the role of travel, narration, memory and new experiences in the maintenance of place. Finally the relationship of lineal place complexes and personal and shared histories is examined.

7.1 ‘PADS’

A ‘Pad’ in a yard
Many lineal place complexes are typically pathways or travel routes. Simple examples of such a lineal place complex are the ‘pads’ in town and out bush. Pads are places between,
they are places of movement and they are simultaneously the connection and division of places.

Just as there was movement between the camps at the Urundangi rodeo (section 6.5) a characteristic of life in Dajarra is the movement of individuals and groups of people between domiciliary environments and between domiciliary environments and community spaces such as the hall or shop. One pattern of movement is the regular movement of members of an extended family group between the households of that group; *a young woman walks with her child to her grandmother’s house, a young man and his cousin brother leave a group of men they spent the afternoon with and return to their parent’s house for a feed.* Where such households are located close to one another, pads are created by the constant movement along the shortest route between the households (see Figure 7.1).

‘The pad’ is often of earth worn bare by the repetitive movement between domiciliary environments and it is often distinct from surrounding ground surfaces such as grass and stony ground. Some pads are the physical manifestation of the social relationships of a family group. The physical signs of such pads are usually lost where they meet the cleared earth floors that are maintained in some domiciliary spaces. The lineal place complex is comprised of the domiciliary spaces and the pads between them. People leave a domiciliary space, get onto a pad and then enter another domiciliary space.

The movement of other social groups, groups of children, groups of men, groups of women, and mixed groups between domiciliary environments also creates and maintains pads: *A woman leaves the road for a pad that will take her to a group of women and children sitting in late afternoon shade. A child later rides his bike up to the same group with a message from someone down the other end of town and speeds off back along the pad lifting some dust as he goes.* The regular movement of such social groups between adjacent domiciliary environments has created and maintained pads. In many cases the pads used by social groups are the same pads used by extended family groups (see Figure 7.9).

Pads are also alternative routes, usually short cuts, between domiciliary environments and other places. There are pads across vacant blocks of land and pads within yards that are used in this way. While pads can be used as the shortest route between places, the same pad can also be used as ‘the long way around’—“*Come on Monaghetti we’ll go back around this way.*” The choice of route followed is nearly always influenced by consideration of others. For example the path chosen between two places may be chosen so as to avoid people or places, conversely a path may be followed so as to encounter others or to pass by or through particular places.
People repetitively follow the established line of movement, the pad, because it is usually the shortest, easiest and safest line of travel- pads are generally free of thorns, glass, and rocks. Pads are also socially safe because following the established line of travel signals your direction of travel to others. There is an element of predictability to the behaviour of people following a pad.

Pads, footpaths and roads in combination form a network of foot travel in Dajarra. This network provides multiple choices for travel between places. The network of walking routes in Dajarra is intertwined with the complex of domiciliary environments and public/community environments that comprise the sociospatial patterns of the community. At the time of this study Dajarra was full of lineal place complexes, it was a nest or cluster of lineal place complexes that are formed by Aboriginal social relationships. Pads are distinguished from footpaths and roads because they are physically maintained, shaped and transformed by Aboriginal social relationships. At times physical boundaries to pads are altered to facilitate the line of the pad, for example people make openings in fences, conversely at times people attempt to inhibit the line of travel, by constructing fences for example. In contrast roads and paved footpaths are planned and designed by others and are physically more permanent.

**The West End pads**

The line of some pads is maintained for many years while others change over time with some pads in Dajarra being replaced, superseded and disused altogether. This dynamic nature of pads is illustrated by the changing properties of pads at the West End, between the West End and Town and within Town. The physical evidence of these transformations can be detected in a number of aerial photographs taken between 1954 and 1981 that show the physical development of town through time including evidence of Aboriginal sociospatial patterns and the introduction of these patterns to the town proper.

An aerial photograph from the 1950s show very little evidence of pads within and between domiciliary environments in the town centre perhaps reflecting the lifestyle of the dominant non-Aboriginal population (see Figure 7.10). However, the grid of surveyed roads in town resembled ‘pads’ because their shape reflected concentrations of movement patterns, with the widest roads at the most active areas of town such as the railway area. At this time there were pads between camps at the Ridge and Snake Gully at the West End and from the West End north to camps at the Junction (see Section 6.4). In addition to the main road that crossed the Carbine on Matheson St, there were two distinct patterns of pads between the West End and Town, one route between ‘The High House’ and the corner of Luck and Matheson St and another between the Ridge and the corner of Luck and Lethem St. The Marshall family had a house on the corner of Luck and Matheson St in the 1950s. Journeys along these pads included those of children walking between camps at the West End and the Dajarra State School, those of people walking between Aboriginal households in the town proper and
camps at the West End, and those of people walking to the police station at the eastern end of town to collect their money. Another distinct pad at this time ran in a northerly direction from Mark St to the camps of the Craigie family.

In the 1960s, Aboriginal social life in Dajarra continued to be focused on camps at the West End and the Junction (see Figure 7.11). The camps on the Ridge and at Snake Gully are clearly visible in the photographs from this time. In the 1960s there was a large camp on the Ridge that consisted of the camps of at least 15 domiciliary groups located around a shared bough shed and positioned in at least six sub-camps or clusters. During this time the two main pads between the west End and Town were maintained but there was an increase in the number of secondary pads that joined onto them. Although there were some Aboriginal families living in town in the 1960s, the 1962 aerial photograph shows very little evidence of pads within and between yards of households in Town.

By 1974 a number of families had moved across the creek from the Ridge and other camps to occupy the new DAIA houses at the western end of town. The aerial photograph from this time shows evidence of growth in the camps at Snake Gully associated with the arrival of people from Urangangi who formed a number of sub-camp clusters (see Figure 7.12). These camps consisted of large cleared external living environments and relatively small humpies or enclosed spaces. The pads between the camps merged with domiciliary spaces at their edges. The pads from the West End to town that were evident in the 1950s were maintained during this time. Of particular note is the pad between Carbine Creek and the corner of Luck and Matheson St. Between 1962 and 1974 the line of this pad was adjusted, perhaps in response to the new houses, so that instead of arriving at the corner of Luck and Matheson Streets it terminated at the domiciliary space of the Marshall’s house on Luck St. This pad traversed the ‘back yards’ of the new houses. In addition to this main route a number of smaller pads formed that connected the domiciliary spaces of the new houses in the same manner that pads connected the domiciliary spaces of the camps. In the 1970s a number of minor pads connecting households in between Luck and Mark St are evident. These pads between households are evidence of a transferal of social interactions and sociospatial patterns from the West End camps to the new Cottages. These social interactions transformed the new government houses into Aboriginal environments.

In the 1980s there is further evidence of the transformation of the Town proper by Aboriginal sociospatial relationships (see Figure 7.13). By 1981 additional Aboriginal housing had been built along Lethem St between Luck and Mark Streets and numerous pads developed that linked domiciliary spaces or external living environments. Most of the Snake Gully campers had moved up to the Ridge, and a series of new pads were established between these new camps. The main diagonal route between the DAIA cottages was no longer evident and was perhaps superseded by the new diagonal pad that formed at the back of the new houses and ran between Luck St and Matheson St.
The sociospatial pattern of camps and the interconnecting pads contrast with the rectilinear nature of the Dajarra Town plan and the uniform spacing of the government built houses. However, the formation of pads between the new cottages in the 1960s/1970s and then the new houses in the 1980s reflects the introduction of preferred patterns of domiciliary behaviour and established social relationships that Dajarra people brought with them when they crossed the Creek and with which they continued to transform these houses at the time of this study.3

Animal pads
Another type of ‘pad’ that Dajarra people experience are those created by animals such as kangaroos and emus as they repetitively follow the same path to water sources. In the 1890s Roth (1897:96-97) observed the Warluwarra taking advantage of the predictable usage of pads by kangaroos and emus to trap them as they approached water (see Sections 4.3 & 7.8).

Since the pastoral invasion of Northwest Queensland, the landscape has been marked by new paths of travel and communication including the pads created by the movement of cattle towards water. There are now distinct networks of cattle pads in Northwest Queensland that radiate from waterholes and bores (see Section 4.4). If Dajarra people come across cattle pads when travelling cross-country they often use them as lines of orientation; “That pad is going back to the bore so we have to keep heading this way”, or, “There is another pad coming in on this side, we must be getting close to the bore now”. Cattle pads indicate the direction to water with the pad growing wider as it gets closer to the water source and thinner as it gets further away. When travelling in vehicles through thick scrub such as turpentine or over rough ground such as deeply cracked black soil, cattle pads are often followed and used as a clear or smooth line of travel. In contrast to existing bores and pads, new pads associated with new bores can disorientate people.

Cattle pads are created by the movement of cattle between places of water and feed. In turn these pads are used by Dajarra people because they have a predictable and known lineal relationship to water sources, bores and waterholes, just as the pads of kangaroos and emus do (although the pads of the kangaroos and emus do not have the same impact on country as those of cattle). Bores were a foci of Aboriginal lives and work and today they are significant places of orientation; and particularly important is the network of bore roads that provide easy vehicle access to country. Cattle pads are not distinct from the Aboriginal geography of Northwest Queensland they are fully embedded within it.

3 The use of pads, and the interrelationship of some external living environments present a challenge to architects and planners working in Aboriginal environments. If given the task of designing new houses, how would one respond to the existing network of pads? How could one contribute to an environment that permits a freedom of cultural expression- an environment that allows people to maintain sociospatial patterns, to reshape sociospatial patterns, and allows people to create new patterns?
Fence-lines
The fence-lines of cattle stations are travel routes and boundaries that are also embedded in the Aboriginal geography of Northwest Queensland (see Figure 7.2). Fence-lines that were built and maintained by Aboriginal workers often continue to be identified with those people: the fence Joe Clarke built near Sulieman Bore, the Thorner boundary fence built by the AhOne family. Fence-lines usually have graded tracks on at least one side that are used by Dajarra people as travel routes between places. Fence-lines are also used as lines of orientation: “Follow the fence-line down until you get to the bore, that place is straight out from there”, or, “We use that new fence-line to get into that place now.” In the search for Henry’s Grandfather’s grave fence-lines were used in this way (see Section 5.12).

Fence-lines are boundaries between places, they physically divide the country into paddocks such as ‘Steeles’ and ‘Carbine’ on Stradbroke Station and they divide the country into cattle stations, the Thorner / Carandotta boundary fence for example. Occasionally cattle station fences are inconvenient boundaries to the line of travel of Dajarra people, this is particularly so when there are no gates nearby. A common response to such a situation is to untie the wire fence from the nearest star pickets, the fence is then laid flat on the ground and the vehicle driven over the wires. Once the vehicle is on the other side the fence is re-erected and left in the condition that it was found and the journey is continued.4

The Queensland/Northern Territory border and border fence that follows longitude 138° from the Gulf of Carpentaria to Poeppel Corner (approximately 1000km) provides another example of a fence-line/lineal place complex (see Figure 7.3). This fence-line not only acts as a physical boundary between Queensland and the Northern Territory but, as discussed in Chapter 4, it is a significant cultural boundary in the Aboriginal geography of western Queensland and the eastern Northern Territory (see Sections 4.4 & 4.5). An illustration of this significance is the Warluwarra Native Title Claim Application in the mid 1990s that used the Northern Territory/Queensland border as a western boundary to the claim (see Section 3.2), despite the fact that Warluwarra country is believed to extend west across the border along certain creek basins.

In contrast to cattle station fence-lines and pads, the border fence is rarely followed although it is frequently crossed. Today there are at least five crossings on the border fence that are regularly used by Aboriginal people from western Queensland and the eastern Northern Territory: (1) the Barkly Highway border crossing west of Camooweal, used by people travelling between Queensland and outstations on the Barkly Tableland or the Sandover River, or following the bitumen to Tennant Ck, Borroloola or Alice Springs; (2) the Camooweal/Lake Nash Road crossing used by people travelling between Lake Nash or the Sandover River and Camooweal or Mt Isa; (3) the Lake Nash-Urandangi Road crossing, used

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4 Dajarra people take care to leave fences in good condition, in comparison hunters from elsewhere have cut through fences on stations in the Dajarra area.
by people travelling between Lake Nash and Urandangi, Dajarra or Mt Isa; (4) the Urandangi-Tobermorey Road Crossing, used by people travelling between Mt Isa, Dajarra, Urandangi and Urumlampe, Bonya, Harts Range or Alice Springs; (5) the Donohue Highway Crossing used by people travelling between Boulia or Dajarra and Urumlampe or outstations further to the west. It is possible to list Aboriginal family groups that regularly use each of these crossings such as members of the Bookie and Rankine families who regularly travel between Dajarra and Urandangi and their outstation at Urumlampe crossing the border on the Urandangi-Tobermorey Road.

Each of these five border crossings represents distinct Aboriginal social and economic relationships that exist between places on either side of the border and they represent Aboriginal place complexes that traverse the border. These place complexes are a continuation of traditional movement patterns and relationships between places either side of the border and they represent the history of travel, migration and displacement associated with the contact history of the border region. These complexes are not just maintained by physical movement they are also maintained by travels across the border in thoughts and words (oral histories) (see Section 5.14). These complexes are also maintained by physical journeys that are yet to be made, for example there are some people who live on the Queensland side who are yet to fully cross back into the Northern Territory to claim country or revitalize connection with country with which they are identified. Knowledge of these trans-border identities and ‘yet-to-be-made’ journeys is maintained by the individuals concerned and by others, for example you might hear someone say “I have to follow my father back to [a certain place] in the Territory,” or you might hear others say “…they have to go back to the Territory side to [such and such a] place.”

While Dajarra people and other Aboriginal people in Northwest Queensland recognize socio-cultural, historical and political differences between the Territory and Queensland side they simultaneously recognize the border as “nothing...just a white man’s line” that traverses country (the border crosses the Georgina River twice) including Dreamings that move between places either side of the border. While the border fence still stands and there are gates and grids to cross it, it is perhaps the Aboriginal relationships (or lineal place complexes) that traverse the border and the maintenance of these relationships (or the crossing) that is most significant in the maintenance of the Queensland/Northern Territory border in the Aboriginal geography of the border region. To this end the border fence-line is a lineal place complex of crossings (“a boundary is to cross” (Williams 1986)).

**Crossing 138° - the lineal place complex properties of pads and fence-lines.**

Within Northwest Queensland, The Georgina River, and Dajarra there is an organic network of pads. These pads are in contrast to but at times incorporate the ‘formal’ lines of graded and bitumen roads, fence-lines and concrete footpaths. Pads precede, follow, supersede, and supplement other networks of travel such as roads.
Pads are created by the repetitive movement between places on a particular path between places over time. By following the pads between domiciliary environments in Dajarra one learns that lineal place complexes may be created, maintained and transformed through social relationships. These social relationships create a physical line between places, a lineal connection between places. The pad is a physical manifestation of social relationships. Pads are characteristically dynamic, they are formed and maintained by action and they are transformed. As people move to new places, new lineal place complexes are formed through the maintenance of existing social relationships. Pads have been overlooked as elements in the theory of sociospatial patterns of towns and settlements. Pads also illustrate lineal place complexes that have an element of predictability to them; they are places of established or regular patterns of behaviour. Knowledge of this predictable usage (by humans and animals) can be used to direct one’s own journeys.

The fence-lines of cattle stations and the Queensland and Territory border illustrate that a lineal place complex may distinguish or divide places and yet interrelate the same places. Such places may be distinct and different yet they are brought together by the movement of people between them (see Section 6.5). The border fence-line is a lineal place complex that is created and maintained through physical properties, yet also and if not more importantly it is formed and maintained by social relationships, patterns of movement, and mental operations that cross it. In other words it is a lineal place complex formed by the lineal complexes that traverse it.

The ‘yet-to-be-made’ journeys across the border are significant. In Chapter 2 (section 2.2) it was argued that one of the ways that places are made and maintained is through the enactment of types of behaviour at a particular location, places are made and maintained through action. These ‘yet to be made’ journeys suggest that in some instances places can also be maintained (and perhaps made) by future or potential actions in place. In this particular example the potential actions are coupled with the maintenance of knowledge properties of place. It is these knowledge properties that make the future action possible and in this instance acceptable to others: “…they’re alright, they can go back there, that is there mother’s country…”

From the dust of the pads and fence-lines followed by Dajarra people we move to experiences had amongst the river red gums and sandy course of Carbine Creek.

7.2 DOWN THE CARBINE

Slim Dusty sang, “It takes me back down the Leichhardt to my old Coolullah ways.” Georgie and other Dajarra people sing, “It takes me back, down the Carbine, to my old Dajarra ways.” When Georgie and others were kids living in the West End camps they walked along the
Carbine hunting and collecting bush tucker, they collected water from soaks dug\(^5\) into the creek bed and carted it up to the camp, they fished for perch after floods, and they recall swimming and playing with other children along the creek. Georgie and others narrate stories that take the listener back down the Carbine to these childhood experiences. At the time of this study children continued to move along the Carbine playing, hunting and collecting bush tucker and from time to time others travelled along parts of the creek. As people like Georgie move along the creek they experience a sequence of named places for example Black Mountain, Mullet Hole, Redbank, The Junction, The Crossing, The Bore, DeSatge’s Crossing, The Lagoons, Black Stump, One Mile, Three Mile and Carbine Well as well as other unnamed places where particular events occurred. When reciting this sequence of places people often do so as if following the creek downstream. (See Figure 7.4-7.6.)

The Carbine is in itself part of a greater lineal place complex of watercourses that drain towards Lake Eyre. South of Dajarra the Carbine junctions with Suleiman Creek, which then flows into Wills Creek, which in turn joins the Burke River, the Burke then joins the Georgina that flows into Eyre Creek.

In addition to the sequence of places along the Carbine, the creek has physical properties that contribute to its ‘lineal’ nature. The first of these is the usually dry, sandy, creek bed and its course as it meanders through the low relief, carrying floodwaters south and holding water in small waterholes such as Mullet Hole and Three Mile. Amongst the Mitchell grass downs, spinifex, gidyea, and stony ridges of Northwest Queensland the taller trees such as river red gums and coolibah, carbeen and bloodwood that fringe the Carbine and other creeks create a strong visual ‘line’ in the landscape. In the first few years that I visited Dajarra, the vegetation along the creek was so thick that the West End could only be seen from town at night when house lights could be seen through the trees. Later, the vegetation thinned out so that houses at the West End became visible from town during the day.

Although people recall places along the Carbine in sequence and retain knowledge of its course, and although they travel down the Carbine in thoughts, memories and mental maps of country, the creek is not always physically experienced in a lineal or sequential manner. Water travels down the Carbine, fish travel up the river after floods and sometimes people travel up and down the creek, but often people visit a place along the Carbine such as Mullet Hole, move away from the creek to another place and return to this place or another place on the creek at some other time. Similarly it is unlikely that Dajarra people physically experience the greater lineal complex of the watercourse from the Carbine to Eyre Ck, yet they experience various parts of the sequence of places such as the Carbine at Dajarra, the

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\(^5\) Some soaks were created by digging into the creek bed, then a 44 drum with the bottom cut out was dropped into the hole. The drum fills with water and the lid is left on to prevent birds, leaves etc fouling the water. When you wanted water you simply lifted the lid up and dropped your bucket into the 44. The drum also prevents the side of a traditional hand-dug soak from gradually caving in.
Suleiman at Wonomo Waterhole or on the Boulia Road, the Wills on the Duchess Road or the Monument Road, the Burke River on the Osborne Road or at Boulia. Although this greater lineal place complex and its sequence of places is unlikely to be physically experienced as one route, the complex and its sequence of places is part of the geographic knowledge of many Dajarra people who follow the waters down this system in thoughts and words.

Dajarra people visit the Carbine for a number of reasons. People regularly cross the Carbine on their travels between the West End and Town or on their journeys between Dajarra and places further to the west. After heavy rainfall groups of people might be found visiting the crossing to watch the creek come up or to inspect the quality of water. People visit places on the Carbine to fish especially after floodwaters have improved the quantity and quality of fish. Small groups of adults sometimes ‘sit down’ (socialise) in the shade and cool of the Creek. Water drums were regularly filled at the bore and tank on the creek, as this water was often preferred to rainwater and tap water in town. Sand and gravel is taken from the creek bed for use in building construction in town, for example all of the footpaths in Dajarra have Carbine gravel and sand. Silt and sand is taken from the creek for use in garden beds and lawns and saplings are occasionally taken from the banks for landscaping in town.

The Carbine acts as a division or boundary between the West End and town. The physical qualities of the creek bed and creek vegetation create a distinct place that is between and different to the physical environment of Town and the West End. At times when the Carbine is in flood, it physically divides the West End and town. For example, during a big flood in the 1950s people were trapped at the West End and their food supplies began to run seriously low. However, it rained and perch fell out of the sky which they then collected and ate. The main concern people have with floodwaters is that they isolate people at the West End from emergency medical assistance at the Health Clinic (see Figure 7.7). Prior to the construction of an all weather air strip in Dajarra in 2003 when the Carbine flooded it also cut the town off from medical assistance at the Mt Isa Base Hospital.

The Carbine acts as a social boundary between Town and the West End. Until the late 1960s the Carbine marked a boundary between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal environments. This spatial separation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal environments was also characteristic of cattle stations where Aboriginal camps were distant and distinct from the station buildings. In the 1970s the Carbine became a boundary between the Georgina River people who had moved into town and the later Arrerntic immigrants who were camped at the West End. This divisional property of the Carbine is illustrated by a story from around the time of the big West End camps that went something like this:

One time, a trigger-happy cop was after some men in town. They were near the chinee apple tree on the railway reserve. The policeman fired a shot into the dust from his service revolver. The men

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6 This was a major concern for the Dajarra Community who had lobbied for an all weather airstrip from since at least 1996.
took off in the direction of the Creek. One of the men, a cripple bloke, was the first to hit the creek. When they got to the West End, the Police came up there and they hid in an old rainwater tank. Then someone moved a bit and the tank began to roll, so they took off running again.

The Carbine acts as a behavioural boundary between Town and the West End. At the West End people experienced a freedom to create, maintain and transform domiciliary environments that supported preferred patterns of domiciliary behaviour. In contrast the new Aboriginal housing in town defined domiciliary environments that were in turn modified by patterns of domiciliary behaviour. The social privacy of the West End also facilitated the enactment of particular types of behaviour such as the performance of corroborees.

A further boundary property of the Carbine is the presence of dangerous beings, sometimes referred to as devils, in the Creek. As a consequence the Carbine was sometimes feared, especially at night-time. In the 1950s and 1960s children were not allowed to cross the Carbine after dark for fear of devils and fear of Aboriginal strangers from the west that came into town with droving teams. Those children stuck on the town side at sundown, stopped with relatives there, whilst those stuck on the West End side camped with their relatives there too.

Although there are now houses at the West End with occupants from various periods of migration, there remains a difference in the lifestyle of Town and ‘across the creek’. The residents of the West End continue to experience a degree of social privacy from the town Aboriginal population, non-Aboriginal minority and the police. The dichotomy between town and the West End is also present in: the type of housing, the orientation and spacing of houses, the smaller population at the West End, the quietness at the West End, and the greater exposure to cooling breezes at the West End.

The creek is over the crossing - lineal place complex properties of the Carbine

In contrast to the physical properties of pads and fence-lines that are created by the actions of humans or animals, the Carbine is a lineal place complex that has natural physical properties that are lineal in nature, the flow of water, the course of the creek and the vegetation of the creek corridor. Creeks are lineal place complexes with directional qualities, a sequence of places exists along the creek that are recalled in relation to the direction of the water flow.

Although a lineal place complex may consist of a sequence of contiguous places, a lineal place complex may not always be a line of regular human travel, and furthermore regular human travel along the complex may not necessarily be needed for the creation and maintenance of that lineal complex. The Carbine is a bit like the Queensland/Territory border, it is regularly crossed and less regularly followed. People visit a part of the complex or sequence, they move away from the complex and visit another part of it at some other time. The Carbine and other watercourses may be visited non-sequentially, yet knowledge of the
correct order of places along the creek is important for orientation and in the sharing of narratives with others. It is through narratives that people are taken ‘down the Carbine’ and through visitation (even if non-sequential) that knowledge of the place properties of this lineal complex is learnt, shared and maintained.

The Carbine illustrates two scales of lineal place complexes. Firstly, the Carbine is a lineal place complex comprised of a sequence of small-scale places. However on a regional scale the Carbine is one place in the sequence of watercourses (lineal places) that drain towards Lake Eyre. The position of the Carbine in this regional geography can be as significant as the position of smaller places in the local geography of the creek.

The Carbine provides another example of a lineal place complex that acts as a boundary to place. The creek creates a physical divide between ‘up town’ and ‘across the creek’ this being at its most extreme when floodwaters cut off movement between these places. However, as with the earlier example of the border fence, the nature of social relationships that traverse the creek are also very important in the boundary properties of this lineal complex. The changing nature of these social relationships over time and the changing nature of the physical properties of the creek illustrate boundary properties to place that are dynamic.

A further dynamic aspect in the boundary properties of the creek is the potential actions of strangers and dangerous beings. These potential actions influenced or shaped the behaviour of Dajarra people. In Chapter 5 (Section 5.7) it was argued that the potential of dangerous energies within a place could shape human behaviour around that place. In Chapter 6 the presence of ganmarri and its dangerous potential also shaped human behaviour around places. In this case potential actions shape human behaviour within a place.

The Carbine illustrates that a boundary to place may be a place in itself, a place between two places, not simply a single line on a map. In this case the Carbine as a boundary is visited by people and inhabited by others (devils and strangers). When travelling between Town and the West End you enter the creek, cross the creek and leave the creek on the other side. To this end the Carbine is part of the West End complex and a boundary to this complex, it is simultaneously part of Town and a boundary to town, and it is a place in its own right.

As we stand on the bank of the Carbine we watch a car travel towards us from the direction of the Jimberella Store. It is loaded up with people and gear for a weekend on the River. The passengers give us styled up waves as the car tyres rhythmically thud over the construction joints of the concrete crossing. We too leave the Carbine and head back out to the Georgina River.
7.3 ‘THE RIVER’

From Headingly to Roxborough

Most Dajarra people continually look westward to the Georgina River which might be described as a heartland in their geography, particularly the approximately 150km stretch of River between Headingly, Butharrawaliya and Roxborough, Kuthawarra (see Section 4.1). Dajarra people regularly travel along the course of the River following a network of roads and bush tracks to popular fishing and camping places on the permanent waterholes or to the Aboriginal communities at Urandangi and Alpurrurulam (Lake Nash) which are also close to Georgina waterholes.

As people travel along the River they experience a sequence of named and unnamed places. The map in Figure 7.14 shows some of the named places experienced as the River is followed downstream from Lake Nash. These named places are not always contiguous; in many instances there are unnamed places between, including places where particular events occurred (see Section 6.1). The lineal complex of the River consists of individual places such as Keith’s camp at Urandangi and other places discussed in Chapter 5; complexes of places such as Jimberella, the Clay Pan and other places discussed in Chapter 6; and places that are also part of other lineal complexes such as the Tobermorey Crossing at Urandangi which is part of the relationship between Dajarra, Urandangi and Urlampe discussed earlier in this Chapter.

These places are experienced in sequence as people physically and/or mentally travel up and down the River. These places are also experienced non-sequentially. For example, people cross the river on their way to other places, and sometimes people visit a particular place on the River and then leave the River altogether perhaps experiencing another complex such as the road back to Dajarra. There are a number of activities that draw people along the river in a sequential experience of place. One of them is hunting. For example, small groups of Georgina River people (mostly men) travel along the River hunting feral pigs. During such journeys it is possible for hunting parties to experience most of the above sequence of places in a single night.

Fishing also draws people along the River. Fishing trips usually take people between relatively close places such as Jimberella and Black Gate; during fishing trips people might throw a line in at a number of the close fishing holes. Social interaction is another activity that takes people along the River, for example people follow the River to visit the camps of friends and relatives (see Section 5.5 & 6.1). There are occasions when people travel along the River simply to experience or revisit places, to introduce others to places, or to search for places they know of but have never physically visited such as Hangman’s Bend (Section 5.6), an old camp, corroboree ground (Chapter 4), or a Story Place (Section 6.6).
'That's still on Wakabi there'

The waterholes on the River are complexes with a sequence of named places and an intensity of place properties. For example the following places on Wakabi Waterhole were mentioned in the text above: the Clay Pan, the place of the goanna capture, the Watering Place, Mackellar’s Hut, Jimberella, the Bottom Watering Place, and Hangman’s Bend. As an outsider it took time to learn where Wakabi starts and finishes because people mostly refer to the places along the waterhole in their stories and descriptions of place without referring to the name of the waterhole. It seems that people refer to Wakabi when they want to make a broader distinction between this waterhole and other waterholes on the River.

Some places on Wakabi such as Jimberella and Mackellar’s Hut (see Section 6.6) are also place complexes consisting of a number of places in sequence on the River. Thus the lineal complex of the River has a finer grain or scale of place, or a greater intensity of place properties, than the map above suggests. Roth noted this intensity of place properties on the Georgina waterholes in the late 1890s. In his observations below he is most likely referring to Lake Katherine or Wakabi:

During my visit to Roxburgh Downs I was shown a fairly-sized water-hole, the portions of which are described at least under seven different names. The importance of water both in the neighbourhood of camp and along the different lines of travel will explain in some measure how it happens that, except in the case of a mountain or some markedly elevated ridge, all geographical location is indicated among these different peoples by words denoting creeks, rivers, water-holes, lakes, or springs. (Roth 1897:133.)

There is an additional and highly important property to the Georgina River complex, that being the identification of individuals and groups of people with particular places or sections of the River. Some people are identified with particular places through their association with place-specific events and experiences, for example Nancy is identified with Black Gate, the place of her birth. Some families are identified with the places where they camped, for example the Majors at Lake Marian, and Walgra. Some people and families are identified with cattle stations on the River where they lived and worked, for example the Punch family at Carandotta and Headingly. There are also families who in an Aboriginal Law way are identified with sections of the River; they are recognised as the traditional owners, as the Bosses, for parts of the River as they are descendants of that place. For example the Age family are identified with the section of the River around Urandangi. As people move along the River part of their experience of place includes this sequence of people identified with various places on the River. Each of the types of person-place identification can exist at the one place and through ongoing interactions with the River new person-place identities are formed while others are maintained. Thus over time there is an intensity of person-place identification at particular places.

Back up the river and further down the river
Within the Georgina complex the stretch of river most frequently visited by Dajarra people lies between Urandangi and Roxborough. Most of this visitation is focused on Wakabi waterhole on the Carandotta pastoral lease. In his description of the “Upper Georgina Ethnographic District” Roth described Carandotta as ‘the Headquarters’ of the Warluwarra (Roth 1897:42). Since Roth made his observations the Carandotta stretch of the River has continued as ‘the headquarters’ for some Georgina River People, particularly Dajarra people. While Wakabi and the stretch of river between Headingly and Roxborough is regularly visited, Dajarra people also move beyond these places to other parts of the lineal place complex that is the Georgina River system. This greater complex includes tributaries such as the Templeton River, Moonah Creek, the Sandover River, Pituri Creek, and the Burke River, that are each a lineal place complex in their own right.

The maintenance of social relations and the search for resources takes people to places further up or down the River. A noteworthy phenomenon is the shift of fishing activity from places on Wakabi down the Georgina to Parapituri (Parapituri is approximately 160km downstream from Wakabi and approximately 170km from Dajarra). When it becomes difficult to get a good catch of fish on the Georgina around Wakabi and following reports from Boulia people or other Dajarra people of good catches at Parapituri, bush trips from Dajarra become focused on Parapituri. The shift from the upper Georgina to the middle/lower Georgina seems to happen towards the middle of the year, a number of months after the last big rains. People say that fish stocks are replenished with flood waters; it seems that this shift from Wakabi to Parapituri is linked with the slow moving floodwaters and the interrelationship of fish stocks with them (in 2000 there was a time lag in the flood peak between Urandangi and Marion Downs of almost two weeks). In following the fish stocks down the Georgina people are in a sense following the time lag in flood waters down the River (although the movement of people occurs sometime after the floods have passed). In this instance it could be said that the River itself draws people to various places along its course. The journeys of Dajarra people to Parapituri to exploit yields of fish in good season when other holes are less productive reflect the theme of a story called ‘Two Fisherman’ documented by Roth (1897:127). In this Story a powerful spirit tells two men to leave a waterhole they were fishing on the Hamilton River. They travelled 65km westward to Parapituri where they sought permission from people already camped there to fish the waterhole and they took a big catch. The two men repeatedly travelled from the Hamilton to fish Parapituri until the mob at Parapituri became annoyed with the men for taking all of the fish and set a trap of hooked boomerangs for them at the bottom of the waterhole.

7 Similarly if there are reports of good catches of fish on the Diamantina, bush trips become focused on the Diamantina Lakes. See also Harney’s (1952) description of the fishing potential of Parapituri.

8 In March of 2004 following summer flooding Parapituri was teaming with small fish, however the manager of nearby Wirrilyerna Station said that good size fish would not come onto the bite until June. At the same time Dajarra people were visiting the Georgina at Black Gate and getting good catches of good sized black bream and yellow belly. To a degree this downstream movement of people supports Sutton’s (1990:71) hypothesis that; “Upriver populations tend to press towards downstream areas.”
Another pattern of travel is the movement of people away from the River. For example, during the rainy season people followed the Georgina tributaries, in particular Moonah Ck, carrying sacred objects to Story Places on the eastern edge of the Hills Country.\(^9\) As the rainy season eased, people returned with the sacred objects to interrelated Story Places on the Georgina. Some Dajarrara people have travelled along Moonah Ck in buggies, on horses and walking on foot. Pastoralists and others also followed the Moonah Ck route between the Ranges and the River. There are roads along most of Moonah Ck, Dajarrara people travel in motor vehicles along part of Moonah Ck on the Top Urandangi Road, the Urandangi–Mt Isa Road. They also cross Moonah Ck on the Dajarrara–Urandangi Road, on the Dajarrara–Mt Isa Road and on the Georgina Stock Route Road.

Some Dajarrara people walked along the Georgina as children, some experienced travelling along the Georgina on horses or in buggies. During the course of this research some Dajarrara people commenced their experience of journeys along the River as babies travelling in the vehicles of parents, aunties, uncles or grandparents all of whom had a range of experiences of this complex, including different time depths of experience and different types of experience. People also recall the foot walking experiences of the old people. They recall stories of the old people walking between Lake Marian and Urandangi to get rations, or between cattle station camps and Urandangi. They recall the old people walking to places on the River for ‘business’ (ceremony). They recall the journey of a Georgina River man who escaped from Palm Island and walked westward (approximately 1200km) until he hit the Georgina, which he then followed to the camps of his family. Some people remember visiting the Georgina as children in the 1950s and seeing ‘wild people’ travelling on foot along the River; they say that you no longer see ‘wild people’ walking along the River because everyone now has access to ‘Toyotas’ (four wheel drives).

**Trade and travel routes**

> It is tempting to suggest that, at the time of European arrival, Australia was crisscrossed with superhighways hustling and bustling with human and superhuman traffic, powerlines, gridlines. The reality was probably somewhat less congested, but it is clear that the country was pulsing with extensive trading routes, ceremonial tracks, marriage exchange links - subsistence, survival, and supply lines. (Reser et al 2000:45.)

Approximately 60 years previous to the aforementioned sightings of ‘wild people’ and almost thirty years after the first non-Aboriginal invasion of the region, Roth observed Georgina River people, their neighbours and wider Aboriginal groups walking along the Georgina, its tributaries and other creeks and rivers in the region. These watercourses were pulsing lines of human movement, trade and communication (see Figures 7.15 & 7.16). Roth’s description of the trade of the drug pituri (*Duboisia Hopwoodi*) provides an example of this travel phenomenon. It also illustrates the incorporation of non-Aboriginal artefacts into this system.

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\(^9\) Informants MS, PD, TD, JM.
Pituri. Obtained from Carlo [station name] (vel Mungerebar), on the upper Mulligan...plant grows a little further east than this, though in scattered patches only- eg about sixteen miles westwards of Glenormiston head station.... From Boulia and Marion Downs, from Herbert Downs and Roxburgh, messengers are sent direct to the Ulaolinya tribes at Carlo with spears and boomerangs, “Government” and other blankets, nets, and especially red-coloured cloths, ribbons, and handkerchiefs to exchange and barter for large supplies of the drug. On its advent at Roxburgh the pituri may travel partly up the Georgina and partly along the ranges to the Kalkadoon, who may supply the Mitakoodi with it, but very little gets further eastward. From Boulia it is sent up the Burke, and so through the Yellunga and Kalkadoon, again carried to the Mitakoodi...(Roth 1897:100.)

Pituri was transported in woven ‘pituri bags’ that have a distinctive bicornuate shape that has been described as ‘lozenge’ (McBryde 1987:265), ‘navicular’ (Roth 1897:102), and ‘pasty’ (Aiston 1937:376). The bags were woven of plant fibre, human hair, opossum string, non-Aboriginal string and blanket thread (Roth 1897:103). The bags have small openings into which the pituri was stuffed and when full the openings were stitched closed. According to Aiston (1937:376) at the markets a seller would place a bag of pituri in front of the assembled camp. The person wishing to buy the pituri would then put down an item of exchange such as a grinding dish. If satisfied with the exchange offer the seller picked up the item of exchange and the purchaser picked up the pituri. (Aiston 1938:375-376.)

Non-Aboriginal people also took advantage of this trade system. For example in the 1890s pituri was shipped from Glenormiston to New South Wales for the Sydney Chinese community to use as a substitute for opium (Lukin-Watson 1980:29).

Other items of significance in the transcontinental trade and travel network were pearl and baler shells and red ochre. From the Gulf of Carpentaria and Cape York pearl and baler (Melo sp.) shells were carried down the Georgina and through to the Flinders Ranges via Lake Eyre. Lake Eyre groups such as the Diyari carried red ochre and grinding slabs from the Flinders Ranges up to the Georgina to exchange for pituri (McBryde 1987:262-266). It seems that there may have also been a trade in copper products. Roth (1897:175) mentions the use of a bluish-green pigment, which he describes as “some form of copper ore”, in the paint up of woman in Georgina River female initiation ceremonies. Copper-ore deposits are not known on the Georgina itself however the Northwest Highlands to the east are renowned for their copper deposits. This suggests that copper ore or at least a pigment derived from copper ore was traded out of the highlands possibly by the Kalkadoon and carried to Georgina River groups.

The Georgina not only acted as a travel route for material exchange but also for the exchange of knowledge and behaviour (Roth 1897:117). For example the Kalkadoon learnt Rain Songs from Wakaya in camps at Carandotta and the Boulia mob travelled to Roxborough to learn

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10 Roth (1897:103) provides a detailed description of the manufacture of these bags.
11 A number of Pituri bags collected from Glenormiston are held at the Queensland Museum (Register QE-6001-0, QE-6003-0, QE-11002-0). The largest of these is 900mm long and 400mm wide. The University of Queensland Anthropology Museum also holds a Pituri Bag from the Boulia area (ID 1742).
corroborees (Roth 1897:117, 168). Roth illustrated the exchange and travel of knowledge and behaviour via these trade routes with the *Molonga* ‘corroboree’. This corroboree is thought to have originated in the northeast of the Northern Territory (possibly Arnhem Land), it was then carried and taught to successive groups down the Georgina River system (it appeared at Carandotta for the first time in 1893) and travelled to the west coast of South Australia. The theme of this corroboree was revenge against the European invaders and it included dancers made up to look like Europeans who were devoured by a female water spirit. The exchange of this corroboree carried it 1600km in 25 years. (Roth 1897:117-118, 120-125; Micha 1970:298; Reynolds 1995:91; Mulvaney 2003.)

The places or ‘markets’ where the Molonga was exchanged are most likely the perennial waterholes such as Wakabi on Carandotta. An important feature of these markets was the visitation of outside groups or neighbouring groups to these places. For example, Roth (1897:104, 134-135) observed the Yaroinga, Andakerabinha, Wakaya, Kalkadoon, Yalanga and Pitta-Pitta visiting Warluwarra country. Perhaps the large gathering of people observed in 1878 on the Georgina waterhole named ‘Double f’ (possibly Wakabi) was a Georgina River ‘market’ (see Section 4.2). Roth captures the social-interaction that occurred between groups at markets in the following descriptions:

[A] large number of people of both sexes may be congregated at the various camps and swapping-grounds, pleasure is often combined with business, new corroborees are performed and taught to others, or perhaps old ones exchanged, a general holiday made of it, and the relaxation thoroughly enjoyed...(Roth 1897:136).

...comparatively large numbers of people of both sexes may be congregated sometimes at these local markets. Thus it happens that ideas are interchanged, superstitions and traditions handed from district to district, and more or less modified and altered in transit, that new words and terms are picked up, and that corroborees are learnt and exchanged, just like any other commodity. (Roth 1897:136.)

Dajarra people had similar experiences of inter-group social–interaction at the Christmas camps on Wakabi described in the previous Chapter (see Section 6.6) and they continue to have similar experiences with various groups at places on the Georgina such as Urundangi (see Section 6.5). There is thus a long history of inter-group social interaction at places on the Georgina, particularly the big waterholes.

In the 1890s Roth observed that the majority of regional travel along place complexes such as the Georgina occurred during ‘winter months’:

The recognized routes invariably, and for reasons readily intelligible, run along water-courses and water-holes; taking all in all it may be stated that owing to the ordinarily scanty supplies of this commodity during summer months, the walk-about usually takes place sometime during the winter ones. The length of time occupied on each journey varies with the distance of course, from a few

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12 Mulvaney (2003) describes the *Molonga* as “the best documented non-material exchange.”
13 According to Reynolds, Siebert recorded the *Molonga*, as performed by the Dieri in northwestern South Australia. By the early twentieth century, its performance was noted at the head of Spencer Gulf (Port Augusta). It was performed at Alice Springs by the Arrernte. The anthropologist Elkin noted the performance at Penong on the Great Australian Bight in 1915 and at Horseshoe Bend in 1930. (Reynolds 1995:91.)
weeks to several months, and cases are not unknown where the blacks will travel all one winter before reaching their destination, will spend summer, the dry season there, and then return the following winter. (Roth 1897:132.)

Border and Rowland (1990:90) and McBryde\(^{14}\) (1987:259, 266) also provide models of winter travel (McBryde also mentions ‘autumn’ as a time of travel), they both argue that cooler temperatures, rainfall and access to food resources supported travel at this time. However, these models of winter travel seem to make incorrect observations of the climatic conditions of the region and seem to overlook resource factors that may influence the timing of travel. There is no doubt that water would have been a critical factor in the timing of regional travel on foot. However, waterholes are replenished by summer rainfall not winter rainfall (80% of rain falls between October and March, the hottest months of the year). During the period March to May, the climate cools off and begins to dry out, waterholes also begin to dry out although some deeper holes retain summer rainfall during this period and some may even continue to be charged by late summer rains and springs. Some Dajarra people have persistently informed the author that this March-May (or Easter) period is the most favourable time to visit the Georgina (see Section 6.6). The period May-September is the coolest but driest of the year. It is in this time that water resources are likely to become critical, with travellers and local groups becoming more reliant on permanent waterholes and soakages. (see Section 4.1.)

During the October to March period fish, goanna and bush fruit resources are all available. During this period kangaroos are of poor quality and scattered due to the availability of water in small and large pools. As the grasses dry off in the cooler months kangaroos are said to be at their best, they become more reliant on permanent water, yet the plains country provides them with good fattening grasses (see Section 7.6). Based on the availability of resources and the oral histories of people travelling towards the hills during the rainy season it seems that the most likely period of regional travel lies between December and August, with the March-May period being the most favourable. The timing of some travel may have been closely related to the slow movement of the floodwaters down the river systems and the fish stocks and other resources that are stimulated by them. People may have followed the fish stocks down the River as they do today. The most adverse time for regional travel seems to be the hot-dry September- November period in the lead up to the summer rains. It is during this time that activities may have been focused on the big waterholes at places like Jimberella with minimal regional travel occurring. Travel would have been seasonally dependant and seasons of severe drought would have limited travel, conversely seasons of good rainfall\(^{15}\) on the Georgina may have facilitated long periods of travel by large groups. However, heavy rain and flooding disrupts travel on the River for example contemporary travel is disrupted by rainfall as the black soil tracks on the Georgina quickly become boggy.

\(^{14}\) McBryde’s work is concerned with the Diyari of the Lake Eyre region, however she is referring to their journeys north to trade for pituri.

\(^{15}\) Such as 2000 and 2004 when Lake Eyre was filled with Georgina and Diamantina waters.
At Boulia during the heavy floods and rains of January and February, 1895, I was assured on native authority that all the rain and water had as usual been produced by the Miorli men: when I begged of them to immediately stay proceedings, the reply came that as the flood had come up too quickly to allow of the removal of the rain-stick from out of its submerged position, the rain would have to run its course! (Roth 1897:167-168.)

Roth (1897), Rowland & Rowland (1990:82-93) and McBryde (1987) all seem to overlook social interaction and ceremony as factors that influence the timing of movement along the Georgina and other travel routes. For example the norm in the Georgina River Basin is for initiation ceremonies to be held in the December-January period. In fact the climatic conditions that influence travel particularly rainfall are influenced by ceremony - the rain making business/ camps of the Georgina and other places (see Section 5.8). Although Roth did not explicitly make the connection between the timing of travel and ceremony, he provided evidence of such for example he recorded Maiawali (his Miorli) rain-makers travelling to various places (outside of their country) on the Georgina and Burke River for Rain business (Roth 1897:168). Dajarra people recall East Arrernte and Warluwarra people travelling from cattle station camps and Dajarra to places on the Georgina to participate in ceremony (including Rainmaking) and corroborees in the December-January period, the last of these said to have been held in the 1950s/1960s (see Section 6.6).

Droving routes and the movement of others

...there is reason to believe that for future pioneers and settlers into the far western, and what is still believed to be arid, country, a knowledge of these aboriginal lines of travel or trade routes might prove to be of great value, since only along them would there be a chance of finding water. Out beyond the Toko ranges, over large areas still awaiting exploration at the hands of Europeans, the Undekerebina men, who were encamped at Glenormiston during my visit there, assured me of certain routes which they had themselves followed...(Roth 1898:13.)

The reports of ‘wild people’ following the River in the 1950s suggest that the Georgina continued to be used as a walking route by people from wider groups (the unknown ‘wild people’) as well as being used by local Georgina River groups. This use of the Georgina continued despite the pastoral occupation and the impacts that it had on travel and trade in the region. (Roth 1897:134; McCarthy 1939:411.)

At the time of the above statement by Roth, the Aboriginal trade and travel routes were already of ‘great value’ to the ‘pioneers’ and ‘settlers’ of the region. Pastoralists rapidly adopted the Aboriginal trade routes and used them as their own trade routes, most notably as stock routes to drove cattle from the Georgina and Northern Territory stations to eastern and southern markets (see Figure 7.17). They were also used as supply routes to the stations that were followed by carriers and camel teams that brought goods from railheads to the east.16

Roads following the Aboriginal trunk trade route on the Georgina had been mapped as early

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16 A recent Queensland Stock Route map produced by the Queensland Government Department of Natural Resources and Mines (2002) acknowledges this adoption of Aboriginal trade routes by pastoralists: “Pastoralists drove stock into newly discovered grazing lands along corridors that followed river systems and Indigenous trade routes.”
as 1886 (McLean 1886). A map of 1899 (Queensland Survey Department 1899) shows a road and stock route following the Georgina between Camooweal and Boulia, and a telegraph line between Camooweal and Urandangi. From Boulia stock routes followed the Georgina south to Birdsville and then onto the railhead at Marree via the Birdsville Track, the rail line continuing onto Port Augusta in Spencer’s Gulf. This is the route along which Aboriginal people carried the Molonga, bale shells and pituri south, and the red ochre north.

The 1899 (Queensland Survey Department 1899) map shows a road branching off the Georgina at Mangala (Carandotta) and heading southwest to arrive at a waterhole on Pituri Creek that is most likely Walayah Waterhole. This is the route that Aboriginal people travelled between the Toko Ranges and the Georgina carrying pituri and grinding stones to Carandotta and it is the route of a Dreaming Story that travels between the Toko Ranges and the Georgina. The explorer Hodgkinson found his way to the Georgina along this route (see Section 4.2), and cattle station roads are maintained along this route.

In 1899 (Queensland Survey Department 1899) roads were mapped that branched off the Georgina at Glenormiston and Herbert Downs for the Mulligan. These were the routes followed by Aboriginal groups travelling between the Mulligan and the Georgina carrying pituri, grindstones, fluted and hook boomerangs and possibly dolerite axes. This route is mapped as stock route ‘U461’ on the current Stock Route Map (Queensland Government, Natural Resources and Mines, 2002).

Members of many Dajarra families continued the history of Aboriginal travel along the Georgina travel routes through their experience with droving teams as ringers and horse tailors. For example Jack and Biddy Punch and Ed Major worked with drovers walking cattle down the Georgina to Marree. Dajarra people continue to have experiences travelling down the Georgina with drovers. Dajarra people such as Henry had experiences travelling along the River maintaining government bores on the stock route. Some Dajarra people had experiences droving cattle and sheep from the Georgina to Dajarra, for example Henry brought sheep in from Carandotta, setting up temporary netted fencing every night to hold the sheep. Sheep were moved small distances per day, so the journey of approximately 150 kilometres from Carandotta would take approximately 2-3 weeks. Some Aboriginal people came into Queensland and to Dajarra with droving teams from distant places in the Northern Territory. For example Harry Spencer, who was born at Pigeon Hole on the Victoria River came into Dajarra with a drover then worked the Queensland cattle stations and in time was recognized as a Dajarra elder, albeit not a traditional owner of the area.

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17 According to McNight (1977:40) the Birdsville Track was first used by drovers in the 1880s.
Chapter 7 – It Takes Me Back Down the Carbine.

Dreaming stories
Another pattern of movement along the Georgina is that of Dreaming Stories or Ancestral Beings. Ancestral Beings had numerous adventures along the River. Some Ancestral Beings travelled along the edge of the River interacting with the physical environment; some entered the water at certain places. There are places where Ancestral Beings interacted with each other on the water’s edge, whilst others interacted in the water and underwater. Some Ancestral Beings travelled in the sky above country, and some travelled underground visiting subterranean places. Some Dreaming stories involve Ancestral Beings visiting a number of waterholes and places along the Georgina. Some Ancestral Beings travelled across country from the east and west to the Georgina and then followed the Georgina. Others crossed the Georgina and moved on to other places and other adventures. Some Ancestral Beings started up on the Georgina travelled great distances away from the Georgina creating other lineal place complexes as they went. As people today move along the River and its tributaries they are experiencing or moving around (see Section 5.7) an intensity of places that were created, transformed or inhabited by Dreaming beings. The current author has documented Dreaming Stories on most of the permanent waterholes between Headingly and Roxborough and some Stories involve the travel of Ancestral Beings along significant stretches of the River (for example over 70km). Ancestral Beings or their actions remain at places on the Georgina.

Follow the River - lineal place complex properties of the Georgina.
Amongst the repertoire of places, place complexes and lineal place complexes experienced by Dajarra people the Georgina River stands out as a heartland. It is a fundamental element in the geography of most Dajarra people. A significant characteristic of this heartland is its lineal nature. This heartland is not a nucleus or some kind of central point, rather, this heartland as described by Dajarra people is a length or section of the River; it is linear with multiple centres of experience. Adjoining, intersecting and even overlapping this section of the River is the heartland of other groups, other Georgina River people, such as the Lake Nash mob (who may also look westward to their Alyawarr homelands) or further north the Indjiladji who have connections with the northernmost reaches of the River.

The Georgina has places along its course that are experienced physically and mentally in sequence; they are also experienced non-sequentially. In contrast to the Carbine, social relationships, natural physical properties, seasonal phenomenon and resources regularly draw people along the Georgina River and influence the timing of journeys. Experience of place or ‘place education’ is also an important stimulus for movement along a lineal place complex such as the River. The search for places, the search for place knowledge and place experience, the desire to teach others about places and the desire to learn about places from others draws individuals and groups of people along this complex which in turn contributes to the maintenance of the complex. For some Dajarra people the exact location of places such as

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18 These places were documented during this study, for the Warluwarra Native Title Claim and for the Greater Mt Isa Anthropological Research Project.
Hangman’s Bend is unclear, yet journeys in search of such places are attempts to position them within the sequence of known places (see Section 5.6). The physical and mental journeys of people along the River are actions that create and maintain relationships between numerous places in this complex.

The Georgina illustrates the variety of scales of place that may be experienced within a lineal place complex. People experience numerous individual places (such as camps), a range of place complexes such as waterholes (in themselves places), and they experience the lineal complex that is the section of the River between Headingly and Roxborough. This section of the River is in turn a place within the broader complex of the Georgina River system.

The role of the River in the Aboriginal trade and travel network of Northwest Queensland and Australia illustrates the relationship of this lineal place complex to other lineal complexes and to other people. It also illustrates the role of interaction between groups in the making and maintenance of place. Not only did people travel great distances along this complex but they carried with them three key place properties for exchange; they carried place specific physical resources and artifacts (many of which were then used to transform the physical environment of other places, for example grinding dishes from the Toko Ranges used to process grass seeds on the Georgina), they carried and exchanged knowledge properties (Rain Songs that in turn could be used to transform place properties) and they carried and exchanged behavioural properties (for example the Molonga dance).

Within a lineal place complex such as the River there may be places that are foci of regular visitation. They might be described as heartlands within the heartland, Roth’s ‘headquarters’, or ‘business offices’ in Aboriginal English. This trade and travel network also illustrates that places within a lineal place complex may be the focus of social interaction between large groups of people, the Georgina markets on the waterholes, the Sacred Sites, the wet season camps, the Christmas camps, the cattle station camps, the contemporary fishing and rodeo camps. Part of the heartland nature of this place complex is its significance in sustaining these large gatherings of people who travel from places throughout the region to interact on the River.

While the River is a heartland it is important to note that natural or seasonal phenomena, resources, ceremonial obligations and social relations also draw people further up or down the complex and off the River and onto other lineal place complexes. These movements away from the River create and maintain interrelationships between it and other places and place complexes- all the journeys between the River and Dajarra for example. Yet a key characteristic to the River as heartland is that it is a place of return- ever since Dajarra people were shifted eastward they have persistently returned sundown way to the Georgina in thoughts, stories and journeys.
The Georgina illustrates the identification of people with places or sections of a lineal place complex. Through the mutual identification between people and places an experience of the sequence of places of a complex may equally or simultaneously involve an experience of a sequence of people. There are numerous ways that people are identified with places and therefore over time there is an intensity of person-place identification at particular places.

The movement of Ancestral Beings between places and their actions at places created and is believed to maintain relationships between places on the River. The movement and actions of some Ancestral Beings interrelates the Georgina and other lineal place complexes. The sequences of places that were visited by Ancestral Beings and the events that occurred at them are recalled as Stories or Dreamings, lineal place complexes.

The Georgina illustrates the adoption or borrowing of Aboriginal place complexes by non-Aboriginal people. The adoption and occupation of this lineal place complex by non-Aboriginal people disrupted Aboriginal people-environment relations (see Sections 4.2 & 4.4). The pastoralists built their homesteads, the centres of their industry, at the centres of Aboriginal social relations- the best waterholes. They then followed all of the Aboriginal pathways with their cattle and they traded items into the Aboriginal system of trade. Although this occupation disrupted Aboriginal people-environment interactions it simultaneously reinforced the Aboriginal people-environment interactions by adding a new layer or new properties to the pre-existing Aboriginal geography. In other words the nature of the pre-existing Aboriginal geography of Northwest Queensland suited the activities of the pastoral industry.

In Chapter 2 it was argued that different experiences of movement between places could contribute to different types of place knowledge. Merlan (1998) found that people who had experienced places by walking remembered them sequentially. This may be true to some extent on the Georgina. However, Dajarra people continue to follow the same routes and to experience a similar sequence of places which the old people walked, albeit in cars and Toyotas. The public stock route road along the Georgina and the relationship between some of the Georgina stations and Aboriginal people has facilitated these contemporary movements. In contrast there are other lineal complexes that people do not physically follow because they are unable to access them or are prohibited from doing so by cattle stations. Whilst such lineal complexes may be remembered and knowledge of them shared through narratives, this knowledge is potentially disrupted (and in the most extreme cases lost) due to the inability to maintain and share direct experiences of the complex. It seems then, that in the sequential experience of place and in the maintenance of lineal place complexes, more significant than the mode of movement is the freedom or ability to move between places – to gain an experience of the place complex.
The Georgina lineal place complex illustrates multiple dimensions of place or an intensity of place properties. These dimensions of place include: the adventures and travels of Ancestral Beings along the Georgina and the places they visited, made and maintain; the foot-walking journeys of the old people along the River, the places where they camped and interacted in social and ceremonial activities; the journeys along the River to the Christmas camps of the 1900s and contemporary journeys along the River; the places visited by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal drovers along the River; and the simultaneous maintenance and disruption of this place complex by the pastoral occupation. The Georgina is a lineal place complex where the movements and actions of Ancestral Beings and Aboriginal people and others intersect, overlap and coexist.

If we were to conceptualise this complex as Rapoport’s (1990:14) ‘beads on a string’ it is something consisting of multiple strands of string of various lengths and thickness, with beads of various shapes and sizes, some of the beads are threaded by the same string, others are not, some beads are threaded by multiple strings whilst others are not. Some of the threads of string and beads are visible and known to many people and some are only known or visible to select groups of people.

A car on the Urandangi Road slows as it approaches the Mt Isa- Dajarra Road, it turns onto the ‘the bitumen’ and accelerates towards Dajarra. As the dust at the turnoff slowly lifts and drifts away in the light breeze and rich light of late afternoon a second Dajarra car, with an esky in the back full of black bream and yellow belly from the Georgina, also swings onto the bitumen.

7.4 THE DAJARRA- MT ISA ROAD

On the bitumen

At the time of this study there was a lively system of Aboriginal travel, trade and information exchange in Northwest Queensland. However, the pastoral industry, government action (and inaction), and the actions of Aboriginal groups have contributed to some changes in the lines of travel and the places of exchange (see Roth 1897:134 and McCarthy 1939:411). Although Dajarra people and other Aboriginal people continue to follow the Georgina, part of the network of travel and trade has been displaced to the east, just as Georgina River people were displaced to the east.\(^{19}\) Since the 1960s the Dajarra-Mt Isa Road \(^{20}\), and the Dajarra-Boulia Road have developed into significant north-south Aboriginal trade and travel routes. For example, the yellow belly eaten at Cat Dam was carried along this route (see section 6.2). This road intersects and conjoins multiple places, place complexes and lineal place complexes. (See Figures 7.18 & 7.19.)

\(^{19}\) Whereas the drovers followed the Georgina, road trains ship cattle north and south along the highway.

\(^{20}\) Known as the Dajarra Road when you are travelling from Mt Isa and the Mt Isa Road when you are travelling from Dajarra. Dajarra people do not refer to this road as its map name of Diamantina Development Highway.
From Dajarra people make numerous short journeys along the Mt Isa Road. They travel to resource places such as the place where Susan collected grubs (section 5.2) and the place where the boys collected gidyea wood (section 5.4). Dajarra people travel short distances (up to approximately 40km) along the Mt Isa Road to hunt kangaroo. People also make short trips along this road to places for recreation and social interaction. People follow part of this road on their journeys between Dajarra and the Georgina, turning west onto the Urandangi Road at the ‘Ardmore Turnoff’.

Aboriginal people are regularly on the road between Dajarra and Mt Isa. Dajarra people travel to Mt Isa, to visit shops, to purchase cars and car parts, to get vehicles repaired, to use health, financial and legal services, and to attend court. Dajarra women travel to Mt Isa to give birth. Teenagers travel to Mt Isa to attend high school and primary school children travel to Mt Isa to attend regional sporting carnivals and other events where they interact with children (including relatives) from Boulia, Urandangi, Lake Nash and Camooweal. Dajarra people travel to Mt Isa to attend and participate in major events such as the Mt Isa Rodeo and the Mt Isa show.

Dajarra people also travel to Mt Isa to visit relatives perhaps staying with them for a period of time. Some young people are regularly moving between the households of extended family in Dajarra and Mt Isa. People make trips to Mt Isa to pick up relatives who wish to return to Dajarra. Households shift from Dajarra to Mt Isa and conversely households shift from Mt Isa to Dajarra. Dajarra people travel to Mt Isa to attend and participate in regional Aboriginal events such as the All Blacks Football and softball carnivals where they compete with Aboriginal teams from the region e.g. the Doomadgee Dragons (see Figures 7.20 & 7.21). People travel to Mt Isa to attend meetings concerned with land councils and Aboriginal organizations (such as the Warluwarra Corporation and the Carpentaria Land Council) to work on cultural heritage and native title issues. Some Dajarra people recently travelled to Mt Isa to attend meetings to gain compensation for their years of unpaid work while under the ‘Aboriginal Act’. Dajarra people travel to Mt Isa to party (socialise) with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people at hotels and clubs in town (chasing ‘youngins’). Important events that draw Dajarra people and other Georgina River people together in Mt Isa are birthday celebrations, particularly 21st birthdays, and funerals. Dajarra people travel to Mt Isa to pay their respects at the funerals of Dajarra people, Georgina River people and people from other Northwest Queensland and eastern Northern Territory groups.

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21 Approximately 1-2 households per year relocate. Some families shifted to Mt Isa when their children commenced high school.
22 A striking feature of these funerals is the black and white clothing worn by most of the people in attendance. Men wear a white shirt and black pants (or jeans) and good shoes (‘disco shoes’). Women wear white tops and black pants or skirts. This uniform dress provides a distinct visual sense of communal mourning.
A car travelling to Mt Isa might have an esky in the back with kangaroo meat or tails for relatives in Mt Isa, conversely cars travelling to Dajarra sometimes carry mangoes or other fruits from the trees of relatives in Mt Isa. People not only exchange food and other goods when visiting Mt Isa, they also exchange information. The regular journeys of Dajarra people to Mt Isa and the interaction with other Dajarra people and the ‘Mt Isa Mob’ (Dajarra or Georgina River people who are long term residents of Mt Isa) means that a range of information about people, places and events is regularly shared through gossiping and storytelling… “They reckon they had a fight down in Boulia the other night.” People also carry messages, sometimes joking messages, between Mt Isa and Dajarra- “if you see [x] tell them to ring up this way…”

The regular movements of Dajarra people up and down the Mt Isa Road over the last 30 years have created and maintained a new lineal place complex or sequence of places that continues to be developed with ongoing people-environment interactions. Dajarra people recall sequences of places along the Dajarra Road where they, or others, had particular experiences including random events. These experiences are sometimes recalled as if travelling the road. For example, knowing that I would be travelling back to Dajarra from Mt Isa by myself and late at night, some Dajarra people went into great detail describing the sequence of places along the highway where people encountered various scary or dangerous beings and phenomena such as the ‘min min light’. I was also given instructions on how to behave if I experienced some of these.

Another sequence of places in this lineal place complex is the series of creeks crossed along the road: (from south to north) Carbine Ck, Timothy Ck, Sulieman Ck, Split Ck, Horse Ck, Jayah Ck, Pigeon Ck, Waverly Ck, Yappa Ck, Nine Mile Creek, Gidya Ck, Moonah Ck, Sybella Ck, and Mica Ck. These creeks are all lineal place complexes in their own right. Most of them form part of the Georgina Basin. There are Dreaming Stories that follow some of these creeks and the old people followed some of these creeks between the hills and the Georgina. There is also a sequence of grids on the Mt Isa Road where fence-lines cross the road including a ‘gammon grid’, a painted grid, near Mt Guide station.

There is a sequence of bores and dams to the east and west of the road: Sulieman Bore, Cat Dam, Split Creek Dam, Briar Dam, Marsh’s Dam, Jayah Ck Bore, Middle Pigeon Bore, Pigeon Ck Bore, Waverley Dam, Bradley’s Dam, and Woolshed Bore. Other places within the complex include the sequence of turnoffs to other roads and other lineal complexes, such as the Ardmore Turnoff to the bottom Urandangi Road, and the turnoff at The Top Urandangi Road. This place complex also includes a sequence of different types of country: the hills country between Dajarra and the Ardmore turnoff, the expanse of black soil plains between

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2 In 2004 a Dajarra man sent an esky full of fresh kangaroo meat up to Mt Isa for the funeral of a relative.
Split Ck and Waverly Ck, the tall trees of the creeks, the stands of gidyea near Mt Guide, and the hills country between Sybella Ck and Mt Isa.

There is a sequence of bush resources on this route which Dajarra people visit and/or retain knowledge of, such as the emu apple tree on the side of the road at Yappa Ck, the patch of wild cabbage on Galah Ck, and the patch of wild potatoes around Sybella Ck. As people travel along this complex they come relatively close to Dreaming places with geographical features that are visible from the road and there are geographic features that people have named such as ‘the house on the hill’, ‘the saddle’, and ‘the Gap’ a cutting through the north-south line of hills to the west of Dajarra. As Dajarra people travel to Mt Isa they pass through a sequence of cattle stations, Stradbroke, Ardmore and Mt Guide and they pass by cattle station places where Dajarra people and families lived and worked such as Pigeon Ck where the Punch and Dempsey families lived and worked for Ardmore Station.

These creek crossings, grids, bores and dams, the different character of the country, the known places of bush resources, dreaming places and geographic features are places of orientation in journeys between Mt Isa and Dajarra and in narratives concerned with personal and shared experiences on the road. These experiences include places where people stopped to capture goannas, places where vehicles have broken down, places where people stopped to change tyres or fill radiators, creek crossings where people have waited for waters to recede, places where Dajarra people and others were involved in accidents, places where Dajarra people died, places where Dajarra people were born on the road, dinner camps and places where people camped overnight. There are also places in this sequence that are associated with other experiences in other places, for example Ted Marshall recalls putting in a well with his father along the Mt Isa Road at the time his brother Mick was born.

Today Dajarra people travel to Mt Isa in private vehicles, the Jimberella bus, the Pensioner bus, or the school bus, most of these journeys taking less than a few hours. In the 1960s groups of Dajarra people travelled in old trucks that moved slowly and took a number of days to travel between Mt Isa and Dajarra. In those days people stopped along the way to collect bush tucker and to camp on the side of the road. Older Dajarra people also recall slow journeys along the Old Mt Isa Road, which is still occasionally followed to access particular places.

‘Any cars going to town tomorrow?’ - lineal place complex properties of roads
The Dajarra- Mt Isa Road is full of stories and places. This road has developed into a new Aboriginal place complex through the place properties that Georgina River people brought with them when they were displaced to the east. The same social relations that draw (and drew) people along the Georgina River draw people along this complex. Dajarra people go to

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24 People collected this bush cabbage and cooked it up with corned meat.
Mt Isa specifically to interact with other members of their social group. These are the same people who travelled along the Georgina to meet up on the big waterholes. Mt Isa and Dajarra are new centres of Aboriginal trade and social interaction; these new centres add to the places of interaction on the Georgina - they do not supersede them.

Just as people travelled along the Georgina to participate in activities with others, people travel between Mt Isa and Dajarra to participate in Aboriginal activities/ events. They may not be the same events that drew people together on the Georgina, nonetheless they are Aboriginal specific events that draw the social group together. Similarly people do not trade the same items that were traded at the Georgina River markets yet there is a distinct system of Aboriginal trade and sharing amongst the social group and others. An important property is the carrying of knowledge and information along this place complex just as it was carried along the Georgina. Similarly the search for resources takes people along this complex just as it takes people along the Georgina. These properties illustrate the formation of a lineal place complex through the enactment of sequences or patterns of behaviour.

The Mt Isa Road illustrates that an intensity of place properties can develop along a lineal place complex through regular movement along that complex. While some places such as Story Places are pre-existing, new places and layers of new place properties develop through the interactions that individuals and groups of people have with the environment. Such interactions may involve the enactment of known forms of behaviour ‘randomly’ at a place (see Section 5.5). The Mt Isa Road illustrates that a number of sequences of place can exist within a place complex. There are sequences of place experiences. There are sequences of known and named places. There are sequences of places defined by different physical properties- the creek crossings and the changing country. There are sequences of Dreaming Places. There are sequences of cattle stations and cattle station places. When people travel the Mt Isa Road they experience all of these as a place complex, but when they narrate stories about the road they sometimes draw attention to one of these sequences, that is people retain knowledge of the overarching lineal place complex as well as the composite sequences of places.

In the last decade (late 1990s/early 2000s) a new type of lineal place complex was introduced to the Aboriginal geography of Northwest Queensland that being cultural heritage clearance corridors associated with infrastructure such as new roads, communication lines and pipelines. In these projects Aboriginal people walk the route of the proposed project identifying culturally significant places that needed to be avoided by the development works. In some instances the same people walk the corridor as monitors of the ‘lineal’ work. The movement of Aboriginal people along these routes creates lineal place complexes in a similar process to the movement of people along the Mt Isa Road. Not only do Aboriginal people modify the route of these projects around existing places they also experience and develop
knowledge of some places for the first time, particularly archeological sites that are discovered as the route is walked. In turn these places contribute to the preexisting knowledge of the participants and create new lineal complexes to be shared through narratives.

7.5 WE MIGHT GO OUT FOR A ‘ROO LATER

Most of the lineal place complexes discussed above are established and have some trace in the environment. In contrast there are lineal place complexes that are temporarily formed through the enactment of established sequences of behaviour or experience (see section 6.1) and they typically involve minimal transformation of the physical environment. In their daily lives Dajarra people enact known sequences of behaviour (actions) that establish, transform and maintain lineal place complexes. The following example briefly examines the sequence of behaviour and places associated with kangaroo hunting.

They are out shooting.

Kangaroos are one of the most frequently and commonly exploited bush tucker resources and kangaroo meat was part of the staple diet of many Dajarra people. People say that they were reared up on ‘roo meat and enjoy consuming it, they get ‘hungry’ for ‘a good feed’ of ‘roo meat’. Kangaroo meat was an important supplement to purchased foods. This was particularly the case for low-income earners and/or where there were large household numbers (for example at a time when a household has a number of visitors).

Kangaroos were exploited seasonally. During the dry time when grasses have dried off and are at their ‘sweetest’, kangaroos are ‘fat’ (in good physical condition, literally fat) and were frequently exploited. During and after the short ‘wet’ season when the grass is green, kangaroos are said to be ‘wormy’ (suffering from parasite infestation), ‘bony’ or ‘poor’ (poor physical condition characterized by a lack of fat) and were exploited less frequently.

Categories of travel when kangaroos were hunted include; (i) one-day bush trips which were usually combined with other activities, (ii) when travelling between places, (iii) extended bush trips over several days, and (iv) short hunting trips (a few hours) from Dajarra (‘they are out shooting’).25 This section focuses on the sequence of places and activities of this last category of hunting trip.26

Preparation for such a trip included (i) fuelling vehicles at the store or roadhouse, (ii) minor vehicle repairs (see section 6.3), (iii) visiting the store to purchase snacks and beverages for the road (see section 5.15), (iv) assembling various items from the domiciliary environment(s), including; water drums, boning knives, sharpening steels, plastic bags,

25 These involve return travel of approximately 5-60 km. In the ‘West End Days,’ in the 1950s and 1960s people made short journeys from Dajarra on foot and even by bicycle to hunt kangaroo with guns or with big kangaroo dogs.
26 The style of hunting is similar in the other categories, however there are some differences in time properties and sequences of behaviour.
calicoes, or plastic tubs for the storage of meat, rifle, bolt and bullets, (v) working out (negotiating) who would participate and assembling the participants. Hunting trips I observed usually involved small groups of men (minimum of two people), but some included children of both sexes. Short hunting trips mostly occurred in the late afternoon, this is a time when kangaroos are active and easily spotted. On occasions kangaroos were hunted during the day, when they were found resting in shade (often in the shade of gidyea) or when they were disturbed from rest (see Section 4.3).

Prior to leaving town, those involved sometimes discussed which of a number of known and frequented places for kangaroo hunting they would visit (up to approximately 30 -40km from Dajarra). This discussion was often started by someone in the vehicle posing the question, “Which way?” Sometimes the responses to this question (and similar questions) appeared to be indecisive, “Might try Boulia Road, or what”. Sometimes the decision took the form of one of three road directions, the Mt Isa Road, the Boulia Road or the Duchess Road. Considerations included, (i) the quality and quantity of game, (ii) where people had recently hunted, (iii) where other people had gone hunting that day, and (iv) avoidance of station managers and, or, consideration of seasonal station work.

We head out along the Boulia Road, jokes, stories, silence, shared drinks, softening afternoon light, the scanning of the surrounding country for kangaroo. Along the roads and tracks surrounding Dajarra there are a number of known hunting places, including areas close to bores (see Section 4.3 & 7.1). If kangaroos were not found at one place, people drove on to the next place. We turn off ‘the bitumen’ (the highway) on to a dirt road.

“This side, look.” A kangaroo is spotted and the driver positions the car for the best shot with instructions from the shooter, “Bit more, bit more… wait there”. Kangaroos are hunted selectively, with a preference for ‘fat’ kangaroos. Bony kangaroos, females with joeys, large bucks (‘the breeders’) and very young kangaroos were usually rejected.

A kangaroo stands poised, ears pricked, it turns and flees. One of the men whistles, it pulls up and turns to listen- silence- followed by the dull crack of the rifle. A teenager runs out, knocks the struggling kangaroo on the back of the head with a rock and drags it back to the vehicle by the tail. Not all hunting trips were successful; on occasions no kangaroos were spotted or else the shooter missed and was then targeted with lighthearted taunts by others in the vehicle.

27 The open ended nature of responses to questions, or the indefinite nature of suggested plans of action, seem to be attempts to limit the possibility of shaming oneself or others by publicly contradicting others, by imposing oneself or ones ideas on others, or by refusing others or their ideas. At other times social interactions involve intentional or deliberate ‘shaming’, or ‘running people down’ (being critical of someone). See Myers (1991: 120-126, 271) observations of Pintupi social life. He found that Pintupi operate so as to not affect another’s identity, they avoid inadvertently ‘running people’ down or ‘shaming them’.

28 They may be bony due to feeding a joey, feeding on spinifex, because they are infested with parasites or because they are sick.
(this kind of reaction was sometimes preempted with complaints about the accuracy or condition of the rifle).

One of the men pulls the skin on the rump, makes a small incision and checks if the kangaroo is fat (a test for the quality of the meat). “Fat?” “Fat alright”. In the event of a poor kangaroo it was taken back for dog meat, or only the tail was taken, or it was left out bush. The number of kangaroos taken in one hunting trip varied, but when there were men from different household groups on the same hunting trip, one or more kangaroos were usually taken for each household. In addition kangaroos were sometimes taken back to Dajarra for elders and other family members and occasionally for family and friends in Mt Isa. At times of community events such as NAIDOC week or bush tucker days at the school, a number of kangaroos were taken.

Once we had a couple of kangaroos we drove off the road to a stand of gidyea. The bruised hind leg was cut between the tendon and the bone at the ankle. One man lifted the kangaroo by the leg and the tail while another guided the incision in the ankle over a short stick of a gidyea tree, hanging the kangaroo upside down from the tree.

Kangaroos were commonly butchered out bush under a gidyea tree, but at times they were butchered back in town including in people’s yard. Gidyea trees provide, a place to hang the kangaroo, shade, and a supply of leaves for the temporary storage of meat.

Russell asked me if I remembered how to skin a kangaroo - “not really”. He said that I should learn because I might get ‘married up’ one day and ‘my woman’ might send me out for ‘roo meat! A method of skinning (butchering) seemed to be generally followed by Dajarra people irrespective of who was performing the task. Boys learnt how to cut up a kangaroo the proper way by observation and through instruction (most often by older relatives). The skinning/butchering method tended to follow the following procedure:

With the kangaroo hanging from one of its legs with its head towards the ground a boning knife was used to remove the skin from the hind legs, from about the joint up, it was then removed around the genitals and down along the ribs. Initially this process involves pulling at the skin with one hand while running the knife behind the skin to free it from the body. As this
process drew closer to the shoulders the skin was sometimes simply pulled down towards the shoulders without the use of the knife. The tail was cut off and stored on some surface off the ground while the rest of the work was completed; this was usually an accessible fork of the gidyea tree the carcass was suspended from. The shoulder was detected with one’s fingers and the knife placed inside the shoulder and cut down towards the neck. The other shoulder was cut down in a similar fashion. The head was then cut off around the neck (sometimes cut and wrenched free with an assistant preventing the body of the kangaroo from rotating by holding onto the loose leg). The head, skin and front legs were left in a heap below the carcass. This activity was often interspersed with the butcher pausing to sharpen the knife.

The stomach muscle was cut until the inner ‘sack’ was found. Two fingers were placed in the hole with the knife in front of the fingers. The knife and fingers were run downwards towards the neck; the fingers guide the knife and prevent it from damaging the organs. Sometimes the organs were discarded, at other times selected organs such as the liver and intestines were retained and placed on a bed of leaves (or some other surface such as the skin of the carcass) and cleaned after the butchering was completed. During this trip the liver was taken and the ‘piss sac’ cut off it and the contents of the intestine squeezed out. The lower part of the leg that is hanging freely was then removed above the joint by chopping at the bone with the knife (sometimes a small axe was used) and then by snapping the bone. The removed part of the leg was thrown aside. At this point the same process was sometimes performed on the other leg (while an assistant supported the carcass) and the carcass removed for further butchering back in town. Otherwise the rest of the leg was removed, then the rib cage and back/rump and if the leg used to hang the kangaroo was not badly damaged by gunshot34 the top part was taken. This left the lower leg hanging from the tree, and the skin, head, arms and some organs below the tree. The dressed meat was temporarily placed on a bed of gidyea leaves or some other surface off the ground. This prevented infestation by ants and kept the meat clear of dirt. The meat was often stored for transport on a bed of leaves (even when plastic tubs and eskies were used). The remaining leg was removed from the tree and discarded (it was occasionally left hanging in the tree). Blood was washed from hands and tools.

We loaded the vehicle with the meat and some gidyea wood and head back towards Dajarra the way we came, it was getting dark. The vehicle was driven around the back of the house and one of the carcasses taken up to the kitchen sink and further butchered while a young man cleaned the ‘guts’ (intestines) at the outdoor laundry sink. A camp oven was filled with rib bones, liver, pieces of rump, segments of the guts (intestines and stomach), some garlic and potato and water and taken out to the gidyea fire to steam (steamed meat)(see sections 5.3 and 6.3).

34 Damaged meat or poor meat was sometimes taken back to town for use as dog food.
Other common methods of cooking kangaroo are: (i) stewed, (ii) fried, (iv) barbequed, (v) tail cooked in the hole, (vi) tail roasted in a conventional oven, (vii) tail braised, (viii) portions of meat or a whole kangaroo cooked ‘in the hole’ (ground oven method). Some men also talked about stuffing the stomach and cooking it ‘in the hole’.

Steamed kangaroo: lineal place complex properties of a hunting trip

Whether it is the Boulia Road, The Duchess Road, the Mt Isa Road- irrespective of the direction people take or which places are visited while hunting, the general sequence of behaviour described above or a similar sequence is followed (another sequence is where the kangaroo is shot and taken back to town to butcher). These sequences exist as a general, rather than a precise, pattern of events that are followed, for example there are variations of the butchering process- the tail might be removed as a first step. Nonetheless, over time Dajarra people repeat the same general sequence of activities related to shooting and skinning kangaroos out bush.

This established sequence of behaviour connects or temporarily articulates a number of places as a lineal place complex. Such a lineal place complex starts in domiciliary environments, it often included the shop and roadhouse, a particular road, a turn off onto a side track, the places where the kangaroos were shot (often an unnamed place), the place where the kangaroos were butchered (often an unnamed place), back along tracks and roads to the domiciliary environment, a laundry and kitchen sink, a camp oven, windbreak and gidyea fire. If the same group went hunting in the same general area, or even if they accurately followed their tracks from a previous trip, a slightly different lineal place complex results because the kangaroos are likely to be shot at different places and it is likely that they will be butchered at a different gidyea tree (although I have visited a gidyea tree for butchering that one of the men in the group had used before). Therefore a hunting group may follow the general lineal place complex of a previous hunting trip but experience a variation on that complex because parts of the sequence are enacted at different places including different tracks taken. The same sequence enacted elsewhere creates yet another lineal complex.

There are four key elements to this complex type: (1) a sequence of events, which is applied to, (2) a set of particular places (place of kangaroo kill and place of butchering) within a general lineal complex (or general area), which produces (3) the specific lineal place complex of a particular hunting trip, and which results in (4) particular types of transformations in the physical environment (vehicle tracks, modified gidyea trees and discarded kangaroo parts at gidyea trees). At times others interpreted the minimal transformations of kangaroo hunting

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35 Some households have small cooking holes in the yard space for cooking tails. One of these cooking holes consists of a small steel drum inserted into the ground with dirt back filled against the drum. A fire is lit in the hole and when it dies down a grill is placed in the bottom of the drum. The tails are then placed in the drum. It is then covered with a sheet of corrugated metal then soil is placed over the top and around the sides to seal the oven. A fire stick, coals or hot ashes are placed on top of the sand.

36 See Roth’s (1897:s156) description of ground ovens in Northwest Queensland and Memmott’s (1979) description of Lardil ground ovens.
trips, for example the tyre tracks of shooters are different to those of cattle station workers (see section 5.10). If these specific lineal place complexes were mapped, one would find a layering of multiple lineal place complexes within the same general area, new trips bring new people-environment interactions, new experiences and new meanings that overlap and intersect with past people-environment interactions.

Although the specific lineal place complex of a particular hunting trip may never be physically followed again it is always potentially revisited and maintained through narratives that are shared with others particularly if some noteworthy or humorous event occurred during the trip. Narratives are sometimes recalled when revisiting the place (see Section 5.12) or when enacting the same sequence of events elsewhere.

From the kangaroo steaming on a gidyea fire in a Dajarra yard we head back towards the gidyea fires of the camps at the Urandangi rodeo (see Section 6.5). We go back in time to the commencement of my first journey from Dajarra to Urandangi with George and Russell in the ‘Gallant’.

7.6 ON THE URANDANGI ROAD

I arrived in Dajarra a few days before the Urandangi rodeo; it was September, school holiday time. Dajarra seemed different. There were a number of people absent from the community (approximately 25 to 35 people had left town). Some had travelled elsewhere for the school holidays, and others such as Henry had already left for the ‘Dangi. There were also people who had returned to Dajarra such as teenagers on holidays from high school in Mt Isa and Charters Towers.

I spent Friday morning hanging out at the shop and at Georgie’s. The town seemed very quiet. I was trying to work out what was happening with Urandangi and how I was going to get there (at this point I wished I had a grant that covered the hire of a 4WD). People seemed to remain quiet about who was travelling with whom. This was an unnerving time. Most people in town were leaving for Urandangi, people had left, people were packing up to go and by sundown everyone who was going would be gone. If you didn’t have a lift you were stuck in Dajarra for the weekend with AFL supporters such as Sharky who planned to watch the grand final at the Dajarra pub. Those who did not have a lift were walking around trying to establish who was travelling with whom and who had a seat left. I was worried, I didn’t know how I was going to travel to Urandangi, but everyone else seemed to know how I would get there - with Georgie.

Georgie spent the morning and early afternoon working on his car, a little ‘Gallant’. We rolled the car over the road to the back of Minniecons’ place so that Georgie could use the welder. We rolled the car back over the road to Georgie’s and parked it under the carport.
with a stone axe used to chock one wheel and a block used on the other. We sat in the shaded heat of Georgie’s carport and ate pub pies and drank cold beer as Georgie made more minor repairs, checked spares and hunted around for tools such as a piece of garden hose (fuel syphon), pliers, wire, water bottles, radiator pepper and fuel for the road. Periodically Georgie excitedly took us forward to Urandangi with joking stories of scenarios: “Monaghetti, the [Urandangi] pub will be rockin’ tonight. All those Territory youngins will be waiting for you……”. People also talked about the notorious heat and dust of the Urandangi rodeo. Still uncertain if I was travelling with Georgie, or if the Gallant would make it out of the driveway, I put my swag in the Jimberella bus.

Georgie planned our departure so that we were in font of the Jimberella bus and other vehicles leaving in the afternoon. With vehicles behind we were assured of reaching Urandangi. Once we were on the road the only concern was a deteriorating rear tyre. In the heat of the late afternoon, we hit the ‘Ardmore turnoff’, or ‘the bottom road’, the Urandangi Road, and after the dips in the road at Horse Creek we were soon on the plains country. The hot dusty wind streaming in through the windows was a relief from the stifling heat experienced earlier in the day.

Georgie told stories about his experiences at the stations we passed along the way- Ardmore, Kallala and Carandotta. He also talked about events that had happened along the road such as places where people had experienced vehicle break-downs. These stories were interspersed with Georgie breaking out into country and western tunes and his son Waylon and Lloyd pointing out karni37 along the road side and ‘roos and emus out on the black soil and Mitchell grass plains. As we travelled we shared soft drink, hot beer, and chips. Everyone seemed to be in an excited state of environmental awareness, commenting on cattle, searching the horizon for the dust of vehicles travelling ahead of us and periodically checking the road behind for the dust of the vehicles following.

Somewhere past Kallala we caught up with two of Georgie’s aunties (one of whom had lived and worked on Kallala) who were travelling in a Toyota with a load of kids. We stopped for a yarn and took the opportunity to fill the radiator. Soon after we came across Georgie’s cousin and her husband driving the Urlampe Toyota to Dajarra to pick up horses for the Urandangi gymkhana. They pulled up for a yarn and described the scene at Urandangi and warned of a heavy police presence.

As the sun set at the end of the road a large orange full moon began to rise behind us; one of the kids thought it was the sun rising again. It was a spectacular sunset with everyone in the car exhilarated as they watched the last edge of the sun disappear.

37Karni are a type of frilled lizard.
The Jimberella Bus finally caught up with us and passed us. We caught up to it at a place near Thorner where they stopped to pick up firewood from stands of gidyea close to the road. In the fading light we joined the others collecting gidyea. Russell laughed when I swore at the patch of thorns that waited in camouflage in the sand for my bare feet, he said something like- “you’re out bush now”. We stacked the gidyea in the bus and headed off. (See Figure 7.22.)

As we approached ‘Dangie, Georgie grew more excited, he described how I would be surprised at how small Urandangi is. Georgie also described the road that remained between Urandangi and us; he updated the description as we travelled, describing the next section of road or next feature just prior to arriving at it. Not far now. We came out of a section of gidyea and in the distance you could make out the lights of the pub and campfires- that was it (this takes us back to section 6.5).

I travelled to the Urandangi rodeo with Georgie again in 1997 and 1999 and I travelled with others in 1998, 2001 and 2004. The pattern of events that were associated with the rodeo, including the journey along the road to Urandangi with Georgie, was striking in its consistency over the years that I visited. The events at Dajarra, the journey to Urandangi and the events at Urandangi are sequences of experience that contribute to the lineal place complex of the Urandangi Road and the interrelationship between Dajarra and Urandangi.

Leading up to the rodeo, social conversation concerning the forthcoming event intensified. People talked about previous rodeos, who would ride this year, who would be going, who would be driving, and who would be travelling with them. The focus of such conversations included the shop and social groups such as groups of men around cars under repair for the drive and in anticipation of the police force they know will be waiting at Urandangi for cars with defects. These rodeo conversations took people forward and backward in time to Urandangi as people thought about past rodeos and projected forward to the forthcoming event.

People travelled to Urandangi in small ‘convoys’ consisting of extended family or social groups such as groups of men. So for example three cars from one family group left Dajarra in succession and single men travelling in two cars left Dajarra late at night to ‘sneak’ their cars into Urandangi before the police arrived! When travelling like this, the road is periodically checked to make sure that the companion vehicles are still ahead or behind, “Pull up, we’ll wait for them up here”.

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38 Thorner Station approximately 25km by road to the southeast of Urandangi.
39 The rodeo was not held in 2002 or 2003. It started again in 2004 with a one-day event that included a night rodeo. In 2002 it was reported that a crisis in the Australian insurance industry had made premiums for the two days prohibitively excessive. The impact of the insurance industry on this important regional event illustrates that a range of industries can negatively impact on the cultural heritage of a community not just those that directly effect the physical environment?
On later trips to Urandangi with Georgie he shared similar stories of stock-work experiences, descriptions of the road, and as we came upon Urandangi on dusk, ‘- all the lights of Urandangi, all the campfires’. When travelling through country on roads such as the Dajarra-Urandangi Road, people narrate stories related to particular places, these narratives are a form of entertainment; they are a way of teaching youth about country, and they are a way of sharing knowledge of country with contemporaries or outsiders such as myself. People narrate experiences at places such as cattle station bores along the Urandangi Road. For example people spoke about Cannamulllya bore which used to be the main stopping place for Dajarra people on journeys between Urandangi/ the River and Dajarra, some would have dinner or a cup of tea there and some people used to camp there overnight and continued their journey the following day. There are the bores where Dajarra people lived and worked such as Ybeo on Kallala (see Section 4.4). Bores continue to be visited on journeys between Urandangi and Dajarra. For example returning from Urandangi in 1999 a group travelling in two cars visited Split Creek Dam to fill radiators and to cool off and Camo, Russell and I stopped at the same place for a ‘bogie’ after the 2001 rodeo. The Dajarra-Urandangi Road is full of stories, this is the road people followed to Dajarra when they were displaced from the River and forced to move from Urandangi to attend school in Dajarra and this is the road that was regularly followed back to the Georgina and to the big camps at the Urandangi Rodeo; this is the road followed to meet up with relations and friends.

The Urandangi Rodeo is a significant time and place of social interaction between the Aboriginal groups of the eastern Northern Territory and Northwest Queensland. People travel to Urandangi from Dajarra, Boulia, Mt Isa and Camooweal and from the Northern Territory side they travel from Lake Nash, Urampe and as far west as Harts Range. These Aboriginal people travel to Urandangi to interact with each other. The Queensland (from Dajarra and Mt Isa) and Northern Territory Police also travel to Urandangi for the rodeo. Many people believe the police use this crowd-drawing event as an opportunity to inspect vehicles for defects (these are vehicles that are not usually subject to police attention as they are driven in bush communities and on bush roads), and to check for outstanding warrants. On one occasion police supposedly waited on the border crossings and turned people back who were travelling east to the Urandangi rodeo from Alice Springs/ Harts Range way.40 Many people complained that the heavy patrolling of vehicles lead to a significant decrease in the rodeo attendance over the years and they resented the impact that such blitzes had on the ability of people to maintain and enjoy social relations.41

Following the experiences and shared narratives on the Urandangi Road, the sequence of events at Urandangi includes: setting up camps, maintaining gidyea fires, visiting relatives, walking to the pub with others, partying and mixing with people at the pub, visiting camps in

40 It seems at certain times the police continue patrol and attempt to manage Aboriginal movements on the Queensland-Northern Territory border (see Section 4.4).
41 In the 1920s the Police travelled from Dajarra for the Urandangi Races as they still do. (Queensland Police 1927-1930.)
the morning, watching and participating in the gymkhana, mixing with people at the
gymkhana, playing cards, going down to the River for a ‘bogie’, visiting friends and relatives
at the front of the pub, going back out on the Dajarra Road for firewood, standing around cars
yarning, sharing meals in camps, walking up to the Disco at the pub, and watching and
participating in the rodeo (see Figure 7.23).

On the completion of the rodeo presentations most Dajarra people head straight for the
Dajarra Road creating a convoy of dust. Once back in Dajarra the rodeo often continued as a
topic of conversation with people sharing stories about events of the weekend: stories about
events on the way to Urundangi such as pulling up outside of Urundangi to stuff a pair of
underpants between a loose headlamp and a car body to stop the light shaking wildly about
and thus avoiding the attention of the waiting police, or a story about the small goanna that
Camo caught on the ‘Dangi Road which later fed five men who all ‘felt sorry’ for it because it
was so small; they might be stories from Urundangi such as descriptions of rides in the rodeo,
maybe the behaviour of someone at the disco, the conversation might turn to the small turnout
and the actions of the police, or maybe to stories like that of a Dajarra man who thought some
white jillaroos were interested in him but instead got him locked up for the night. There are
stories about the journey home such as stories about the experience of a rain storm that swept
across the plain, “we were at Thorner when that rain came”, or the story of Camo, Russell
and I trying to catch a kangaroo that came into drink at Split Ck dam while we were
swimming there. Russell and I waited in the water metres from the kangaroo while Camo
snuck up behind it; a bird sang out and the kangaroo took off- “you fellas are silly, that
kangaroo would have drowned you if it had jumped on you in the water”. 42 There are stories
that are not so readily told such as new relationships that might have formed! There are
stories that are only shared between particular groups of people, for example groups of men
might share different stories and least different versions of stories that are shared in mixed
gender company. And there are ‘gammon’ [invented] stories that are designed to tease and get
a laugh, “I’m sure Monaghetti had a youngin in his swag!” “Which one?” “That old
youngin!” “Ah no, Mon-a-ghetti!”

The dust and the heat: lineal place complexes and narratives

The sequence of events associated with the Urundangi rodeo, creates a lineal place complex
of which Dajarra (and places within Dajarra) and Urundangi (and places within Urundangi)
are a part. Journeys between places are often filled with narratives as the journey to the
Urundangi rodeo was. Journeys through country trigger narratives about people, places and
place experiences. The experience of places can stimulate stories about them and other places
both near and distant. As narratives are embedded in places, and visitation stimulates the
retelling of those narratives, visitation is a highly important process in the learning and
sharing of place knowledge.

42 Roth (1897:98-99) recorded Aboriginal people sneaking up on water birds in this fashion.
Narratives about places take people on journeys from the places they occupy to other places - the narratives in Dajarra take people on mental journeys backwards and forwards along the road to ‘Dangi. The physical and mental movements between Dajarra and Urandangi maintain and develop social relationships and the relationships between these places as well as the places on the road. Stories are not always commonly shared and this contributes to a diversity of place knowledge amongst the Dajarra community (see Section 5.12).

The new experiences of journeys along existing place complexes become the topic of narratives. These new experiences are incorporated with pre-existing memories and place experiences. In some instances new experiences are had while narratives are shared during a journey along a place complex. Journeys are made between Dajarra and Urandangi at times other than the rodeo weekend, and journeys from Dajarra to other places follow the Urandangi Road. There are then multiple layers of experience and place properties that contribute to this lineal place complex outside of the Urandangi rodeo weekend. Other lineal place complexes similarly have this characteristic of multiple layers of place experiences, place memory and place narrative.

At the same time, it is important to note that people do not always excitedly narrate place-specific stories on journeys. Some journeys are characterized by silent observation (and experience) of the environment, of the sequence of places of a journey. Such a journey may consist of minimal communication between participants - the silence might be broken by a subtle hand gesture towards plain turkeys on the side of the road.

For young people like Georgie’s kids, roads such as the Urandangi Road contain a concentration of place properties. In contrast to the generations who grew up on cattle stations or worked on stations, younger generations have less access to country. It is through journeys along roads such as the Urandangi Road that young people hear stories about places and stories about the experiences of older people in places and it is through these journeys that they have the opportunity to experiences places themselves, and to develop their own place stories. People get to know places through mental and physical journeys.

Urandangi is a part of many lineal place complexes, there are Dreamings that travel through Urandangi, it is a place within trade and travel routes, droving routes and the flow of the Georgina waters, and it features in the personal histories of most Dajarra people. We now leave the pads, tracks, fence-lines, creeks, rivers, roads, and hunting trips to follow the place complexes of personal histories.
7.7 FROM THE GEORGINA TO DAJARRA

Back down the Carbine - lineal place complexes and life histories

Georgie sings, “It takes me back, down the Carbine, to my old Dajarra ways.” On arriving at Urandangi from Dajarra with Georgie he often took me straight back along the Urandangi-Dajarra Road with the story of how the ‘welfare mob’ forced his family to move from Urandangi to Dajarra. When Aboriginal people in Northwest Queensland recall their personal life history, they almost always pay attention to the sequence of places where they lived, worked or had particular experiences. In other words, people often recall their life history as a lineal place complex, and people tell their life history as if a journey, they take you back down the Carbine and other paths, they take you through the environments of their life. When telling these stories people seem to pay more attention to the accuracy of the place sequence and other people involved rather than the chronology of events (“Mall was the manager then”, “Wrights had the store then”, “Mum had her second baby then”, “I was only a boy then - about the size of that kid over there”). (See Memmott 1979:481-485).

The lineal place complexes of personal histories are often unique to individuals and constitute an important part of their identity. Just as the actions of kangaroo hunters create lineal place complexes that are unique to a particular hunting trip, the movements of individuals through environments interrelate or cluster places into unique place complexes. For example, movements between Georgina cattle stations characterize the personal histories of people from Jack Punch’s generation, whereas those of Susan Age’s generation might be characterised by journeys between Dajarra and the Georgina. If one were to map the life histories of all Dajarra people you would find multiple and far more complex relationships between places than is suggested in the above text. Whilst the lineal place complex of a particular life history may be unique parts of it are often shared with others. As mentioned earlier in the thesis Dajarra people rarely travel alone; people nearly always ‘take a mate for the road’. Dajarra people (family members, workmates, friends) move through parts of their lives together and share place experiences, thus parts of one person’s life history or lineal place complex intersect with and are shared with the personal history or lineal place complex of others, for example Georgie and others were moved into Dajarra at the same time as Susan’s family, and the Dajarra mob regularly returned to the Georgina together. Furthermore, certain segments of personal place complexes may be identical to those of another person, yet the places were experienced at different times. Thus there are layers of similar place experiences interconnecting places, for example other people at other times also moved between Urandangi and Dajarra. Through the retelling of personal histories or parts of personal histories, knowledge of parts of these individual place complexes is shared. Some people may not have heard stories concerning particular lineal place complexes nor experienced them, yet they may know of people who hold stories about a particular complex
or who have experienced a particular complex and thus could potentially share these experiences- they are holders of place knowledge.

To revisit Rapoport’s conceptualization of lineal complexes as beads on a string, when we consider the multiple lineal complexes of the life histories of the Dajarra mob, then we are considering a complex woven fabric in which some strings merge as one, others split apart and turn off into another part of the fabric, some strings are intertwined, some sit loosely together, some sit alone and there are loose ends. And within this fabric there are significant places and times where multiple strings intersect and merge, the big places of social interaction, the Georgina River Markets, Jimberella, Urundangi, and Dajarra.

CONCLUSION

In tracing the pads and fence-lines of Northwest Queensland and the eastern Northern Territory we learn that Dajarra people experience an organic network of lineal complexes that are characterized by repetitive movement between places. Such movement is often the product of social relationships that create, maintain and transform relationships between places. Some lineal place complexes are the physical manifestation of these social relationships. Lineal place complexes are dynamic; as social relationships change, so too does the nature of the associated lineal complex(es). Some lineal place complexes are lines of orientation between places. Lineal place complexes can act as boundaries to places. Some lineal place complexes are made and maintained by the movements across them rather than along them. Some lineal place complexes are maintained by physical journeys that are yet to be made.

In following the Carbine we learn that some lineal place complexes consist of a sequence of contiguous places. There are a range of activities that draw people along such lineal complexes including entertainment and the exploitation of resources. Yet humans may not always physically follow such complexes sequentially and regular human travel along a complex may not always be fundamental to the maintenance of that complex. Lineal place complexes may be maintained through the sharing of place knowledge and in particular the sharing of narratives that describe the correct order or sequence of places within that complex. It is also clear that a lineal place complex may act as a boundary between places; such boundary properties include the physical nature of the complex, the social relationships that traverse the complex, and behavioural properties associated with it. The Carbine also illustrates that some boundaries to places are in themselves places of occupation and activity.

The Georgina River illustrates a heartland that is a lineal place complex rather than a localized nucleus or centre. A key characteristic to the River as a heartland is that it is a place of return - people persistently return to the Georgina in thoughts, stories and journeys. Social relationships, natural physical properties, seasonal phenomenon, resources and the search for
place experience and knowledge regularly draw people along some lineal complexes and influence the timing of such journeys. The movements of Ancestral Beings and the movements of humans between places and their actions at places create and maintain relationships between places within lineal complexes. The Georgina illustrates that a variety of scales of place may be experienced within a lineal place complex. People experience numerous individual places, a range of place complexes, and in particular they enjoy experiencing the lineal complex that is the section of the River between Headingly and Roxborough, as well as the larger lineal complex of the Georgina River system from Camooweal in the north to Boulia in the south.

The traditional trade and travel network illustrates the interrelationship of numerous lineal place complexes. It also illustrates that a number of Aboriginal groups may have a role in the maintenance of a place complex. Part of the significance of a complex may be the inter-group interaction within it. Within a lineal place complex there may be places that are the foci of regular visitation, or of interaction between large groups of people. Through the mutual identification between people and places an experience of the sequence of places of a complex may equally or simultaneously involve an experience of a sequence of people with some common or inter-linked identity attributes. The movements of humans and Ancestral Beings away from a lineal place complex create and maintain interrelationships between it and other places and place complexes.

The Georgina illustrates the seemingly paradoxical situation of a lineal place complex being disrupted and yet reinforced in its properties by the non-Aboriginal adoption or borrowing of it. It seems that in the sequential experience of place and in the maintenance of lineal place complexes, more significant than the mode of travel is the freedom or ability to move between places. The Georgina illustrates a lineal place complex with multiple dimensions of place or an intensity of place properties – it is a place where the movements and actions of Ancestral Beings, Aboriginal people and others intersect, overlap and coexist.

The Mt Isa- Dajarra Road illustrates the creation of a new Aboriginal place complex (and the transformation of a place complex created by non-Aboriginal people) through the application of place properties from another lineal place complex (the Georgina). As people travelled the Georgina trade route and in more recent decades the Mt Isa Road, they carried three key place properties for exchange that were then used to maintain and transform this complex; they carried place specific physical resources and artifacts, they carried and exchanged knowledge properties and they carried, enacted and exchanged behavioural properties. Aboriginal social relations, important Aboriginal events, and the search for bush resources draw people along this complex just as they drew and drew people along the Georgina.
The Mt Isa Road (and clearance corridors) illustrates that an intensity of place properties can develop along a place complex through regular movement along that complex. New places are added to pre-existing places or place properties through the interactions that individuals and groups of people have with the environment; such interactions may involve the enactment of known forms of behaviour ‘randomly’ at a place. The Mt Isa Road illustrates that a number of sequences of place can exist within a place complex - people retain knowledge of the overarching place complex as well as the composite sequences of places.

In hunting kangaroos we learn that the enactment of an established sequence of behaviour connects or temporarily articulates a number of places as a lineal place complex. Such a lineal complex may not necessarily be followed again. The enactment of the same sequence of behaviour elsewhere creates another lineal complex. If these specific lineal place complexes were mapped one finds a layering of multiple lineal place complexes within the same general area, new trips bring new people-environment interactions, new experiences and new meanings that overlap and intersect with past people-environment interactions.

In travelling to the Urandangi rodeo we learn that journeys through country trigger narratives about people, places and place experiences. As narratives are embedded in places, and visitation stimulates the retelling of those narratives, visitation is a highly important process in the learning and sharing of place knowledge. The physical and mental movements between Dajarra and Urandangi maintain and develop social relationships and the relationships between these places. The experiences of new journeys along existing place complexes eventually become the topic of narratives and are added to existing knowledge and existing narratives. A characteristic of some lineal place complexes is multiple layers of place experiences and multiple narratives - all the journeys on the ‘Dangi Road.

In travelling to Urandangi we learn that outside forces continue to disrupt the freedom of Aboriginal people to maintain relationships between places and relationships between groups of people. The impact of police actions and the crisis in the insurance industry (public liability) on one of the biggest social interactions on the Georgina and the sharing of place experience and knowledge en route, illustrates the need for a broader understanding of the circumstances that can negatively impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage. It is through journeys along roads such as the Urandangi Road that young people hear stories about places and stories about the experiences of older people in places, and it is through these journeys that they have the opportunity to experiences places themselves, and to develop their own place stories. Whereas there is a concentration of ‘old camps’ along the watercourses of Northwest Queensland, there is now to be found a growing concentration of Aboriginal place properties along public roads.
In listening to personal histories we learn that people often recall their life history as a lineal place complex. These stories are characterised by a focus on the accuracy of the place sequence and the other people involved rather than the precise time of events. The lineal place complexes of personal histories are often unique to individuals and constitute an important part of their identity. Dajarra people move through parts of their lives together and share place experiences, thus parts of one person’s life history or lineal place complex intersect and are shared with the personal history or lineal place complex of others. Through the retelling of personal histories or parts of personal histories, knowledge of these individual place complexes is shared. In lineal place complexes we learn of the externalization of memories that are lived, or experienced, as well as thought about (following Fox 1997:8).

In considering the multiple lineal complexes of the Dajarra mob we are considering a complex woven fabric of interrelationships between places. Just as places do not exist in isolation, neither do lineal place complexes -Dajarra people are regularly moving from one place complex to another. Lineal place complexes are part of greater units of place and these are the subject of the following chapter.
**Figure 7.1** A pad runs across the yard of the house in the foreground. Another pad runs parallel to the fence and links the houses of a woman and her daughter-in-law.

**Figure 7.2** The Carandotta boundary fence.

**Figure 7.3** The N.T./Qld border fence on the Lake Nash-Urandangi Rd.

**Figure 7.4** Mullet Hole on Carbine Creek, upstream from Dajarra.

**Figure 7.5** ‘The crossing’, the highway crossing of Carbine Creek at Dajarra.

**Figure 7.6** Three Mile waterhole on Carbine Creek downstream from Dajarra.

**Figure 7.7** The Carbine in flood.

**Figure 7.8** Radiator trouble on the Mt Isa Rd.
Figure 7.9 Sketch plan (above) of pads linking four domiciliary spaces. The pads merge with the earth floors of regularly used domiciliary spaces. The genealogical relationship of the households is shown below.
Figure 7.10 Pads and roads in Dajarra in the 1950s. (1) The Junction, (2) High Houses, (3) Snake Gully (camps), (4) the Ridge (camps), (5) the Railway, (6) School.

Figure 7.11 Pads and roads in Dajarra in the 1960s. (1) The Junction, (1a) The Pensioner Camp, (2) High Houses, (3) Snake Gully (camps), (4) the Ridge (camps), (5) the Railway, (6) School.
Figure 7.12 Pads and roads in Dajarra in the 1970s. (1) The Junction, (1a) The Pensioner camp (2) High Houses, (3) Snake Gully (camps), (4) the Ridge (camps), (5) the Railway, (6) School.

Figure 7.13 Pads and roads in Dajarra in the 1980s. (1) The Junction, (1a) The Pensioner camp (2) High Houses, (3) Snake Gully (camps), (4) the Ridge (camps), (5) the Railway, (6) School.
Figure 7.14 The Georgina River between Lake Nash and Roxborough.
Figure 7.15 Travel and trade routes of Northwest Queensland.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Items Obtained</th>
<th>Items Traded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yarriga</td>
<td>(a) From the Gordon Creek Uandungai area the Yarriga travelled up the</td>
<td>Pearl shell, eagle hawk feathers, stone knives, large coolamon, human-hair belts.</td>
<td>Sprays, hook and simple boomerangs, &quot;white man's knives&quot;, blankets, arrows, tiris, small coolamons, emu feathers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Georgia to Lake Nash, Anzal Downs and Coomeenwal to trade with the</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wakaya</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(b) From the Gordon Creek Uandungai area the Yarriga travelled to</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rockdale (most likely via Moonsah Creek) to trade with the Kalkadoon</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and Yalanga</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(c) The Wakaya that reached Caramotta are likely to have travelled</td>
<td>Blankets, human-hair twine, boomerangs, sprays, milli-milli, fighting poles,</td>
<td>Blankets, stone knives, human-hair, opossum-hair, kangaroos, wally-hair, coolamons, short woomera spears and long gilygay spears,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>down the Kalkadoon to Caramotta and the Georgia to Coomeenwal and Lake</td>
<td>girdledoresses, red ochre, dilly bags, grain necklaces, hook-boomerangs and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nash</td>
<td>shields.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(d) Visited Rockdale on Moonsah Creek to trade with the Yarriga and</td>
<td>Pitirs, fishing nets.</td>
<td>Pitirs, boomerangs, stone knives, human-hair, opossum-hair, kangaroo-hair, wally-hair, coolamons, short woomera spears and long gilygay spears,</td>
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<td>Yalanga</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(e) Visited Caramotta, most likely via the Templeton River, Moonsah</td>
<td>Pitirs, and the Kalkadoon learnt Rain Songs from Wakaya at Caramotta.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creek, or Split Creek</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andakkerbena</td>
<td>(a) The Andakkerbena travelled from the Toko Range to Gordon's Creek</td>
<td>Ocher, boomerangs, stone knives, human-hair belts.</td>
<td>Pitirs, opumoomir and blankets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>where they traded with the Yarriga.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) The Andakkerbena travelled from the Toko up the Georgia via</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glenemiston</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitta-Pitta</td>
<td>(a) Travelled along the Georgia to Herbert Downs and Glenemiston then</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>continued up the Georgia to Rockough.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) At Glenemiston the Pitta-Pitta turned south to Carlo on the</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mulligan Rivers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitta-Pitta and Yalanga</td>
<td>(a) The Pitta-Pitta travelled with the Yalanga up the Burke and Wills Rivers to</td>
<td>Sprays, coolamon</td>
<td>Pitirs, boomerangs and hook boomer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buckingham Downs, Chattooth and Devoncourt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and continued north along the range to Rockdale. They are likely to</td>
<td>Shields, Stone Knives, Opossum twine, human hair twine and hand spears.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>have followed the Wills onto the Salisbury then followed the Burdekin</td>
<td>Government blankets, pitirs, human-hair belts, &quot;bills&quot;-tails.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>crossing onto Weyaley Creek at the watertable and following this same</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to Moonsah Creek.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) From Rockdale they went down Moonsah Creek to Caramotta.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>(c) Then down the Georgia and home via Herbert Downs and Parapatiri.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>264-268)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>(a) Fluted &amp; hook boomerangs from the upper Georgia were carried</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>eastwards towards Mimikool and the Cloncurry District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Fluted &amp; hook boomerangs from the upper Georgia were carried down</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the Georgia onto the Mulligan and Burke Rivers then via Springvale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>into the Diamantina where they were taken upstream and downstream.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>(a) From Carlo pituri was carried to the Georgia at Glenemiston and</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>then up to Rockough (most likely via the Mulligan)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) From the Georgia pituri (from Carlo) was taken along eastern</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tributaries to the Kalkadoon on the range.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>(c) Pituri from Carlo was carried via Glenemiston and Herbert Downs to</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bulola, then up the Burke to the Yalanga and Mimikool.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(d) Pituri from Carlo/Toko Range was carried to Rockough.</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e) Pituri from Anmadakul (or Ewe Creek) was carried to Uandungai.</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Birdsville and Redstone (Aston 1937:373).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>(a) Shields from the Upper Georgia and Rockough were carried down the</td>
<td>Shields.</td>
<td>Shields.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgia and across to the Toko Ranges.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Shields from Rockough &amp; Upper Georgia were carried down the</td>
<td>Shield.</td>
<td>Shields.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgia to the Lower Diamantina.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>(c) Shields from Rockough &amp; Upper Georgia were carried to the Middle</td>
<td>Diamantina from Bulola, Springvale and Diamantina Gairs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diamantina via Bulola, Springvale and Diamantina Gairs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>(a) Pitirs from Walyjah and Toko Ranges were carried to Rockough and</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>then to Caramotta.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Pitirs from Walyjah and Toko Ranges were carried down the Georgia</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>onto Rockough. Some were taken to Carlo and the Upper Mulligan via</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glenemiston. Others were taken to Bulola, Springvale and the Middle</td>
<td>Pitirs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diamantina via Herbert Downs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>(a) Two-Handed Sword from Bulola, Wardenia, Herbert Downs, and Marion</td>
<td>Two-Handed Sword.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Downs were carried northwards along the Georgia.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>(b) Acute-tip hand spears from the Bulola District were taken north</td>
<td>Acute-tip hand spear.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>along the Georgia and south along the Lower Diamantina.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>(c) Ornate boomerangs from Wardenia, Bulola, Marion Downs, Wardenia,</td>
<td>Ornate boomerangs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Springvale, Diamantina Gates, were taken up and down the Georgia.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carried to Toko Ranges via Glenemiston and Carlo.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>(a) Stone knives from the Upper Georgia &amp; Selwyn Ranges were taken to</td>
<td>Stone knives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the Mimikool and Wamenara, and to the Middle Diamantina via Wardenia,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bulola and Marion Downs or Springvale.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>(b) Delicate axes from the Selwyn Ranges were traded on the Mulligan</td>
<td>Stone axes (See also McBride 1987: 265)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>then carried southwards to Lake Ere and the Dyari.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>(c) Raker Shell from Normanton was carried to Bulola via the Diamantina.</td>
<td>Raker shell (See also Mountford &amp; Harvey 1938:136-134)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 7.16** Travel routes of Northwest Queensland and items traded in the late1880s (Orthographic rendition of tribal names follows Roth). (Roth 1897:104, 112, 118, 134-135, 143-146, 149, 151, 168.)
Figure 7.17 Map of 1886 showing (1) roads and droving routes, (2) droving routes, and (3) telegraph lines. (McLean 1886).

Figure 7.18 The Mt Isa - Dajarra Rd near Jayah Ck.

Figure 7.19 On the highway at Dajarra.

Figure 7.20 A team of Dajarra and Mt Isa residents celebrate a win at the Mt Isa ‘All Blacks’ football carnival.

Figure 7.21 ‘Otto’ Dempsey coaching his Dajarra team at the women’s softball carnival, Mt Isa.

Figure 7.22 A stand of gidyea between Thorner and the ‘Dangi.

Figure 7.23 Murray Bookie coming out of the chute at the Urandangi Rodeo.
Chapter 8
DJ ROCKERS: GREATER PLACE COMPLEXES

It was earlier argued that it is difficult to clinically separate places from other places and Chapters 6 and 7 displayed some of the ways that places are interrelated. Although places do not exist as separate entities people do distinguish units of place; places such as Black Mountain (Chapter 5), place complexes such as The West End (Chapter 6), and lineal place complexes such as the River (Chapter 7). This chapter is concerned with places that display a greater complexity of sub-units or place properties; some of these are of greater spatial scale and in some instances they extend beyond the immediate visual field. Such places are comprised of multiple places and place complexes (including lineal place complexes). Although some of these units of place would be referred to in the literature as cultural landscapes I refer to them as ‘greater place complexes’. The term ‘greater place complexes’ is slightly more cumbersome than the term ‘cultural landscape’, yet it is preferred as it has the ability to capture (or remind people to consider) the multiple places, people-environment interactions and interrelationships between places within such a complex. It reminds one to consider the whole (the fabric) and the constituent elements (strings and beads). The term greater place complex is also more applicable to a greater range of places than the notion of cultural landscapes is.

To finish the brief journey this thesis has taken through the Aboriginal people-environment interactions of Northwest Queensland this chapter moves through a selection of greater place complexes experienced by Dajarra people. The chapter commences with the distinction that Dajarra people make between ‘bush’ and ‘town’. Time is then spent ‘in town’ further examining some of the places and place properties of Dajarra. The complex properties of other settlements are then considered by heading back out to the ‘Dangi and going for a last run up to the Isa. The chapter then heads ‘out bush’ and returns to the greater place complexes of plains country, river and hills country. Pulling up to open gates in boundary fences, the role of cattle stations as greater place complexes is examined and the interrelationships between cattle station geography and Aboriginal geography is further considered. From boundary fences the greater place complex of individual and shared ‘beats’ is explored. A significant characteristic of ‘beats’ is the role of movement, experience, kinship and place knowledge in their definition. A final journey is made to the Queensland and Northern Territory border to consider its role in the definition of greater place complexes. The definition of two greater place complexes which are highly significant in the political life of Northwest Queensland are then considered; these are language group territories and native title claim areas. Finally, the notion of cultural regions is considered and Roth’s Upper Georgina Ethnographic District is revisited.
8.1 IN TOWN & OUT BUSH- Greater Place Complexes.

Dajarra people make a distinction between places ‘in town’, and a broad category of places that are ‘out bush’. These distinctions are made in everyday conversations including descriptions of where people are at any point in time. You might hear people in Dajarra saying things like: “They’re out bush”; “They’ve gone out for gum”; “They came back in”. A number of journeys between town and bush were illustrated in the preceding chapters including the journeys to bush resources with Susan (Section 5.2); collecting gidyea with the boys (Section 5.4); in search of Henry’s grandfather’s grave (Section 5.12); returning from the Clay Pan (Section 6.1) and Cat Dam (Section 6.2); people were followed out of town to the River (Section 7.3) and along the Mt Isa Rd (Section 7.4); men were followed out bush shooting and carrying kangaroo carcasses back into town (Section 7.5); travels out along the ‘Dangi Rd were experienced (Section 7.6); and the movements of Dajarra people between the River and town were traced (see Sections 4.5, 6.4, 7.3 & 7.7).

There are physical distinctions between ‘town’ and ‘bush’; for example Dajarra is surrounded by a fence line that is crossed as you move between ‘town’ and ‘bush’ (see Figure 8.1). Although this fence line contributes to a distinction between town and bush it is not necessarily a fixed and precise physical boundary between town and bush as there are places that are considered to be a part of Dajarra and yet lie outside of this fence line including the dump, the racecourse, the aerodrome, Three Mile and Mullet Hole on Carbine Ck.

There are also distinctions between the physical properties and structures of the built environment of ‘town’ (buildings, roads, street lights, gardens etc), and the physical properties of the natural environment (creeks, rivers, waterholes, rock holes, flats, ridges, hills and plains), and the built environment ‘out bush’ (camps, fences, yards, bores, dams, troughs, tracks and pads). In contrast to the physical properties of houses ‘in town’, the physical properties of built environments in camps ‘out bush’ are of a more temporary and minimal nature and are readily and easily modified. There are also obvious physical differences in the scale and form of houses ‘in town’ and camps ‘out bush’. However, on closer observation there are some properties that are common to ‘houses’ and camps. When Dajarra people move between the self-constructed environments of camps ‘out bush’ and houses ‘in town’, they move between the minimalist architecture of ‘travellers’ camps’ and ‘open camps’ and the transformed architecture of ‘non-Aboriginal’ buildings (buildings designed by others and provided by government agencies). ‘In town’ and ‘out bush’ Dajarra people continue to produce and maintain a repertoire of architectural elements and architectural environments that were first documented by Roth in the 1890s. The creative architectural transformations which Dajarra people have made to houses ‘in town’, such as the addition of windbreaks, are an extension of these architectural traditions. When Dajarra people crossed the Carbine to the government funded housing stock ‘in town’, they transformed it with their architectural
repertoire and with patterns of domiciliary behaviour. The ongoing transformation of housing stock to (re)produce some of this repertoire indicates that the housing does not provide environments that totally satisfy patterns of Aboriginal behaviour or preferred lifestyles.¹ (See Figure 8.2.)

Another physical difference is the contrast between the vegetation of town and bush. A feature of town is the growth of shade trees such as river red gums away from the course of the creek², the growth of imported trees such as neem trees, mango trees, citrus trees, and the pine trees that shade a number of yards in town, and the growth and maintenance of imported grasses, plants and creepers. The distinction between imported and endemic vegetation was first pointed out to me by Henry. From the vantage point of the seats in front of the Jimberella Store he drew my attention to the pine trees behind the pub and the oleander that stood in front of the Railway Station building. These same pine trees and bushes were often used around homesteads where the constructed vegetation distinguishes these places from the surrounding landscape. The effect of deep shade and the height of the trees (together with other elements such as buildings and communication towers) is most striking amongst those homesteads that stand out on treeless plains such as at Kallala or stand away from the tree line of a waterway such as at Headingly.

These transformations in vegetation create cooler micro-climates and reduce the impacts of air-borne dust, for example the microclimate maintained under the neem tree in Keith’s yard (see Section 6.3). These transformed microclimates also contribute to the definition of town (and of homesteads) by creating physiological boundaries to place in the same way that the windbreak in Keith’s yard does (see Section 5.3). ‘In Town’ and on the homesteads, the transformation of the landscape has relied on ground water supplies. There are documented health benefits in maintaining the types of vegetation that people in Dajarra do yet when the community lobbied for improvements to the poor town water supply they were accused of high water consumption and of water wastage (FACS 2003:145-163).³ (See Figures 8.3 & 8.4.)

When people use the terms, ‘in town’ and ‘out bush’ they are not simply referring to the physical distinctions between ‘in town’ and ‘out bush’, they are also making a behavioural distinction. There are numerous activities that are performed out bush that are not performed in town; for example, you shoot kangaroos ‘out bush’, you do not shoot them close to town or ‘in town’. Another example is the freedom or relative ease that Dajarra people enjoy at places ‘out bush’ to establish, define and modify culturally distinct sociospacial patterns and enact

¹ There is an opportunity for architects and others to develop an understanding of the preferred architectural environments of Aboriginal clients by investigating the architectural traditions they maintain in the transformations they make to built environments.
² Some of the trees in Dajarra yards were transplanted from the banks of the Carbine as saplings.
³ Such claims could never be validated because very few houses had water meters and they are also harsh given the comparatively high industrial usage of water in the region.
preferred patterns of domiciliary behaviour outside of the constraints of settlement plans and housing (see Sections 6.4 & 6.5). There are activities that take place ‘in town’ that do not normally occur ‘out bush’ such as those associated with the school and various services.

There is also a difference in the nature of social interactions ‘in town’ and ‘out bush’. Dajarra is one of a number of significant centres of Aboriginal social interaction in Northwest Queensland and the eastern Northern Territory. In contrast to the size of the Dajarra population, social interactions out bush are usually of a much smaller scale involving small groups (at a minimum two people) such as a group of men hunting kangaroo, family groups, and small mixed groups visiting places like Cat Dam together. The largest of these populations ‘out bush’ are found in the camps on the Georgina River waterholes. A characteristic of social interactions out bush is that they usually involved a degree of selection or choices of participation- people generally (but not always) choose to travel ‘out bush’ together. If someone decided they were not happy with some of the people proposing to travel together out bush they might ‘bail up’ (refuse to go). Similarly journeys out bush were occasionally arranged so as to prevent an individual joining the group, “…don’t worry about him just keep going,” “…you fellas might wait here, we will be back soon.” Sometimes the composition of a group travelling out bush was defined by practical circumstances such as getting a seat in a vehicle before others do. In town people also chose with whom they were going to interact with but they also experienced casual social encounters. Sometimes they experienced unwanted social encounters, and people’s actions were always potentially under observation by a wider audience (including the police). In response people sometimes “jump in” when a car is heading out bush in order to escape social interactions (sometimes to avoid social tensions) ‘in town’.4

**Between bush and town- greater place complex properties**

When people use the terms ‘town’ and ‘bush’ they are making a distinction between two greater place complexes. The first, ‘town’, encompasses the places of Dajarra, whilst the second, ‘bush’, encompasses multiple places that are outside of Dajarra and other towns. In previous chapters, particularly Chapter 7, the role of movement in the interrelationship of places was illustrated. Movement also plays a significant role in the definition of place boundaries. The movement from ‘town’ to ‘bush’, the movement from one greater place complex to another, is marked by the experience of difference in physical properties, behavioural properties and activities including the nature of social interactions. These experiences of difference do not necessarily coincide in space, that is, they do not necessarily occur at the same location in space. In other words there may be a series of moments of differentiation rather than a singular moment of differentiation between places (see Rose in Sutton 1995:112). Consequently, the difference or boundary between town and bush is really

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4 In some instances people attempted to sneak out bush and sneak back into town so that others remained unaware of their movements and activities.
a gradient, or a blurred edge. The start of one place, ‘bush’, and the beginning of the next, ‘town’, is not exact.

This is further complicated when we consider the role of knowledge properties. Dajarra people regularly move between bush and town in thoughts and words, in memories, stories and conversations. People are often physically ‘in town’ and yet ‘out bush’ in thoughts and words. This is most striking (and most apparent to an observer) in the narratives shared in settings of social interaction ‘in town’.

8.2 SHE’S BACK IN TOWN NOW- DAJARRA

A car rattles across the grid as it approaches Dajarra on the Boulia Rd. A group of teenage girls walking down the middle of the highway (Lethem St) towards the roadhouse look out passed the cattle yard towards the car as it begins to slow to take the corner where the CDEP shed stands on the site of the old police station. It is one of a small party of cars that is returning to town after a day on Sulieman Ck where kids swam and played in the small waterhole at the Mickey Wright Bridge and others relaxed and had a feed in the shade of a river red gum. As the car straightens out of the corner the short drone is heard of a second car as it crosses the grid.

We too return to Dajarra, as people regularly do from places out bush and from other towns and townships in the region, to consider some of the properties that contribute to its nature as a greater place complex.

When people refer to ‘in town’, in Dajarra, they are referring to a greater complex of individual places, place complexes and lineal place complexes that are part of people’s everyday experiences. Some of Dajarra’s place complexes were illustrated in previous chapters including, The West End, Carbine Creek, and Town. The West End in itself is a place complex consisting of a number of named places: The Ridge, Snake Gully, The High Houses and the Lagoons. There are lineal complexes ‘in town’ that are formed and transformed by social relationships and manifested in pads across Dajarra, such as those between domiciliary environments and those that cross the Carbine between the West End and Town. (See Figure 8.9.)

A family town- family groups in Dajarra

A significant place complex ‘in town’ and one that traverses the Carbine is the complex of domiciliary environments of extended family groups. There are two dominant types of extended family domiciliary environments ‘in town’, those that are dispersed, and those that are clustered. Some family groups operate as a large ‘camp’ although they occupy houses that are dispersed across the town. Members of these groups regularly move along pads, tracks,
footpaths and roads between the domiciliary environments of their extended family (see Section 7.1). In my first days in Dajarra I was struck by the relative frequency of car movements around such a small town (it is 650 metres from one end of town to the other and approximately 250 metres from one side of town to the other). I wondered what all the driving was about—why for example had a brown Holden wagon made so many trips in one morning? One of the reasons for these frequent trips is the regular movement of people between the dispersed domiciliary environments of extended family households. For example a young man and his wife might regularly return to his parent’s house for a feed. Children might return to their grandmother’s house from their mother’s house to camp at night. Some people might spend most of the day socializing in the domiciliary environment of another family member and only return to their own house to sleep. There were differences in the regularity of movement amongst different people in town—some people were frequently on the move, while others, particularly some older people and those with disabilities, tended to spend most of their time within their own domiciliary environment where they were visited by relatives and others. (See Figure 8.10.)

In large camps ‘out bush’ such as the camp at the Urlandangi rodeo, Dajarra people have the freedom to define sociospatial patterns in the same way that they did in the town camp at Dajarra, and they consistently form large family camps some of which consist of a number of clustered sub-camps. ‘In town’, in Dajarra, it is less easy for people to transform sociospatial patterns, nonetheless there are movements of family groups across the rental housing stock to form clusters or large ‘camps’ surrounding the house of a key family member. For example some family groups were observed readjusting their sociospatial pattern once a head householder (or family head) moved to another part of town following a death. This can be a slow process of social accretion or clustering that is dependant on tenancy waiting lists and the availability of housing stock close to the new house of the family head. Despite the management of tenancy being controlled by community and government agencies some family groups are able to maintain proximity (and have displayed a preference for proximity) and have displayed persistent attempts to self-regulate sociospatial relationships just as they did at the West End and as they do in contemporary camps ‘out bush’.5

A different type and scale of social accretion is the occupation of individual households by extended family groups, in this case more mobile relatives join core, stable, household members. Some people join an extended household while visiting Dajarra or during a break from work and then leave town again. Single people (mostly young males and females and some older men) float between a number of houses in Dajarra, stopping with one relative for a period of time and then move onto the household of another. Sometimes such a move is instigated by a social or economic conflict such as a disagreement concerning the level of the

5 Memmott (1991b:262-269) observed this phenomenon amongst the Aboriginal population of the town of Wilcannia in western New South Wales.
contribution the mobile person was making to the household; such a contribution might involve giving the household head some money on pay day or doing things around the house such as “raking up the yard”\textsuperscript{6}. Both dispersed and clustered households experience this type of social accretion.

The kinship that influences sociospatial patterns also underlies the broader social, economic and political life of Dajarra. People identify and are identified with their family for example the Bismark mob, Dempsey mob, Punch mob, the Majors, the Costelloes, the Marshall mob, or the Condrens. Henry describes Dajarra as a ‘family town’, that is, many things in the town are shaped by family affiliations including sharing behaviour, the ability to obtain assistance from someone else, political support or conflict in community organizations and the composition of sporting teams. These family ties also surface, or are most obvious to an outsider, in disputes or conflict. On occasions a person (or people) in the company of other family members will “run down” (speak disparagingly of) another family.

A dispute between men that usually socialized together illustrates how family affiliations are more evident at certain times.

\textit{The men were drinking together; it was payday in town for one of the men, whilst two others had returned to town with pay cheques after weeks of station work. Those with the cheques were stopping at one house whereas the other man with money was stopping at another. Upon receiving requests for money to purchase more alcohol the household members accompanying the men with two cheques claimed they had nothing (no alcohol or money) to share with the group. A dispute arose with the second group accusing these men of failing to share and “shout back” (reciprocate). The second group consisting mostly of closely related men went off to a relative’s house at the other side of town so they could have a ‘quiet drink’\textsuperscript{7} away from the other group. In the evening this second group moved back closer to the other group (with two cheques) and occupied a place where they could see them.}

\textit{An argument broke out between a man from each of the groups, it was a loud verbal confrontation with the men leaving their respective groups and moving towards one another gesturing towards their preparedness to fight by removing their shirts. The remaining members of each group watched the two arguing and did not move. The two men split and returned to their respective groups- yelling after one another as they went. Back within the}

\textsuperscript{6} The activity of “raking up the yard” was introduced in Sections 5.13 & 6.3. Whereas outsiders might think of this as a gardening activity it is really a cleaning and maintenance activity; in raking up the yard people are cleaning their external living environment in much the same way that they sweep and mop up their internal living environments. Furthermore “raking up” sometimes also involves rearranging furniture and other objects in the yard, adjusting structures and watering the yard surface.

\textsuperscript{7} This meant no skolling, no arguments, no wild behaviour- just sitting down and having a good yarn. One man tried to join this group but he was turned away because he was drunk.
group, the arguer joked and laughed about the argument- at the same time threatening to continue it further.

The regular men’s social group that included people from various families had split along family lines (and other allegiances) due to this dispute. To not share resources is seen as a failure to meet social obligations- to not shout back is seen as a failure to reciprocate. This is an example of the style of request and refusal that occurs in the demand sharing of the Dajarra community (see Peterson 1993). People are expected to share a range of things through family connections including place knowledge, the use of cars and equipment, and resources such as money, bush foods and grog. Dajarra people sometimes refuse requests to share, as was the case in the above example.8

Dajarra people identify with a range of family and social groups. People identify with their mother’s side and/or their father’s side. People also identify with their spouse’s family and intermarriage adds a layer of complexity to these group affiliations in Dajarra. Such identification is dynamic and the particular identity that someone expressed at any point in time was dependant on the circumstances. People identify and are identified with other groups, such as the groups of men who regularly socialise together. As the above incident illustrates the composition of these social groups are highly dynamic. The incident also further illustrates the diurnal and nocturnal use of external living environments by social groups and the movement of groups of people across a complex of such spaces (see Section 7.1).

A complex of yards- a complex of social environments

“They’re around the back there…” A feature of life in Dajarra is the complex of external living environments throughout the town that are the focus of social interaction and activities involving various gender and age groups. Card games are one of a range of popular social activities carried out in yards; these are significant social events that can draw relatively large numbers of players, observers and children from various families to an external domiciliary environment. Participants may not necessarily be related to the householder, so for them the domiciliary environment may not be one that is normally visited as part of an extended family household. Card games are most popular amongst women and while some games are played between women only others are played in mixed gender groups. Some games are played for money and others are simply played for entertainment. The games played include Euchre, Instant, Jackpot and Cooncan. In card games people maintain social relationships while participating in the game. A significant characteristic of games played for money is that

8 See Martin’s (1987:7) account of disputes over the sharing of material resources in Aurukun.
monetary exchanges (losses and winnings) are circulated within the Dajarra population rather than losses extracted from it as it is in other forms of gambling.9

The use of a number of domiciliary environments by a particular group interrelates those environments to form a place complex.10 For example, large groups of men or women regularly use a repertoire of external living (and domiciliary) environments to socialise. If someone wanted to find a man or a woman who participated in a particular social group they would start by visiting the repertoire of places used by that group knowing that is where the person is most likely to be found. However, the activities of such a group are not confined to this complex of regularly used places with other spaces also visited. Furthermore, the same external domiciliary environment used by women may be part of a complex of places regularly used by groups of men or children and sometimes they are simultaneously used by separate groups. These complexes change in response to shifts in households, changing social relationships and changes in the composition of the group. During the cool months social activities are focused on the warm sunny spaces, windbreaks and gidyea fires within this repertoire of domiciliary environments used by such a group. Similarly in the hot time a complex of shaded cool environments is occupied.

Earlier (Section 4.6) I provided a “snapshot” of activities that may be encountered in Dajarra, and this included activities that occur in domiciliary environments. During the course of the day a number of social groups may be found in external living environments. For example, on one day of a winter field trip I visited a number of social settings occupied by different social groupings; at the shop a group of women sat in the sunshine talking, at a house a group of people sat in the yard playing cards and talking, in one of the masonry cottages a group of people sat in the yard talking, and another card game was in full swing in the yard of one of the high cottages. These social groups each consisted of between 5 and 15 people. There is regular movement between these types of social settings with people leaving and joining groups. For example, a whole group may leave one domiciliary environment and join people in another – “Hey, wait there you fellas, we might come with you.” The actual family group or domiciliary group of one of these external living environments may only display itself at meal times or in the evening when members of a domicile return to eat or sleep, whereas at other times it is used by a wider social group (see Figure 8.5.).

By moving between these external living environments and participating in various social activities I learnt that participation in the social group places tension or restraints on the

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9 Poker machines were introduced to the Dajarra Hotel towards the end of this study. In contrast to card games poker machines are played as an individual with attention focussed on the machine and the money lost to poker machines is extracted from the community. Although people continue to participate in card games it would be interesting to consider if the introduction of these machines has had an impact on the frequency or magnitude of these games and thus the nature of social interaction in the community.

10 Martin’s work highlighted the complexity of Aboriginal domiciliary environments: “…co-residence, commensality, family groupings, and domestic economic units are not necessarily coterminous- for instance, people who live together may not eat together…” (Martin 2002:21).
decisions of an individual. I also learnt that a feature of social interaction in Dajarra is that one’s actions are nearly always public and potentially under surveillance. For example, I was involved in a social gathering/ drinking session with a group of men at the home of one man’s sister; her partner was away working at the time. The men used a space on one side of the house and a group of women were playing cards on the opposite side of the house. It was decided to leave my car at the house and I walked off with the men to another house. I returned the next day with a group of men to get my car. Later in the day a woman approached me at the shop to tease me; she said that when she got up early in the morning she had seen my car at the house and wondered what it was still doing there, she thought I must have “camped” there the night and jokingly threatened to tell the woman’s partner. People sometimes modified their behaviour or behaved in response to this type of surveillance. For example cars were used to screen social groups in an external domiciliary environment.

Whereas people sometimes tried to avoid being observed by others, on other occasions people deliberately made themselves ‘visible’. People regularly communicated by body action and hand signal across significant distances. Sometimes people attempted to trick those surveying the scene- for example they might walk off in one direction and then slip around another way (although it is fairly difficult to conceal movements in such a small town). A further characteristic of the surveillance that people made of the social environment was car trips made about town to check where people were and what they were doing.

When people left social groups they often announced their intention to leave by providing some reason or excuse for doing so; you might hear someone say something like, “I might head back down this way to do [such and such],” and you might hear someone from the group respond with something like, “You’re right, come back after then.” Continuous participation in the social group is reflected in group travel - whether moving about town or out of town people prefer to travel with others. Just as people look for “a mate for the road”, people encourage others to join them as they move about town: “Come for a walk down this way.” In addition to movements between extended family groups, these regular movements between social environments also contribute to the frequency of car movements about town.

**Outside of yards**

Outside of the complex of yards and domiciliary environments there is a range of places that are visited and used as places of ‘public’ social interaction including the Jimberella Store (see Section 5.5), the Jimberella Hall and the pub (the Dajarra Hotel). There are other places that are used by the community in general including a large cooking hole to the north of the town that was used to cook foods such as kangaroo and vegetables for community events including

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11 During the course of the field study a ‘jackpot pub draw’ was introduced at the pub. ‘The draw’ was run across a number of country pubs and involved people obtaining free tickets from the publican for a money prize drawn on a Friday night. Large numbers of the Dajarra population, drinkers and non-drinkers, adults and children, would gather inside and outside the pub for the draw. It was an occasion where large numbers of the community were in the same place at the same time.
NAIDOC week functions. Roadways and footpaths are places of social interaction that were sometimes occupied in combination with yard spaces. People sometimes stood outside a yard and interacted with others in the yard itself. On occasions people did not enter a yard because they were in conflict with someone already there, or they were maintaining distance from an individual or group within the yard.

The public, or perhaps more appropriately the neutral nature of roads and footpaths is illustrated by their use in disputes between men. Fights between men are significant events that are at times ‘taken outside’ of yard spaces (domiciliary spaces) to the space of roads and footpaths. Many fights (but not all) between males followed a similar pattern. One aspect of social life that instigated fights was ‘disrespectful’ or ‘wrong’ behaviour, “…he did the wrong thing…”; “I might be drunk, but that’s not right saying what he said.” Some conflicts erupted because a person was seen to be “big-noting”. Some were the result of relationships with women, while others were the result of a perceived failure to meet obligations to share resources. Although there exists obligations to share, individuals (and groups) also exerted a right of refusal particularly when it was perceived that the person requesting an item had previously failed to share or reciprocate; “You might be family, but that doesn’t mean you can just walk into my yard and sit down and drink all my grog. When did you bring anything into this yard?” Heated, loud, verbal exchanges were usually the first sign to the wider public of a fight, although such exchanges were often preceded by verbal sparring that might go on for hours or even days. The public airing of grievances can usually be heard from many Dajarra households and people at a distance or those unable to see the dispute sometimes tried to establish who was arguing- “Hey? Wait there.” “Is that the man with the white hat?” “That’s him.” These loud exchanges prompt people to have a good look in the direction of the dispute. Men sometimes signaled their intention to fight by shaping up, or by moving away from a group or outside a yard and challenging another to fight them, men also signaled their intention to fight by removing their shirt, and sometimes by removing their boots and rolling up their jeans.12

Challenges to fight were sometimes ignored by the other person sitting quietly (not responding to the provocation), in some instances the challenged diffused the situation by moving away from the challenger, but often a challenge was met front on even if it was only with a stinging verbal counterattack. In some instances others intervened and tried to calm people down, particularly if the conflict and potential fight had no solid basis, “Come on you fellas we were all sitting down talking good way just before”, an authoritative member of the household occupied by the men, or numbers of a social group sometimes “upped” or “jammed” (rebuked) one or both of those involved which sometimes resulted in one or both men backing down or walking away.

12 A fighting custom seemingly acknowledged by some members of the Queensland Police. In a Police interview concerning a violent event I was asked if one of those involved had their shirt on or off.
Although I observed many rows between men, relatively few of these ended in fights. However, what struck me about the few fights I observed was that they were bare knuckle fights that generally (but not always) seemed to follow the rules of fighting that you might find in a boxing tent, including other men acting as a type of ‘referee’; they were not out-of-control brawls. For example, whether or not a man had done something to instigate a fight he might receive some empathy if he was “double-banked”, that is, set upon by two men at the same time—“Poor fella, they double-banked him eh!” Drunken fights were sometimes finished off the next morning when people were sober; “He might have won this round, wait until the other bloke comes back sober in the morning.” Sometimes a crowd of rowdy onlookers rapidly formed around fights with people positioning themselves in both close and strategically distanced locations to get a clear view. The end of the fight is often said to be the end of the argument. A common aspect of fights are those people who are in some way aligned with one of the fighters, usually a family member, acting as “back-up”, which I always understood to be a protective role in ensuring the safety of one of the fighters by preventing others from also attacking him or by stopping the fight if it went too far. The role of family in back up was illustrated on one occasion when a man who had avoided a fight stated something like; “...they had all of their brothers there [so I couldn’t do anything], but my brother and cousin brother will be down from Mt Isa tonight, so I will be alright.” In some fights you see a collapsing of broader social relationships and a surfacing of close kinship as a core source of identity and security. In the 1890s Roth observed the role of brothers in fights:

It occasionally happens that party feeling runs very high, and perhaps the “brothers”- and there may be dozens of these...on either side- take up the quarrel, which may hence lead to the whole camp, men as well as women, joining indiscriminately in the general melee. (Roth 1897: 140.)

13 In Dajarra I only observed women fighting on a few occasions. Fights between women seem to occur less frequently than those between men. It seems that people also act as referees in female fights. In contrast to these refereed fights are fights between partners (domestic violence); such violence seems to be rarely controlled by third parties (referees) and more likely to involve the use of weapons (or the threat of the use of weapons).

14 If someone were not to follow the standard fighting behaviour then they may be shamed or run down or announced as the loser of the fight. One man joked about a dispute he had with another man in the middle of the night, they couldn’t fight because there was no-one else around so they tried to wake someone up to act as referee. These unofficial referees were observed stepping in to stop fights once someone had been knocked to the ground. In the early 1970s Memmott observed this fighting etiquette was maintained even when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal antagonists were involved as in the fight he observed outside the pub between Percy Rankine and Mick Wright (owner of the Dajarra store at the time) (p.c. Memmott 8/2/05).

15 A crowd of people gathered at the Jimberella Hall one year to watch the State of Origin Rugby league on an outdoor projection screen. At a critical part of the match the crowd was raucous yelling and screaming at the screen: “Hit him, hit him.” “Get him” “Come on...” etc. Minutes later the police could be seen pulling out of the station 100m away with the lights on their vehicle flashing, much to the amusement of the audience they pulled up looking for the fight!

16 On one occasion I was with a group of men when a fight broke out between two men one of whom was aggrieved with the way the other was behaving towards a married woman. I walked away from the fighters and a close group of men to a more distant group of observers. Later, one of the fighters gave me a hard time for walking away because he had seen me as his ‘back up’, “Thanks for the back up Monaghett! What did you walk away for?”

17 This is not always the case and fights do occur between close family members.
Roth’s (1897: 139-140) observations of fighting behaviour in the Boulia District and at Glenormiston bear many similarities to the contemporary fights encountered in Northwest Queensland. However, in contrast to the knuckle fights in Dajarra in a section entitled “The Maintenance of Law and Order: Methods of Fighting” Roth described men engaged in (mostly non-lethal) fights using stone knives. Of particular note is his observation of the movement of disputes away from domiciliary environments:

Private quarrels are arranged and settled somewhat on the following lines: - Supposing an individual considers himself aggrieved, an animated conversation ensues between parties concerned, obscene language is freely used…Mutual friends, or their gins, will, in nine cases out of ten, next intervene, and make an attempt at separating the pair: otherwise, they will each run for the nearest spear or anything handy, and throw it…If the feud is going to develop into anything serious, both parties will probably betake themselves to a distance from camp. In fighting thus as the outcome of a private quarrel, there is actually, as a rule, no intention of killing…Before fighting commences, the combatants usually strip off even that little which they ordinarily wear…(Roth 1897:139-140.)

...Under no circumstances is fighting of any description whatsoever allowed in camp at night, and the whole crowd collectively will see that no infringement of this rule ever takes place: if people want to fight, they must go outside, and, when necessary, kindle fires to see by. (Roth 1897:141.)

“Hey, what about that time we had a rip down the road there?” I once sat with two men both around 40 years of age who had spent most of their lives in Dajarra. As they described a number of places on footpaths around town where they had fought each other, they joked and laughed about some of the circumstances of these fights and the state of their relationship at the time. People retain knowledge of the location, circumstances and results of many fights. The footpaths and roads in front of houses are identified with these conflicts of the past. In addition some people recall a space at the western end of town that was regularly used by Dajarra men for proper knuckle fights around the 1950s/1960s. Men would remove themselves to this space, settle their dispute by fighting, and then sometimes return to the same place together. These might be described as place complexes of conflict; they are places where fighting prowess is displayed, they are at times places of extreme violence. They are more than this though; they are also places where social rules are expressed, maintained and enforced and where kinship and identity is expressed.18

We were living in the third cottage then
Memories of the circumstances and places of fights are part of a complex of memories associated with Dajarra. These memories reflect an intensity of events and social relationships that were directly experienced by Dajarra people or indirectly experienced through the stories that other Dajarra people have shared with them concerning life in this town since at least the 1930s. These memories include the movements of people into town, the movements of people back out bush and the movements of people to other towns.

These memories include changes in the sociospatial pattern of the town over time. Some people recall changes in the sociospatial pattern of the West End, for example the movement of camps from Snake Gully to the Ridge, and people remember movements of people from the West End into town; “they moved into the cottages then”. People remember the complex of domiciliary spaces (houses and camps) that individuals, domiciliary groups or extended family groups have occupied over time. People continue to identify and are identified with past domiciliary environments as well as their current domiciliary environments. The successive tenants of a particular house may be recalled. Thus, the first DAIA houses in Dajarra, the seven identical masonry houses known as ‘the cottages’, contain the memories and experiences of over thirty years of occupation by Dajarra people. There is an intensity of memories associated with such places because the same social group continues to occupy them. Therefore young people experience events in houses that were the location of events and experiences in the lives of their mother or father, their grandparents (father’s father, mother’s mother etc), and their great grandparents (their mother’s mother’s father etc), their wider group of relatives and the wider social group (DJ mob). During the field study there were situations where four generations of one family group interacted with one another at one of these cottages.

People hold memories of behavioural properties that have changed. People remember carting water from the creek up to the West End camps, people remember the drovers bringing mobs into town, people remember the train pulling into the station once a week, older people remember helping to load sheep onto cattle trains when they were children, people remember being sent back out to work by the police, people remember those who had to walk down to the police station to collect money or rations, people recall Aboriginal people being chained up to a tree somewhere near where the Jimberella Store now stands. People remember corroborees held in the creek and at the West End.

Changes to the physical properties of Dajarra also contribute to its complex nature. Most of the old timber and tin buildings have been demolished or destroyed by fire or termites. New buildings including houses have been erected, roads have been sealed, footpaths laid, and streetlights installed. The physical properties of houses and yards are regularly transformed using architectural traditions to create environments that support preferred patterns of domiciliary behaviour. Trees and gardens are planted and maintained. One of few remaining older buildings in Dajarra is the Railway Station building and the associated water tank. When I first arrived in Dajarra, the building was in a poor condition; it was occasionally used as a discrete drinking venue and the walls of the building contained graffiti announcing that various Dajarra identities “were here”. Members of the Jimberella cooperative aspired to gain control of the railway reserve and the building was eventually refurbished as a reminder of

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19 Letters to the Commissioner of Police in 1923 and 1930 documented this practice. (Letter from G. Pollock to The Commissioner of Police 1923; Queensland Police 1930.)
Dajarra’s role in the Australian pastoral industry. The community also established a small camping area on the railway reserve for travelling tourists. At the time of writing, the long-term aspiration of the Jimberella Cooperative was to establish a community cultural centre and keeping place on the railway reserve, but it was yet to be fulfilled.

Through the telling of stories associated with the railway (and other places in town) people may gain knowledge, including memories, of things they did not directly experience, for example a young person may be able to talk about (and have a memory) of days when droving teams brought cattle to the railhead, yet they may have been born after the last cattle truck rolled out of town. One of these stories involves a small bush timber ‘poddy-dodging yard’ in the hills to the east of Dajarra. It is said that a past Dajarra policeman used to give people who were ‘in trouble’ a horse and make them go out into the surrounding cattle properties and bring in cleanskins (unbranded calves) in lieu of being locked up. The calves were stored in this small yard where they were branded with the policeman’s brand. It has been claimed that when this policeman left Dajarra, he left with a number of cattle trucks full of stock.

The dynamic social interactions that take place in physical environments that are regularly transformed contribute to ongoing modifications to the knowledge properties that individuals and groups associate with Dajarra. When people recall their personal history, or memories of certain events, they often do so in relation to their place of residence in Dajarra, the place of residence of others at the particular time, and they position the history in relation to the history of the physical environment of the town more broadly. It is also common to use the presence of certain people to locate the story in time. This is done much in the same way that people positioned their life history in relation to the cattle station worked at the time. You might hear people position a story (or memory) by saying “We were living in the third cottage then,” or “There were no houses at that end of town,” “They had just come in from Urandangi on the mail truck,” “He was out at Ardmore”, “Muller’s had a trucking yard there then”. The identification of Dajarra people with non-Aboriginal environments in town and the layers of events and experiences that have occurred within them have transformed them into Aboriginal environments.

**Dajarra country, Dajarra people, DJ Rockers**

In Chapter 3 I suggested that Dajarra is located near the intersection of Kalkadoon, Yalanga and Warluwarra country. At the time of writing, the spatial extent of language groups associated with the area in the vicinity of Dajarra was the subject of the Carpentaria Land Council’s ‘Greater Mt Isa Anthropological Research Project’. Irrespective of who may prove to be identified as the traditional owners for Dajarra, as a result of the displacements from the Georgina, the cattle stations and other places to Dajarra, and the continuing occupation of Dajarra and surrounding country, a number of groups including the Warluwarra and some
East Arrernte families identify very strongly with the town and surrounding country. This identity is clearly expressed by the song ‘DJ Rockers’, written and performed by Dajarra men some of whom have East Arrernte and Alyawarr affiliations and were part of the last migrations from Urandaangi and others who are descendants of people who had earlier migrated from the Georgina River stations to Dajarra.

Today, many people talk about their simultaneous affiliation with Dajarra (and surrounding area) and their ‘country’- “So we’ve been there. That old Georgina…But D-A-J-A-double R-A, That’s the place I’d rather be.” An East Arrernte man has expressed this simultaneous attachment by saying when he is in his country he ‘worries’ for Dajarra and when he is in Dajarra he ‘worries’ for his country. Some people say that they were born in Dajarra, so they ‘claim’ Dajarra, others say that although they were born in Mt Isa they grew up in Dajarra so Dajarra is home whereas their country is further west; “we originally come from that way (west), but this is my home”. It seems that people recognize the social significance of their place of birth yet they prefer to identify with the place with which they have strong affective ties.20 Whereas their parents or grandparents were ‘reared up’ on the Georgina, or further west, many younger people were ‘reared up’ in Dajarra. A number of people recognize their association with more distant country yet assert they have greater knowledge of the country around Dajarra than other groups in the region. Yallop (1969) made comparable observations amongst the Alyawarr at Lake Nash:

Association between a person and his or her country is usually expressed by the addition of the suffix-aringa to a place name...All other men at Lake Nash were “men of” the same country as their father and father’s father. The place of a person’s conception was not referred to but no secret was made of the fact that several men at Lake Nash had been born outside the country to which they “belonged”. Of these men it was said that they had two countries or that they belonged to one country but their “home” was in another. (Yallop 1969:193.)

There are now at least two to three or even four generations who have ‘grown up’ in Dajarra, or who have been ‘reared up’ in Dajarra. These people strongly identify with Dajarra; they identify and are identified as Dajarra people, ‘DJ mob’, ‘DJ Rockers’ (remember the Dajarra people I met on my first trip to Mt Isa (Section 3.5)). Whilst these people continue to visit country further to the west, the Georgina River and beyond into the Northern Territory, they do not currently have the same opportunities to access their places and country as their parents, grandparents or great grandparents who lived and worked on their country had (see Section 4.4). Yet, at the same time they have greater flexibility and resources to travel within Northwest Queensland, the eastern Northern Territory and to places further afield.21 Although the experiences that children have of country may differ to their ancestors, they continue to be taught their identification with country. I was recently struck by this process when a Dajarra girl (3rd generation to be reared up in Dajarra from time of birth) whom I have known since

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20 Others were born on their country and maintain identification with their place of birth.
21 Many Dajarra children get the opportunity to visit distant places such as east coast cities on school trips.
she was a baby recently asked me if I knew where “the land” was. I was not sure what she meant by “the land” and answered “no”. After deriding me for “not knowing anything”, she gave me road directions to “the land”, Wunara, her mother’s mother’s father’s country on the edge of the Barkly Tabeland in the Northern Territory (see also Section 6.6). In some instances people who were reared up in Dajarra but now reside elsewhere reaffirm their identity in social settings. For example during an argument a woman asserted her identity by saying something like: “I grew up here, my grandfather reared me up across the creek, I’ve lived here all my life, so don’t tell me....”

Whereas in Dajarra people identify and are most clearly identified in terms of family groups and other smaller social groups, the collective identification as the ‘Dajarra mob’ is most obvious at large social events outside of Dajarra. Sporting teams such as those in various Mt Isa competitions reflect this identification with Dajarra, by being composed of current and past Dajarra residents (and their descendants) and by being named after the town, for example the ‘DJ Scrubbers football team’ and ‘DJ Scrubbettes’ women’s softball team. Some teams reflect identification with country for example the ‘Wunara Warriors’ women’s softball team was comprised of descendants of Jack Punch (see Section 4.4). At regional games, where Dajarra teams meet others from places such as Doomadgee, Mt Isa and Cloncurry, the supporters of each of these teams often occupy one part of the sporting venue and are readily identified as a social group. The self and social identity of ‘Dajarra people’ is reinforced (and learnt by children) at such events. The supporters and members of Dajarra teams can be seen as a social group at other regional events including the Urundangi rodeo, that is, the same people encountered sitting close to one another at a regional sporting event in Mt Isa are also likely to be encountered camping close to one another at the Urundangi rodeo. This same social group can also be observed at other key events such as funerals.

Broader forms of identification are also expressed at larger regional gatherings. For example, during an event at Boulia a fight broke out between a Boulia person and a white man. This quickly turned into a fight between on the one side non-Aboriginal station workers joined by members of a boxing troupe and on the other side Boulia men supported by Dajarra men who rushed in to back them up. As the fight erupted a Dajarra women raced up to her brother and myself looking for “back up”, she overlooked the involvement of the Boulia men and said; “Quick you fellas all the Dajarra boys are in a fight”. In a very short space of time differences in social relationships and identification between Boulia men and Dajarra men were collapsed into a shared identity expressed through physical force in the face of conflict with outsiders, such identity and support reflected kinship ties between certain Dajarra and Boulia families and a history of social interaction. At other times the two town identities of Boulia mob and Dajarra mob prevail over these ties. A similar surfacing, or strong expression, of group

22 Rather than collapsing into the overarching identity, it may be more accurate to say that these broader forms of identification surface or are expressed.
identity occurred at the Urandangi rodeo one year. In this case a young Dajarra man and a young man from Lake Nash began arguing and it looked like they were heading towards a fight. Close relatives and other Dajarra men quickly surrounded the Dajarra man and walked him away from the dispute. A fight between the two men could have escalated into a major conflict and had the potential of serious repercussions for the Dajarra man. In contrast to these examples is the fight at Urandangi mentioned in the previous chapter that was ignored because it had nothing to do with the Dajarra mob.23

**In town- greater place complex properties**

‘In town’, Dajarra, illustrates a greater place complex characterised by multiple places or sub-units of place. One of these sub-units is the complex of places that are interrelated through kinship. Movement between the domiciliary environments of an extended family group creates and maintains dispersed and clustered extended family households. The social relationships that define this complex of households also defined the sociospatial pattern of the West End camps and continue to define contemporary camps ‘out bush’. These place complexes are dynamic; they are modified as households move about town or in and out of town in response to events such as the death of a family member, conflict, and the availability of new houses. They are also modified as family members attempt to self regulate their sociospatial patterns and cluster more closely to one another. This dynamic nature has meant that over the last 30 years or more, any given family group has experienced numerous combinations of domiciliary environments within their extended family household.

Other sub-units of place within the greater place complex of town are the complexes of yards that are centres of social interaction. Some yards are interrelated because a particular social group regularly moves between and occupies them and they form part of a complex of places occupied by that group. Some yards are part of the place complex of a number of different social groups, that is, the same yard belongs to a number of place complexes. Just as extended family households are dynamic, so too are the complex of places used by social groups; for example over the time of this study male social groups (with core members) have occupied different combinations of yards within Dajarra. Changes in the nature of such place complexes are related to movements in or out of town of significant figures within the social group, movement across the Dajarra housing stock by members of the social group, and conflict within the social group. The identification of yards with the place complex of a number of social groups, the dynamic nature of such social groups, the dynamic nature of tenancies, combined with changes in the housing stock illustrates some of the greater complexity that is characteristic of places like Dajarra.

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23 In the 1970s Memmott (1979:488) observed that while in Mt Isa Mornington Islanders suspended tribal differences and expressed a common islander identity.
A further sub-unit is the complex of social spaces outside of yards such as the place of fights. Fights illustrated the use of “public” places to resolve conflicts, particularly those between men. In watching fights we observe a particular pattern of behaviour that was first documented by Roth in the camps of Northwest Queensland in the 1890s continuing in contemporary Aboriginal settlements. At times fighting behaviour creates relationships between public spaces and adjacent domiciliary environments; it also creates a place complex within town where these intense social interactions have occurred. The account of fights ‘in town’ also highlighted the aural and visual surveillance that occurs between places and across places complexes within Town. Dajarra is a greater place complex of constant and at times intense social interaction.

As a greater place complex, Dajarra is characterized by an intensity of activities, events and experiences that have occurred ‘in town’ (within the one place): jokes, fights, births, deaths, encounters with dangerous beings, hunting birds with shanghais, digging for mungaroo, interactions with the police, schooling, making of the DJ Rockers sound track, sexual relationships, floods, steam trains loaded with cattle rolling out, drovers bringing in mobs, and the movement of camps. As a greater place complex it is also characterized by multiple transformations in the physical, behavioural and knowledge properties of place. Memories of these activities, events, experiences and transformations are strong because there is continuity in the social group that occupies this place. The occupation of the cottages by Dajarra people over thirty years contributed to an intensity of place properties within these places, similarly the ongoing occupation of Dajarra as a whole (and constituent sub-units of place) by this social group and the sharing and reliving of memories through narratives contributes to its nature as a greater place complex. Dajarra is ‘complex’ because multiple place properties coexist within the one place. (See also Section 6.4.)

Dajarra is a greater place complex that is bounded by identity; Dajarra is bounded by a group of people who identify and are identified as DJ mob, Dajarra people. Dajarra is ‘complex’ because this collective identification is ‘complex’- people with different country affiliations maintain and express strong identification with Dajarra and each other.24 It was earlier argued that the naming of the Jimberella Cooperative reinforces identity with the River but at the same time membership and representation on the Jimberella board by people from various country affiliations reinforces this collective Dajarra identity (see Sutton 1998:68). This collective identification together with the migration history of Dajarra people may be seen to conform to Sutton’s description of ‘Historical People’:

‘Historical people’ are living where they are because of historical factors such as migration and deportation, and do not ‘really come from’ their current location. They are not without country as they usually assert themselves to be ‘traditional owners’ of places

24 Memmott (1979:438) described a similar phenomenon amongst Mornington Islanders visiting Mt Isa in the 1970s who ‘suspended’ their tribal and sub-tribal identities and socially operated as a single group, the ‘Mornington Islanders’ (see Section 2.2).
elsewhere, and assert only contingent rights in the country of current residence. (Sutton 2003: 18-19.)

However, a critical and complex issue is to what extent these strong associations with Dajarra go beyond the historical and also reflect, at least amongst some members of the population (past and present residents), relationships to this country as traditional owners, or are an extension of such relationships. This is a complex question because people who are identified with all of the neighbouring traditional owner groups have lived in Dajarra over at least the last 70 years (specifically Warluwarra, Kalkadoon, Pitta-Pitta, Yalanga).

In common Aboriginal usage, ‘traditional owners’ are deemed to have rights to assert a relationship with their country as a matter of their origin there, whether they live there or not. They ‘really come from’ or ‘properly belong to’ their country in an intrinsic sense. The ‘traditional owners’ are those with proprietary relationships to the country, possessors of core rights as well as contingent ones. (Sutton 2003:18-19.)

Another critical question is whether a process of succession involving Warluwarra people and possibly other groups has occurred in relation to country around Dajarra. Has a process (or processes) of conjoint succession taken place? Has a co-succession taken place, whereby a composite group of people including Georgina River people, East Arrerntic people and others have succeeded or are in the process of succeeding to country around Dajarra? Such a composite group is not unusual to this region. In fact the majority of groups represented in Dajarra have a long history of social interaction (including intermarriage, and participation in ceremony) within the Georgina River Basin (see Section 8.6-8.9 below). If processes of succession are/were occurring on the country around Dajarra, were they interrupted by cultural heritage surveys in the region in the mid 1990s and later native title claim processes in which people were asked to publicly assert their identity and country? Such processes forced people to cut away at collective identifications such as DJ mob and the social relationships that underpin them. Although these questions remain unanswered in this thesis, it is important to recognize the role of social identity in the definition of these greater place complexes.

25 This process of succession may fit Sutton’s model of succession in the post-classical era: “As local estates became vacated (i.e. they no longer had living direct land-holders), succession to them...tended instead to be collective, carried out by the surviving families from the same region, but still defined geographically on a basis that arises from the classical cultural system (eg. Drainage subdivision, language group area, regional confederacy).” (Sutton 1998:68.)

26 According to Sutton conjoint succession is where “…members of surviving subgroups of a single language group or other wider regional identity group have at times jointly assumed responsibility for all the untenanted estates of their wider group as well as maintaining or amalgamating their own local estate interests. These are clearly not cases where existing ‘normal’ succession pathways are engaged in by one or two individuals or a small genealogical subgroup. Whole language groups or similar sized regional groups may be involved.” (Sutton 2003:6.)

27 Amongst the grounds that Sutton (2003:6) defines for group succession the following may apply to the Dajarra population: territorial proximity, shared rights in Dreamings, and geographic unity (e.g. ‘We all one river’),
8.3 THE ISA & THE DANGI- IN OTHER TOWNS

Out at the ‘Dangi

The time came for the annual races at the township of Urandangi. That was a big social event and a meeting of the blacks. My wife explained to me the old gins didn’t have any money. I knew that without being told. She pointed out the many small jobs they had done for her; a trip to the “Dangie” would be a hollow outing without a shilling or two. Surely the station could afford to let them have about five shillings each.” (Lamond 1964:36.)

We never used to think about going to town. We used to only think about going to a race meeting. There were race meetings in Camooweal and Urandangi. The boss used to say, “Do your work properly and you can all go to the race meeting next Week”. We would go to town for two days. That was the only time we saw money. We’d get ten or twenty pounds. We never used to drink in those days. In those times we never worried about grog. The horses came from all the stations. All stock horses. (Jack Punch in Rosser 1987:81.)

The intensity of knowledge properties that characterise Dajarra as a greater place complex are also characteristic of other places where Dajarra people have experienced long histories of residential occupation including Jimberella (Section 6.5) and Urandangi (Sections 5.1, 6.5, 7.6).28 Urandangi is replete with memories including those of camps of the past; the camps of people who came into Urandangi to get rations and blankets, the camps of sick people who were removed from Urandangi by the police, the camps of people at the Four Mile and Lake Marian, the camps of Aboriginal stockmen working with drovers, the camps along the Georgina of Dajarra people and other Aboriginal people from the region during the Urandangi horse races held from at least the 1880s into the 1900s (The Queenslander 1889:438), the camps to the west of the pub that people occupied just prior to their forced migration to Dajarra, the temporary rodeo camps described in previous chapters, the camps of people who come into Urandangi to have a few drinks at the pub, and the recent development of camps on land purchased by Aboriginal people.

In addition to the temporary camps at Urandangi discussed in earlier chapters, the dynamic nature of this settlement is illustrated by the recent occupation of town blocks by Aboriginal people. At the commencement of this study most of the Urandangi Aboriginal population lived at the Marmany community a few kilometres from the Urandangi Pub which is the commercial centre of this very small settlement. During the course of the study a number of Aboriginal people (Warluwarra, Alyawarr, Arrernte, and Wangkamana identities) established camps and purchased blocks of land adjacent to the Urandangi Pub, which is the only place one can procure groceries, fuel and drinks. These camps were comprised of north-orientated external living environments and made use of elements such as windbreaks, shade roofs, low rectilinear humpies made of sheet metal over bush timber and star picket structures and some incorporated caravans that were generally orientated in similar fashion to Henry’s camp at the West End (and the cold weather domes documented by Roth) with doors opening onto north

28 Whereas Urandangi is recognized in government documents as a settlement, Jimberella is best described as an unofficial Aboriginal settlement, a place of regular Aboriginal residential occupation.
facing external living environments that were screened from southerly winds by the body of the caravan and attached windbreaks (see Section 6.4). (See Figure 8.6.)

When a Dajarra person visited Urandangi in the late 1990s or early 2000s it was not unusual for them to encounter people (including Arrerntic identities) who have associations with communities down the Plenty Highway such as Urlampe, Bonya and Harts Range; Warluwarra, Alyawarra and Arrerntic identities who reside at Urandangi (including people who are recognized as traditional owners for Urandangi); people from Alpurrurulam (including Alywarr, Bularnu and Warluwarra identities); people associated with Sandover communities such as Ooratippra and Ampilatwatja (including Alyawarr identities); people who spend blocks of time in Mt Isa (including Warluwarra, Alyawarr and Arrerntic identities). Urandangi is a centre of social interaction for numerous groups in the Georgina River Basin (western Queensland and eastern Northern Territory) it is a place where people ‘meet up’. The Urandangi Aboriginal population (all people resident and visiting at any point in time), which is usually very small, does not immediately suggest this regional role and like Keith’s camp at the Urandangi rodeo (Section 5.1) there is little physical evidence of this role. However, this place is complex by way of the multiple experiences, events and interactions associated with it and in particular the memories of these interactions- all of the campfires. The succession of camps at Urandangi, transformations in the settlement, social interactions and memories of social interactions coexist with Story places and associated Dreaming tracks some of which travel great distances. Knowledge of these Story places includes knowledge of the traditional owners and bosses for those places and the proper forms of behaviour to be enacted at or in relation to those places. Thus Urandangi is a greater place complex with minimal human-made transformations to the physical environment but with an intensity of social interaction and knowledge properties.29

In the Isa

The extended family structures in Dajarra, where households are interrelated to one another through kinship, extend to other settlements in the region including Urandangi (and the temporary camps at Urandangi), Boulia and Mt Isa. When Dajarra people visit Mt Isa they often stay with close relatives and spend time travelling between the households of relatives that are located throughout the town. In contrast to the dispersed extended family households in Dajarra, these households are in some cases located at considerable distances across this large regional town that has an Indigenous population of over 2800 and a total population in excess of 20 000. For those without a car (children, teenagers and some adults) the greater distance between some households makes it more difficult to frequently move between the domiciliary environments of extended family than it is in Dajarra. In such cases people get around on foot, look for a lift, use taxis, and make use of shuttle buses that provide free

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29 A vivid bad dream that I had at Urandangi was interpreted by some Dajarra people as being a product of this intensity of events and social relations that have occurred at this place. They warned that a lot of people have travelled through Urandangi and as a consequence you do not always know what events have taken place there.
transport between residences and clubs (The Irish Club and the Buffalo Club). In some cases these extended family households include family members who have lived in Mt Isa for twenty years or more. Knowledge of such a complex of households makes it possible to predict where someone visiting town is likely to be found.

When one of these Mt Isa households is visited it is not unusual to encounter other Dajarra people there. They might be Dajarra people staying with the household while they visit Mt Isa (a process of social accretion that can easily expand a household with an additional 5 to 10 people), or they might be Dajarra people moving about town visiting other Dajarra people (not necessarily family members) during a day trip to Mt Isa. Thus across Mt Isa, a town that for most Dajarra people is not in their country, there are households who are identified (by Dajarra people themselves and others) as Dajarra households, a complex of Dajarra social/domiciliary environments dispersed across the town (this includes the Jimberella house in Doreen St). Most Dajarra people do not move freely across this entire complex (just as they do not move freely across all domiciliary environments in Dajarra) nor are they likely to be aware of the location of all of the residences within it (at times people have to ask others for the location of a Dajarra household when tracking someone down). In other words individuals and families have there own sub-complex of places that they regularly visit within this Dajarra complex. The people found in these Dajarra households are the same people who are encountered as a social group at regional events this being most apparent at funerals. Other Aboriginal groups also use Mt Isa in this way, for example Mornington Islanders operate in Mt Isa as a culturally distinct group, and houses are identified with this group. Thus there are a number of Aboriginal domiciliary complexes within Mt Isa associated with different Aboriginal groups. These complexes of households dispersed across the town are an extension of the sociospatial/socio-territorial pattern that Memmott (1979:435-443) observed at the Mt Isa camping area in the 1970s (see Section 4.5). These Aboriginal complexes contribute to Mt Isa as a greater place complex. Dajarra people’s experiences in Mt Isa are not restricted to such complexes, there is a wide range of places visited by them such as, the mine, the Leichhardt River, clubs and pubs, schools, shops, football fields, banks, hospital, police station and courts, and Aboriginal organizations.

Out at the ‘Dangi and in the Isa - greater place complex properties
‘All of the camp fires’- some places such as Urandangi are greater place complexes that display minimal human-made modifications to the physical environment yet possess an intensity of knowledge properties, layers of memories of human actions and experiences, memories of camps, knowledge of the actions of Ancestral Beings and signs of these actions in the physical environment. Such intensity of knowledge properties can exist at places where there is a very small population at that place at any point in time.
Mt Isa continues to be used by Aboriginal visitors and relatives in a culturally distinct manner. Kinship interrelates domiciliary environments to form extended family households; these in turn can be identified with larger social groups such as the DJ mob. The numerous extended Dajarra family households in Mt Isa together with the complexes of other Aboriginal groups contribute to the greater complexity of this place. Kinship extends between Dajarra and Mt Isa interrelating extended family households in both towns; a family has part of their extended family household in Dajarra and part of it in Mt Isa. Across this town with its massive human-made transformations of the physical environment that are largely out of the control of Aboriginal people (the mine and town), its settlement plan and houses located by government agencies, Aboriginal place complexes are formed and maintained through social interaction with kinship at its core. These same social relationships underscore the location of camps at large events (such as the Urandangi rodeo); they were characteristic of the location of camps at the West End and they underscore contemporary attempts to self-regulate sociospatial patterns in Dajarra. Thus Aboriginal residents and visitors have applied community/socially orientated lifestyles to the scattered manner in which Aboriginal housing has been provided in Mt Isa. Mt Isa illustrates that a greater place complex may be formed and maintained through social interaction (particularly kinship). Social interaction contributes to Dajarra and Mt Isa separately as greater place complexes but it also works across these two towns forming a greater place complex comprised of places regularly used by or identified with a social group. 30

8.4 THEY’RE OUT BUSH

We now leave Dajarra, Urandangi and Mt Isa and return, as Dajarra people regularly do, to places ‘out bush’. Bush trips varied in duration including: short trips to visit places close to Dajarra of only a few hours, such as those with Susan to collect grubs or those hunting kangaroo; day trips such as the trip to Cat Dam; and extended bush trips (numbers of days), such as the trip to the Clay Pan. The purpose of bush trips also varied including, to go hunting or fishing, to collect foods, to collect bush materials, to simply visit a place or to show people a place (education/enculturation), to search for a place, to participate in recreational activities such as swimming, to visit others camped out bush (for example relatives in a stock camp), to camp with others (social interaction), and to ‘get out of town’ for a period of time (recreation). Sometimes bush trips were made for more than one of these reasons. Furthermore a bush trip that was initially made for a particular reason often involved a range of other activities, for example the search for Henry’s grandfather’s grave also involved inspecting old camps, hunting, noting the location of bush fruits, and sharing place knowledge through narratives.

30 The camping area on the Leichhardt has remained as one of few Aboriginal residential clusters in Mt Isa.
‘Dajarra people love bush tucker’

Bush trips involve interactions with a range of places, place complexes and lineal place complexes. For example, trips made to exploit bush resources involve interacting with the lineal place complexes of travel routes and watercourses, place complexes such as stands of gidyea and individual places such as a particular conkerberry bush. A characteristic of the Dajarra community is the regular bush trips made to exploit seasonal ‘bush tucker’ resources.

Many families in Dajarra regularly hunt, fish and collect plant foods. The ‘DJ Rockers’ sing, ‘Dajarra people love bush tucker’, and for many Dajarra people, bush foods form part of their staple diet. Bush foods exploited by the community include kangaroo, fish (black bream, yellow belly and perch), turkey (bustard turkey), lizards (goanna and karni), porcupine, bush fruits (including emu apple, bush orange, bush banana, bush cucumber, conkerberry, gidyea gum and bloodwood nuts), and grubs (witchetty grub). Many of these resources, particularly the fruits and lizards are easily accessed from the side of public roads, however hunting game often requires travelling into areas occupied by cattle stations and this is at times problematic.

Dajarra people revisit places known for the resources they contain such as the fishing holes on the Georgina (see Sections 6.6 & 7.3). Some people know of resource places but have not yet interacted with them although others may have, for example some people know of the fishing potential of Parapituri but are yet to visit this waterhole. People travel with knowledge of the types of environments where certain resources are to be found and they travel with knowledge of types of behaviours required to exploit these resources. Thus there exists places ‘out bush’ that are yet to be encountered and articulated with activity. Yet when people encounter particular environments they have the knowledge required to interact with them. Similarly people search for new environments that suit desired behaviour (see Sections 5.5 & 7.4).

A temporary camp out bush

This greater place complex, ‘out bush’ contains many places that are visited temporarily and in some circumstances the physical interaction with a place is unique to a particular trip and is not repeated. Examples of such places are temporary camps (or ‘travellers’ camps’31) and dinner camps out bush that involve the temporary articulation of a place with architectural properties (see Section 5.1). During ‘bush trips’ Dajarra people regularly transform places in the broader Aboriginal environment into ‘architectural environments’. Such transformations are often made quickly and temporarily; they involve minimal or negligible transformations of the physical environment, and they may simply involve carrying out patterns of behaviour within the existing and naturally occurring physical properties of a place. A common example of this type of transformation is the selection of a shade tree in the environment to occupy for a period of time, perhaps as little as a few minutes. An example of this type of transformation is the ‘dinner camp’ (lunch camp) made during a day trip that Henry took with a group of men and boys to show them places they had not visited:

31 See Memmott & Go-Sam’s (1999:237) description of ‘traveller’s camps’.
The men spent time selecting an appropriate place for the ‘dinner camp’, eventually turning back on their tracks to a stand of low gidyea. As soon as the vehicle pulled up the group collected firewood from the base of the trees and a fire was lit at the fringe of shade they provided. While some of the men stood in the shade at the edge of the gidyea and tended the meat cooking on the hot plate, others pushed inside the gidyea to occupy the low, shaded space created by the intersecting foliage of a number of trees (the space was approximately 1.5 metres high to the lowest branches). An esky was taken into this space and used as a food table. The men left the shade in turn to take a piece of meat from the hot plate and to pour a pint of tea from the billy. Once all of the meat was cooked the remaining pieces were placed on a bed of gidyea leaves on top of the wood heap. On returning to the shade some of the group brushed the ground surface with their feet before sitting down to eat their meal. Once everyone had ‘a feed’ and ‘a drink of tea’ the esky and hot plate were loaded into the vehicle, the fire doused, and the group continued on their journey.32

Shade trees are also used as architectural elements in camps of longer duration such as Henry’s camp at the West End and Ranko’s stock camp at Pearce’s Bore. Shade trees are elements within the ethnoarchitecture that Dajarra people consistently use to articulate places and place complexes. (See Figures 8.7 & 8.8.)

Dangerous places
Some Dajarra people caution that care should be taken when visiting places out bush for the first time, or when visiting places that the visitor has no knowledge of because “you don’t know where you are walking, you might get sick” meaning one does not know if there are powerful beings present at those places and if there will be repercussions for one’s actions at those places (see Section 5.7). Places ‘out bush’ can become dangerous, for example during the course of this study most Dajarra people stopped visiting a place because it had become dangerous following the deposition of objects their by other Aboriginal people. Others have since visited this place but used smoke to protect themselves while visiting and to cleanse themselves once they completed the visit. On at least one occasion during fieldwork Dajarra people used smoke to protect from danger at places.

The River, plains country, hills country
Within this greater place complex of ‘out bush’ there are a number of place complexes that Dajarra people define by their topographical characteristics: (i) the Georgina (The River), (ii) major creeks, (iii) plains country, and (iv) hills country. The scale and intensity of many of these places means that they can also be described as greater place complexes in their own right, for example the Georgina was described as a lineal place complex with an intensity of

32 The use of shade trees as an architectural element or type has been documented amongst other Aboriginal groups. (See for example Keys 2000:59-59.)
place properties, yet this intensity of properties means that it could also be described as a greater place complex (including tributaries). The Georgina plays an important orientation role within the greater place complex of ‘out bush’. Dajarra people and others in the region make the broad distinction of “sundown side” of the river and “sunrise side”. Thus the River divides the greater place complex of ‘out bush’ into an eastern and western side. This distinction can disorientate a visitor to the River (such as myself) because although the River generally flows in a north-northwest to south-southeast direction, the many bends in the river mean that the sun may rise downstream and set upstream rather than either side of the river. The major creeks similarly are important places of orientation ‘out bush’. Knowledge of the water systems and the location of waterholes combined with knowledge of the introduced complex of bores and dams is fundamental to the way that Dajarra people orientate ‘out bush’. I once asked Henry how he knew where he was while we were travelling through some rough country at the back of Ardmore Station- he answered to the effect that if he ever was to get “bushed” he always knew that if he were to continue west he would hit the Georgina and he would be right then.

Another place complex that people distinguish is the vast and mostly treeless black soil ‘plains country’. Within these ‘open’ plains are places with signs of the actions of Ancestral Beings, that is, places created or visited by Ancestral Beings. There are also numerous places visited by humans such as places regularly visited for hunting porcupine and goanna. On the plains there are subtle topographical features such as low ridges, shallow depressions, shallow watercourses, and blue-bush swamps. There are places where particular events have occurred, and there are lineal place complexes that traverse the plains such as the travel routes of humans and Ancestral Beings. Significant physical features in the plains country are the bores and associated dams that can be seen from considerable distances, for example from the Stock Route Road on the eastern side of the Georgina it is possible to see the walls of a ‘turkey’s nest’ 15-20km away on the western side of the River.

The last of the complexes that people define on the basis of topography is the rugged ‘hills country’ of the North-west Highlands that includes the country around Dajarra. Within this complex are the lineal place complexes that are created through the regular kangaroo hunting trips that people make out of Dajarra. People also maintain knowledge of a complex of places in the Hills country that possess physical evidence of use by ‘the old people’- such as axe quarries, and rock art sites. There are complexes of resource and recreation places in the hills country that are frequently visited by Dajarra people including a complex of waterholes and dams. Dajarra people regularly travel from the hills country, across the plains to the Georgina. A number of Ancestral Beings also travelled across the plains between the Georgina River and the hilly country and left signs of their adventures on the plains and in the hills.
Out bush- greater place complex properties

Dajarra people regularly experience physical and/or mental journeys ‘out bush’. These journeys illustrate the role of movement and action in the experience of greater place complexes. The small sample of places ‘out bush’ described in this thesis illustrate that a greater place complex may consist of a wide range of places. There are places such as dinner camps that are only fleetingly interacted with and there are places where generations of people and Ancestral Beings have interacted with the environment. It would be extremely difficult if not impossible to map all of the temporary dinner camps, all of the places that Dajarra people have interacted with for very short periods of time. There are three key types of known places ‘out bush’, (1) those that Dajarra people know and that they have visited, (2) places that they know but do not visit or will not visit (including dangerous places), and (3) known places that are yet to be visited. A further characteristic, or level of complexity, of such a greater place complex is that there is diversity in the knowledge and experiences that Dajarra people have of places ‘out bush’, thus a place that one Dajarra person has interacted with on many occasions remains unknown to another member of the community, whereas other places are known to many members of the community (see Section 5.12).

Unknown places are also a key part of such a greater place complex. There are three types of unknown places, firstly there are those places that are yet to be visited by Dajarra people and articulated with activity. This includes places where the environment will stimulate a type of behaviour when it is encountered, and places that are searched for because they suit the type of behaviour that people desire to enact- a simple example being the search for an appropriate shade tree. A quality of a greater place complex, such as ‘out bush’, is that they are not totally defined by human interaction or known in entirety; there are always areas of place potential within the complex. A greater place complex is a place for future action- where people will apply known forms of behaviour to their knowledge of the types of environments and experiences they encounter. People are continually interacting with such environments generating new places and new place experiences. This reminds us that not all the places of a community can be mapped because they are still yet to be made. If places are unknown this does not mean that they are not relevant or do not exist. In fact the very nature of being unknown defines some places, for example unknown places that are potentially dangerous influence behaviour- some people avoid places they do not know. The second type of places that are unknown are those for which an individual or numbers of people do not hold knowledge but others do. The third type of unknown place is those for which people are unaware of the actions that have gone before them in that place- in some instances such places are perceived to be dangerous.

‘Out bush’ we learn that topographic units can define place complexes. The physical extent of such broad topographic units, the distinction between the physical properties of one topographic unit and another, defines a boundary to the places within it. These topographic
units bound numerous places and a diversity of place properties and therefore can be viewed as greater place complexes in their own right. Although topographic units have boundary qualities there are also places, place complexes and lineal place complexes that traverse them. The distinct physical properties of topographic units are employed as significant elements of orientation within the Aboriginal geography of Northwest Queensland.

Sutton (1990) postulated that population movements from resource poor areas towards resource rich areas characterized Aboriginal Australia, including movements from plains to hills and from hinterlands to rivers. There were pulsing movements from the plains to the hills and from the hinterlands to the Georgina River. Some of these pulses were recorded in the early 1900s as people from the west came into the Georgina in response to drought, disease and contact violence. However, according to Roth’s (1897) accounts of travel in the region and the history of travel in the 1900s Aboriginal movements in this region are omnidirectional not unidirectional as Sutton’s model proposes. People moved back and forwards between these topographic units and continue to do so.

8.5 ON THE STATION

The pastoralists, of all the colonists, offered the form of colonisation most compatible with the maintenance of traditional Aboriginal connections to land…(Sutton 2003: 35.)

The pastoralists by and large were not there to change Aborigines ideologically, or to get them to abandon their bush knowledge and skills. Local geographical knowledge was a field in which pastoralists could not, at least initially, compete with the original inhabitants. Knowledge of the land’s waters and other resources, of its vegetation associations and physiography, and of the mythological and spiritual landscape, were constitutive or substantive aspects of local systems of law and custom to do with rights in land and waters. (Sutton 2003: 36.)

In the previous chapters it was argued that cattle station geography is not distinct from the Aboriginal geography of Northwest Queensland. It was established on Aboriginal geography and in so doing simultaneously disrupted and reinforced it. Cattle station geography remains fully embedded within Aboriginal geography in the contemporary context. Just as Dajarra people use topographic units to define greater place complexes they also recognize and use cattle stations as greater place complexes, for example it is common to hear someone describe places as being on the “country” of a particular station, “That’s all on Carandotta country.” Realizing that Carandotta and Walgra are now owned by the one station, Headingly, a Dajarra person expressed the need to readjust their perception of this greater place complex saying, “That’s all Headingly country now, it’s still Carandotta but it is Headingly country”.

The earliest ethnographer in the region, Walter Roth, identified Aboriginal groups with particular stations in the early 1890s, however in reality through their occupation of the waterholes, cattle stations became identified with particular Aboriginal groups. Thus Carandotta is identified with Warluwarra people because its homestead is located on a key
waterhole on Warluwarra country, Headingly is identified with Bularnu because its homestead is located on a main waterhole on Bularnu country. In this sense cattle stations followed Aboriginal units of place. However, the boundaries to stations were created through government controlled lease processes and are defined by fence-lines that run in long straight lines across the landscape. In contrast to most places experienced by Dajarra people cattle station boundary fences provide physical, human-made (and maintained) boundaries. These are the greatest human-made place boundaries experienced by Dajarra people, for example boundary fences surround the 300000 hectares of Carandotta and the eastern boundary of Ardmore was over 150 kilometres long (AACo 2003). Some of these cattle station boundaries are regularly experienced, for example the Ardmore boundary is experienced on the Mt Isa Rd and Urandangi Rd.

Although the centres of cattle stations, the homesteads, occupied core areas of Aboriginal countries their boundaries do not necessarily coincide with the boundaries of those countries. However, through a history of work and occupation of cattle stations by individuals, families and Aboriginal groups, cattle station boundaries have influenced the way that some people, particularly younger people, have come to know and define Aboriginal boundaries to country. Individuals, families and Aboriginal groups are now in some instances identified very closely with the spatial extent of particular stations. It is noteworthy that Dajarra people and their ancestors built many of the boundary fences, cutting gidyea and bloodwood posts by hand, they were also stationed at bores to maintain these fence-lines in their work as boundary riders (and later as grader drivers). The experience that some Dajarra people had tender mustering, this involved mustering with the stock camp of the adjoining station and retrieving cattle that had strayed next door, may also have reinforced identification with these boundary properties. Strong identification with cattle station boundaries is illustrated by various native title claims in Northwest Queensland that use them in the definition of country and this has contributed to difficulties in the contemporary native title context.

On the station- greater place complex properties
The division of country into cattle stations initially followed Aboriginal units of place, the greater place complex of cattle stations has at its core the geography of Aboriginal groups. The construction and maintenance of boundary fences introduced new units of place to the Aboriginal geography. Aboriginal people and groups in turn identified with these new greater place complexes of cattle stations. Boundary fences in the landscape, physical properties of place, encompass numerous Aboriginal places and place complexes and such places are now identified with the country of the cattle station. Cattle stations are greater place complexes that are visually obvious- there are obvious signs of the complex in the landscape, they are also extremely complex due to the history of non-Indigenous occupation and adoption of Aboriginal geography and in turn the close role that Aboriginal people had in the establishment, development and maintenance of these stations and the identification which
Aboriginal people maintain with cattle stations. Many Dajarra people identify very strongly as stockmen and women, and they maintain knowledge of the role of their ancestors in the Northwest Queensland pastoral industry- including the boundary fences they built and maintained.

Although native title claim processes may push people towards an abandonment of cattle stations as units of place within that context, Dajarra people are highly likely to continue to use these greater place complexes in their daily lives- in fact they cannot avoid them- they experience them on an almost daily basis. These greater place complexes do not supersede or cut off other units of place rather they supplement them. While boundary fences are supposed to keep cattle in and restrict access to stations, Dajarra people regularly traverse them, so too their places and place complexes.

8.6 THE BEAT

A characteristic of the Aboriginal lifestyles of Northwest Queensland and the lifestyles of Dajarra people is regular movement between regional centres; Dajarra people travel to Boulia, Boulia people travel to Dajarra, Dajarra people travel to Mt Isa, Mt Isa people travel to Dajarra. Some people talk about their ‘beat’, the places they regularly visit and know. For many Dajarra people this ‘beat’ includes the regional centres of Boulia, Cloncurry, Mt Isa, Camooweal, Urandangi, and Dajarra. Dajarra people can most regularly be found on the road to Mt Isa and to a lesser degree the roads to Boulia and Urandangi. Journeys to regional centres range in length from day trips, to relocations or migrations such as a household moving from Dajarra to Mt Isa or Cloncurry. This ‘beat’ extends into the eastern Northern Territory and includes places down the Plenty and Sandover Highways which Dajarra people either visit, are identified with, are yet to return to, or at which they maintain close social relationships with people from these places.

Earlier in Section 8.3 the relationship of extended family households in Dajarra and Mt Isa was described. The identification and use of a complex of Dajarra households in Mt Isa was also described. These complexes extend to other settlements in the Georgina River Basin and define the limits of a ‘beat’ for individuals, family groups and Dajarra people in general. Dajarra people have a beat, a greater place complex that extends across a region, of households that they regularly visit, are most likely to visit, or know they can visit in other places- “When I go through Dajarra I always pull up at Georgie’s house”. In most cases the primary households in this complex are those of extended family and secondary households are those of other Dajarra people (this is of course subject to the state of relationships at the time of the visit and in some circumstances people stay with other Dajarra people instead of extended family). These regional complexes of extended family households that contribute to the definition of this ‘beat’ sometimes display themselves at the one place, for example they
display themselves in the sociospatial pattern of big camps on the Georgina like those at the Urundangi rodeo. On such occasions the kinship network of the ‘regional beat’ is concentrated within the sociospatial pattern of a temporary camp.

This beat includes numerous places that are regularly visited ‘out bush’: places on the Georgina such as popular fishing holes; places on the plains country such as the Urundangi Rd; and places in the hilly country such as stands of gidyea that are visited to collect wood for cooking and warming fires in Dajarra. It also includes those places of potential future action ‘out bush’.

Dajarra people also travel within this beat for work. People travel to cattle stations close to Dajarra such as Kallala and more distant stations such as Pathungra on the Hamilton. People travel to work at the mines of Northwest Queensland including the Phosphate and Osborne mines. People also travel outside of their usual ‘beat’ for work, for example people have travelled to the ‘Gulf country’ (Gulf of Carpentaria) and lower down the Georgina to cattle stations in Southwest Queensland on the edge of the ‘sand hill country’.

People infrequently or irregularly travel to more distant places. Some people have travelled from Dajarra to Townsville or Brisbane for medical treatment. Teenagers travel to Charters Towers to board at secondary school. Children have travelled to the east coast on school excursions. People travel outside of Northwest Queensland to represent the community at meetings, to attend training programs, and to participate in sporting events. Young people have ‘hit the road’ to Sydney and Melbourne. Some Dajarra people have migrated to distant places such as Townsville, Woorabinda, Rockhampton and Brisbane and are occasionally visited by friends and relatives from Dajarra. Some individuals who migrated into the region when they were young make visits to their distant homelands, for example to country around Borroloola and the Torres Strait Islands. While Dajarra people rely on kin when visiting these distant places, such places lie outside of the ‘beat’ of most Dajarra people. (See Figures 8.11-8.13.)

Three beats: the Gulf, the Georgina, and the Sand hills

Many Dajarra people would identify with the Georgina River ‘beat’ encompassing an area from Mt Isa west to the Barkly Tableland in the Northern Territory south encompassing parts of the Sandover River and Plenty, then east from Urlampe across the Toko Ranges towards Boulia, across to Cloncurry and back across to the Isa. Although Mt Isa and Cloncurry might be more appropriately described as lying within a ‘hills country beat’ or ‘highlands beat’ that overlaps with the ‘Georgina beat’. Most Dajarra people have their family located within the Georgina (and hills country) beat and their spouse’s family is also found within this beat. To the north of this ‘beat’ is the ‘Gulf country’, the southern Gulf of Carpentaria, which for most Dajarra people lies outside of their regular travels (both physical and mental) and outside of
their realm of social relations (although a few Dajarra people have married people from the Gulf and moved to places such as Burketown). Mt Isa acts as a regional centre for both of these beats. To the south of this Georgina beat is the ‘sand hill country’ which similarly lies outside of the regular travels of most Dajarra people and to a lesser degree outside of their realm of social relations (some Dajarra people maintain minimal contact with Aboriginal residents at Bedourie and Birdsville). The Gulf and Sand hill country are outside of the regular movements and social interaction of Dajarra people yet they do maintain knowledge of these areas and of family groups identified with them. Thus the Gulf and sand hills are part of a wider geography with which Dajarra people are familiar.

Not all Dajarra people share the same ‘beat’. There are family groups within Dajarra that have distinctive beats, for example the beat of the Clarke family includes Garawa country and Gulf communities. There are also Dajarra identities such as Sharky who migrated to Dajarra from distant places and who have since restricted their movements to this Georgina River ‘beat’ where they now have family (Sharky has now moved within this ‘beat’ for approximately 30 years).

Georgina River People- greater place complex properties

Dajarra people and other Aboriginal people use the term ‘beat’ to describe the limits of their travels (both physical and mental), the limits of their place knowledge, the limits of their social networks (and social interactions) including the limits of the spatial extent of family. Journeys across the geography of Northwest Queensland are limited by the spatial extent of kin and other Dajarra people (other social networks), that is, the spatial extent of extended family households and of Dajarra households.

A ‘beat’ then is a greater place complex that is bounded by limits of familiarity. Jeremy Beckett made one of the first observations of the role of kinship in the definition of beats (and thus greater place complexes):

All Aboriginal people have “beats,” areas which are defined by the situation of kin who will give them hospitality, within which they can travel as much or as little as they please, and where they are most likely to find spouses. Proximity is only a minor factor… (Beckett 1988:131.)

Following Beckett, Memmott made these observations of Aboriginal beats:

Most of the Aboriginal population of Queensland is clustered into regional groupings, in many cases consisting of a number of relatively proximate and sizeable communities separated by areas with very small or negligible Aboriginal populations... The idea that a number of Aboriginal communities or settlements in a sizeable region may be analysable as a type of contemporary cultural unit seems to have been first advanced in analyses of western New South Wales in the 1950s and 60s by Beckett…and later by Vallance (1970). These researchers found a pattern of regional travel generated by kinship networks. The distribution of an individual's kin generated that person a 'beat'...a set of places which he or she could visit and expect to obtain hospitality and economic support if necessary. It was also within such a beat that a person would most likely find their spouse. (Memmott 1991a:201.)
The Collins English Dictionary provides the following definitions of a beat (Wilkes 2001:136):

Beat…to form (a path or track) by repeatedly walking or riding over…Beat the bounds- …to define the boundaries of a parish by making a procession around them and hitting the ground with rods…to define the scope or limit, as of a topic or discussion…Beat- …an assigned or habitual round or route….

A key feature of Aboriginal beats in Northwest Queensland and eastern Northern Territory is that they too are defined by regular or repetitive physical travels that involve interactions with people and places. It is also clear that beats are also defined by mental journeys, they are defined by repetitive travels through country and repetitive visits to places, made in the narratives and thoughts of Dajarra people. Although kinship has a significant role in shaping such movements it is important to note that they are also shaped by other factors including the location and availability of resources, the location of work and places of past work experiences, and place knowledge. It is also important to note that ‘beats’ are not restricted to settlements as Memmott and Beckett suggest they are, equally important are the numerous places ‘out bush’ that are also regularly visited.

In cattle stations we see a greater place complex that is defined by creating a boundary around the outside of it, it is defined from the outside, the station is fenced off. In beats we see greater place complexes that are defined or bounded from within. Beats are defined by the limits of regular physical or mental travels made by a group of people- they are greater place complexes that are defined by people consistently living and moving within the same area.

8.7 TERRITORY SIDE TRAVEL & QUEENSLAND SIDE TRAVEL

The Northern Territory/Queensland border divides this Georgina ‘beat’ into a Queensland side and a Northern Territory side. The physical movements of many Dajarra people are concentrated on the Queensland side of the border. Some Dajarra people continue to physically visit the Northern Territory side of the Georgina beat, and some people maintain knowledge of this part of the beat without physically visiting it, they maintain knowledge of the people likely to be encountered there, of relatives and other Dajarra people living there and of the location of relatives and other Dajarra people visiting there.

There exists at least three complexes within the NT side Georgina ‘beat’ these are: (1) the Plenty (Plenty River/Plenty Highway), including communities such as Urlampe, Bonya, Walpianga and Harts Range; (2) the Sandover (Sandover River/ Sandover Highway), including communities such as Ampilatwatja (Ammaroo), Ooratipira: and (3) the Barkly Tableland including places such as Wunara and Buradu (on Alexandria Station). The ancestors of those Dajarra people with Northern Territory affiliations come from one or more of these three complexes. For example the Punch and Rankine families identify with the
Barkly, whereas the Bookies and some of the Marshall mob identify with the Plenty. (See Figure 8.11.)

Urandangi is a regional centre, a hub of interaction where the Northern Territory and Queensland side elements of this Georgina ‘beat’ intersect and overlap. This use of Urundangi reflects the greater role that the Georgina has played for people moving within the Queensland side and Northern Territory side beats, the Georgina has always been a place of interaction between eastern and western Georgina groups (see Section 7.3). The Alpurrurulam settlement (Lake Nash) might be described as the Northern Territory side equivalent of Urundangi; it too is where these Northern Territory and Queensland side elements intersect and overlap.

In the previous chapter the regular travels made between Dajarra and Mt Isa along a displaced Georgina trade and travel route were described. Similar journeys are made between Northern Territory communities (such as Alpurrurulam, Urump and Buradu) and Mt Isa. Mt Isa is a regional centre for people who are regularly found within the Queensland side or the Northern Territory side of this Georgina beat. Mt Isa is now an important place of social interaction between people from the Queensland and the Northern Territory ‘side’ just as the big Georgina waterholes were places of social interaction between these groups. Mt Isa is an important place where these two beats from the Georgina intersect and overlap.

**This side of the border- greater place complex properties**

Memmott (1991a) earlier mapped a ‘Northwest Queensland cultural region’ from the Gulf of Carpentaria south to towards Boulia, he argued that one of the properties of this cultural region is that it was defined by regular travel generated by kinship networks (the other properties of Memmott’s cultural region are discussed below). It is clear that at least in terms of ‘beats’ Memmott’s cultural region now requires serious revision. While Dajarra people maintain knowledge and identification with a broad Northwest Queensland geography that includes the Gulf they do not regularly move throughout it, instead they identify more closely and move more regularly within the two key beats of the Georgina River Basin. Memmott seems to have observed the distinction between the Queensland side and NT side described above as he mapped the western edge of the Northwest Queensland cultural region along the western side of the Queensland/Northern Territory border. However, he failed to map the Northern Territory side of the Georgina River beat and the interrelationships that exist between it and the Queensland equivalent. This Georgina River beat illustrates a place complex defined and maintained by kinship networks.

The Queensland side and Territory side beats can also be described as greater place complexes. These place complexes reflect a continuation of traditional movement patterns and the history of travel, migration and displacement associated with the contact history of the
border region. An important property in the definition of these two complexes is the extent of traditional ceremony. Ceremony continues in the Northern Territory side and people from Queensland who wish to participate in ceremony travel to the Northern Territory to do so. The division of the Georgina Beat into a Queensland side and Northern Territory side illustrates the role of contact history and the limits of or differentiation in cultural practice in the definition of a greater place complex.

8.8 COUNTRY

Sociocentric boundaries are difficult to draw; one cannot say that an area X, made up of such-and-such places, constitutes a “country.” When individuals describe their “own country,” their lists of places are likely to overlap without being identical. (Myers 1991:60)

Pintupi maintain that society, as they see it, is potentially boundary-less, that individual networks and ritual links extend beyond any definable group. No one, they say, lived entirely in one place, with a single set of people, at one waterhole, as if in “a paddock.” (Myers 1991:79)

Language groups and native title claimant groups

Dajarra people, and Warluwarra people, hold what could be called ‘diasporic identities’; they are simultaneously associated with their traditional country(s) (or homeland(s)) and other places such as Dajarra where they have been ‘reared up’. Many Dajarra people are affiliated with more than one country, tracing descent through both their mother and father. Some people have affiliations with multiple countries by tracing descent through three or four grandparents. A characteristic of ‘Dajarra people’ is the close association of the members of a number of constituent language groups in the town who have shared experiences and identification in place, as well as a longstanding tradition of affinal links.

Most considerations of Aboriginal place boundaries focus on how territoriality or ownership is manifested in the environment. In Chapter 3 the attempts of linguists to map or fix the distribution of languages with the geography of Northwest Queensland were described. However, the maps of the linguists mask the real situation of multilingual people with multiple affiliations to serial countries on the Georgina River Basin. They also tended to overlook the interactions between groups, including intermarriage. Roth (1897:42, 168.) described a number of such interactions. For example he observed that Carandotta Station was the headquarters of the Warluwarra, however he also observed the Wakaya teaching the Kalkadoon Rain songs at this place. There is a long history of intermarriage between the Wakaya and Warluwarra that continued at the time of this study. Such interactions included the corroborees on the Georgina in the 1900s attended and performed by a mix of Wakaya, East Arrernte and Warluwarra.

33 Merlan (1998) illustrated similar transformations in associations with places in Katherine and with country around Katherine.
34 See Smith’s (2000) account of diasporic identities in Cape York.
Native title processes require people to fix boundaries to claims, to prove the extent of their ‘territory’ at the time of European contact and to demonstrate the maintenance of connection to places in their country. Just as cultural heritage legislation promotes a static model of culture, so too do native title claim processes promote a static model of cultural landscapes. These processes ask Aboriginal people to unravel history, including a history of intermarriage and adoption, and to cut away at historical associations (with places and with other Aboriginal groups) in order to produce a discrete model of their country. This does not mean that prior to the advent of these land processes that people did not identify with areas within the region as language groups, it means that in the contemporary context people have been forced to savage other forms of group identity and identification with places that they simultaneously hold. They have held and valued these ‘other’ forms of identification for many years and in some cases it is likely that these other forms of identification are longstanding if not part of (or at least an extension of) the classical system.

Although there may be many reasons for the significant number of overlapping native title claims in Northwest Queensland one might be that they are a product of people incorporating a variety of the greater complexes described earlier, such as cattle stations, beats and language groups, into their definition of country. For example the Warluwarra claim currently includes the Northern Territory border and cattle station boundaries in its claim map. There is a tendency for those involved in native title processes to view these overlapping claim maps as ‘incorrect’ because they do not conform to a classical model of discrete land owning groups. They may also be viewed as incorrect because they incorporate place boundaries that have been introduced since the non-Aboriginal invasion of the area (a failure by observers to understand how these boundaries were developed and why they are incorporated in perceptions of country). However, if these maps of overlapping claims represent the greater place complexes of a particular group they might be very accurate.

**Identifying with country- greater place complex properties.**

Dajarra people maintain knowledge of land-owning groups that are identified by language names. Knowledge of story places within an area and identifying and being identified as bosses for those places constitutes the primary way that people define these greater place complexes. However when it comes to mapping the extent of these complexes they have employed a composite of boundaries of the greater place complexes, which they experience and maintain knowledge of, including the topographic units described earlier.

Country as a greater place complex is a complex matter of identification. People identify with country in a number of different ways- the extent of a language group being but one of these. Native title processes have encouraged some people to make minor realignments to their person/place identification, perhaps simply articulating one part of their person/place identity
more clearly, e.g. more clearly articulating their identification with a language group. However, there are cases where people have experienced (or have been forced to make) more significant realignments to their identity. There are some people who seem encouraged by the savaging of identity that the native title process instigates and who repeatedly attack the identity of other claimants and claimant groups (even those who share the same apical ancestor). The stripping away of identity with social groups other than language groups and of identity with places other than language group territories within the native title context is a contemporary form of displacement. What are the social costs of such displacements? Is there trauma associated with such displacements? What impacts have native title claim processes had on the mental health of claimants? It must be noted that it is the native title claim process that is at question here, not the concept of native title.

8.9 REVISITING THE ‘UPPER GEORGINA ETHNOGRAPHIC DISTRICT’

The complex forms of identification with country that many Dajarra people maintain are not recent. Roth observed the formation (if not existence) of wider group identities in Northwest Queensland in the late 1890s:

Owing to the opening up of the country with the advent of the Europeans, some of these tribal camps have been shifted of late years from their original quarters or else amalgamated with others, while in a few cases, what with privation, disease, alcohol, and lead, the whole community has been annihilated. (Roth 1897:41.)

He goes on to make the following observation of his ‘Boulia District’:

Why there should be such a multiplicity of communities in this particular district, as compared with the others, it is somewhat difficult to understand, except on the supposition that a composite society is actually undergoing a process of agglutination; on the other hand, some of the above tribes cannot boast of more than a score or two of individuals. (Roth 1897:41.)

Roth (1897) argued that there existed ethnographic districts comprised of groups with common cultural elements: (i) they each have a ‘head camp’; (ii) members of a district have common places and behaviours; (iii) they have mutually intelligible language; (iv) common trade-routes, markets, hunting grounds, customs, manners and beliefs; (v) there exist bonds of comradeship and friendship; (vi) there is intermarriage within the district; and (vii) the constituent groups are allies in warfare (Roth 1897:41; Memmott 1995:122). These characteristics apply to the wider groupings of people found in Northwest Queensland and the eastern Northern Territory today.

Roth identified an Upper Georgina District (Section 4.1) that covers an area from the headwaters of the Georgina downstream to Roxborough. The groups he identified with this region include the Wakaya, East Arrernte (Andakerebenha), and Warluwarra. These same groups continued to enjoy close associations at the time of this study. The notable omission
from Roth’s account is the Alyawarr who migrated to the Georgina some 20-30 years after his study. The Lake Nash Alyawarr are now clearly identified and strongly identify with the Georgina.

Roth’s Upper Georgina Ethnographic District also conforms to Memmott’s definition of a contemporary cultural-geographic region:

A boundary to a contemporary cultural region has a number of co-incident properties. It is where a mixture of social, economic, travel, and geographical boundaries tend to coincide…Phenomena that tend to create boundaries for a population in a region are (a) a large surrounding area with no Aboriginal inhabitants (possibly due to dispersals, removals, and the impact of diseases…); (b) isolation between adjacent areas due to poor transport systems; (c) lack of interaction between neighbouring groups… due to cultural dissimilarities; and (d) lack of accessible economic opportunities.

Two further phenomena that tend to reinforce the sense of region are (a) the presence of a highly resourced regional centre catalysing the regular visitation of Aboriginal people and the establishment of a set of social and residential spaces there, containing individuals with kinship links back to the smaller towns; (b) similarities or continuities in the socio-economic environments of the towns in the region, so that there exists relatively similar procedures and possibilities to obtain preferred dietary items, to arrange social benefit payments or credit, and to maintain particular behavioural styles (e.g. camping, fighting, drinking). This does not mean that all of the towns or settlements in the region have a similar character in all regards, they may be quite diverse in some respects…

In yet other areas of Queensland, cultural-geographic regions, if they exist, overlap with one another forming more continuous networks or chains of interacting population centres, particularly on the east coast of Australia. (Memmott 1991a:201-202).

This Upper Georgina region occupies the Georgina River Basin as far south as Roxborough (although Parapituri might be considered by some to be the southern extent of this contemporary cultural-geographic region); this section of the Georgina is the focus of visitation, occupation and interaction by these groups; the groups have shared history in this region; these groups have a history of shared participation in ceremonial activity and participation in Georgina River corroborees; the groups within this region interact with each other and look towards one another rather than outside of the region; Mt Isa acts as a regional centre for these groups (although the NT based groups also use the regional centres of Alice Springs and Tennant Ck); the movements of these groups are focused within this region (see Section 8.6 & 8.7 above); there are economic links between communities within this region including a trade in cars and car parts; some people from these groups hold knowledge of the actions of Ancestral Beings across the region, and this place knowledge is at times shared with people from the region. When Dajarra people say they are from the Georgina River, they are describing two layers of identity, (1) they are identifying as people from country on the River, and (2) they are identifying as people from the Georgina River region.

35 See Young & Doohan’s (1989:109-110) complementary description of social networks, they also observed people finding their spouse within their mobility region. Taylor & Bell (1996:403) have referred to mobility regions as “functional regional networks”.
So we’ve been there that old Georgina - the Georgina greater place complex. It is clear that there exists groupings of people associated with greater place complexes other than discrete land-owning groups. Dajarra people identify with a cultural region, over a century ago, Roth called it the Upper Georgina Ethnographic District and people from the region today call it ‘The Georgina’. This greater place complex is defined by a combination of: physical properties, the topography of the Georgina basin; regular movement of groups within it; social interaction within it; a focus of lifestyles within the region; shared history within the region; economic links across the region; a shared regional centre; and lastly the region is defined by mutual identification- the constituent groups identify with the region and with each other.

CONCLUSION

In this final chapter I have taken the reader on a journey across a range of greater place complexes within which Dajarra people experience the types of places, place complexes and lineal place complexes described in the preceding chapters. In Chapter 2 two important questions were posed: (1) how is it that people know they are in a particular place and not some other place? And, (2) when are people in-between places? I now turn to a consideration of these questions.

In moving between town and bush we learn that Dajarra people experience boundaries to greater place complexes that are characterized by differences in physical properties, behavioural properties and activities including the nature of social interactions. We also learn that experiences of differentiation between places do not necessarily coincide in space.

In spending time ‘in town’, we learn that a greater place complex may be characterised by multiple places or sub-units of place. Dajarra is defined by a number of place complexes that exist within it such as complexes of extended family households, complexes of social environments, and complexes of ‘public’ places. Movement and occupation are key to the creation and maintenance of such complexes. ‘In town’, illustrates that a greater place complex may be defined by an intensity of social interactions that are not found outside of that place. A place may also be ‘complex’ by way of the multiple (and/or different) transformations and experiences that have occurred within it and the memory of these transformations and experiences. Multiple place properties coexist within the one place. Dajarra illustrates that a greater place complex can be defined by a strong identity. Dajarra is associated with a group of people who identify and are identified as ‘DJ mob’, Dajarra people. Part of Dajarra’s complexity as a place arises because this collective identification involves diasporic identities. Rather than erode or devalue forms of Aboriginal place identity such as ‘DJ mob’ in pursuit of models of classical Aboriginal Australia, these more complex
forms of identity and the significance they have to people who hold them need to be more fully explored and understood.

In heading back out to the ‘Dangi we learn that other settlements are also defined as greater place complexes by the intensity of social interactions that occur within them and the intensity of memories and knowledge properties associated with them, yet there may be little physical evidence of these properties. Urandangi also illustrates that a greater place complex may be a regionally significant place of social interaction even though it has a very small population at any point in time. Travelling for a last run up to the Isa we learn that Aboriginal social interactions and kinship can interrelate urban places across a greater place complex that has undergone massive transformations within its physical environment, such transformations being out of the control of Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people may then take control of such environments by using them in culturally distinct ways. Kinship interrelates households within settlements contributing to the greater place complex properties of those places. Kinship and social identification (such as ‘DJ mob’) can interrelate households across settlements creating a greater place complex identified with a distinct social group.

By heading ‘out bush’ we learn that a greater place complex may be comprised of numerous places, place complexes and lineal place complexes. Physical and mental movements within a greater place complex are keys to the experience and maintenance of such places. Out bush we learn that there can be a range in the time depth of interactions with places within a greater place complex, from fleeting human interactions to the enduring actions of Ancestral Beings, and to those places still awaiting human interaction. Out bush we learn that different types of known places may exist within a greater place complex (1) those that people know and have visited, (2) places that people know but do not visit or will not visit, and (3) known places that are yet to be visited. It is also clear that unknown places may exist within a greater place complex: (1) unknown places that are yet to be visited and articulated with activity, (2) places that remain unknown to an individual or numbers of people but are known to others in the social group, (3) places where the past actions in that place are unknown. Out bush we observe the use of the distinct physical characteristics of topographic units as definitions to greater places complexes.

Pulling up to open gates in boundary fences we learn of a complex interweaving of Aboriginal geography and the introduced geography of cattle stations. Boundary fences provide obvious physical definition to greater place complexes. Aboriginal geography forms the basis of the greater place complexes which the boundary fences define. Introduced boundaries to greater place complexes can become fully embedded within Aboriginal geography through the long history that Aboriginal people have had in constructing, maintaining or interacting with them. It is important to note that introduced greater place complexes do not necessarily supersede existing greater place complexes.
Moving through the Georgina ‘beat’ we learn that a greater place complex can be defined by the limits of familiarity- the limits of travels (both physical and mental), the limits of place knowledge, the limits of social networks (and social interactions) including the limits of the spatial extent of family. Beats illustrate the definition of a greater place complex through repetitive movements and occupation within an area rather than by a boundary property that circumscribes. In travelling through the Georgina, we learn that movements across a greater place complex can interrelate a range of places out bush as well as places in town (beats are not restricted to settlements). The Northern Territory and Queensland sides of the Georgina ‘beat’ illustrate the existence of greater place complexes within a greater place complex- beats within a beat. Cultural and historical differences can act as boundaries between greater place complexes.

Language groups and native title claim areas illustrate that greater place complexes can involve a range of forms of people/place identification, and they can involve different types of boundary definition. Contemporary land rights processes call for a stripping away of this complexity and a reification of people/place identity. The definition of large-scale Aboriginal relationships to land is more extensive than simple models of territoriality and discrete land owning groups. In spending time on ‘The Georgina’ we learn of large-scale Aboriginal interactions with a greater place complex involving a number of distinct Aboriginal groups. This greater place complex is defined by a combination of physical properties, topography, movement, social interaction, shared history, economic links, a shared regional centre, and mutual identification by various groups. It is important to note that an individual or groups of people do not have to physically move throughout the whole region in order to identify with or be recognized as belonging to part of that region.

Dajarra people are constantly moving (physically and mentally) between places. Places do not exist and are not experienced in isolation; they exist and are experienced in combination. The ongoing interaction of Dajarra people with their environments maintains and transforms existing greater place complexes and also involve people incorporating new greater place complexes into their repertoire of places.

It is time to sit down by a gidyea fire and consider what the journey this thesis has taken across Northwest Queensland and into the Northern Territory tells us about the nature of cultural heritage and cultural heritage legislation. This is the subject of the concluding chapter.
Figure 8.1 The last grid and fenceline crossed as Dajara is approached on the Mt Isa Rd. The tree line of Carbine Ck is to the right. The sign on the door reads, 'Jimberella Coop'.

Figure 8.2 Storm clouds in 2003 over the cottages built in the late 1960s.

Figure 8.3 Cooking a feed in the shade of pine trees.

Figure 8.4 The shade trees of Headingly Station.

Figure 8.5 A birthday celebration in the front yard of one of the cottages.

Figure 8.6 The north orientated living area of a camp at Urundangi that includes a caravan with windbreak, a bough shade, raked earth floor, external use of carpet, gidyea fire.

Figure 8.7 The use of the shade of gidyea trees at a dinner camp near Needlebush Hole.

Figure 8.8 Ranko’s stock camp at Pearces Bore that includes a north orientated metal windbreak and behind a bush windbreak, raked earth floor, and the use of trees as support structures.
Figure 8.10 Plan of Dajarra showing examples of extended family households. Households 1 & 2 are dispersed family households consisting of the houses of parents and their children. Household 3 is a clustered household consisting of a mother and the houses of her children. Household 4 is a cluster consisting of the house of a cousin brother and the houses of two cousin sisters.


- extended family household 1
- extended family household 2
- extended family household 3
- extended family household 4
Figure 8.11 Map of the ‘beats’ of the Northwest Queensland/ Northern Territory border region.
Figure 8.12 Map of the ‘NT Side’ & ‘Queensland Side’ Georgina River ‘beats’. These beats area the core areas where most Dajarra people and their extended families are to be found living and travelling.
Figure 8.13 Map of the wider ‘NT Side’ & ‘Queensland Side’ Georgina River ‘beats’. These beats are the areas where most Dajara people and their extended families are to be found living and travelling and where their Ancestral homelands are to be found.
Conclusion


“…“how long does it take to know a place?”…The visual quality of an environment is quickly tallied if one has the artist’s eye. But the “feel” of a place takes longer to acquire. It is made up of experiences, mostly fleeting and undramatic, repeated day after day and over the span of years. It is a unique blend of sights, sounds, and smells, a unique harmony of natural and artificial rhythms such as times of sunrise and sunset, of work and play. The feel of a place is registered in one’s muscles and bones. (Tuan 1977:183-184.)

9.1 ARCHEAOLOGY, GIDYEA FIRES & LIFEWORLDS

This thesis commenced at a time when strong demands were being made for the replacement of Queensland’s Cultural Record Act 1987 with improved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage legislation. During the course of this study new State legislation was enacted, the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 and the Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003. During the same period Federal cultural heritage legislation became unusable and Aboriginal groups in Queensland were left with this new State legislation as the primary legal instrument with which they could pursue their cultural heritage rights and attempt to manage imposed changes to their cultural heritage. This was particularly the case for Aboriginal groups who were unable to gain native title recognition. However, the new State legislation maintained a fundamental flaw of the previous legislation, this being a narrow model of cultural heritage. This narrow model is a legacy of the role that the discipline of archaeology had in the development of early cultural heritage legislation coupled with a history of legislation that attempted to control the lives of Aboriginal people and their relationships with land. As a result, cultural heritage legislation is primarily concerned with managing changes to the physical environment, particularly in relation to development projects.

The Queensland cultural heritage regime has continually failed to fully recognise an Aboriginal preoccupation with cultural heritage. This includes a failure to fully acknowledge the ongoing interactions of contemporary Aboriginal people with their environments and consequently legislation can be viewed as facilitating and in some cases imposing change on Aboriginal societies in that State. The need for effective cultural heritage legislation based on Aboriginal perceptions of heritage persists. Thus this thesis sought to address a critical question: What is the nature of Aboriginal cultural heritage?

An interactive model of place (or of people-environment interactions) and a broad definition of culture provided a useful theoretical framework to approach this question. The significance of this framework is that it draws attention to the physical properties of place (such as stands of gidyea), the behavioural properties of place (such as the collection of gidyea gum, the making of gidyea fires, the use of stands of gidyea as kangaroo butchering sites) and the

¹Title taken from the song ‘DJ Rockers’ by Dempsey et al (1995).
knowledge properties of place (memories of the location and people associated with camp
fires of the past). This study has revealed the significance of such a framework to be that it
assists one to engage with a diverse range of Aboriginal values and cultural elements.
Drawing on phenomenology further enhanced this theoretical framework. The significance of
the phenomenological approach applied in this study is that it emphasised the need to
understand and describe cultural heritage as Aboriginal people themselves experience it.

This thesis sought to understand and describe the ‘lifeworld’, the ‘everyday’ experiences of
place, of the Dajarra Aboriginal community of Northwest Queensland for whom the Georgina
River is a heartland in their geography. This study is the first cultural analysis concerned with
the Aboriginal groups of the Georgina River since the work of the ethnographer Dr Walter
Roth in the 1890s and it complements the later linguistic work of Breen (1970). The work is
an important extension to Memmott’s (1979) studies of Aboriginal place on Mornington
Island. This study contributes to the knowledge of Aboriginal place properties and
intercultural relations about regional and remote towns (see Merlan 1998; and Baker 1999)
and it highlights the necessity to engage with this category of Aboriginal environments that
has largely been neglected in the literature concerned with Queensland Aboriginal groups.
Chapters 3 and 4 represent the first publication to provide details of the physical environment,
contact history and language group analysis for the study region. These chapters are of major
significance and of considerable use to the Dajarra community and other Aboriginal people of
the region.

The ‘everyday’ experiences investigated included places that are set aside as ‘extraordinary’
by current models of cultural heritage and a whole range of places that are not. While the
‘extraordinary’ places receive some level of attention and protection under current legislation,
the second (and larger) group of places does not. This is despite the purported blanket
protection of the cultural heritage duty of care that is enforced under the Aboriginal Cultural
Heritage Act 2003. It seems that this is the first study to approach Aboriginal cultural heritage
in this manner, furthermore it is the first major cultural heritage study in this region outside of
the far more limited studies related to the impacts of development projects.

Tuan (1977:179) observes, “it takes time to know a place”. The short journey that this thesis
made to various places across the Georgina River basin has taken the author a long time to
complete. The time commitment that is required of a researcher using a phenomenological
approach to study Aboriginal people-environment interactions (and cultural heritage) presents
a significant challenge for fieldwork. The reality is that an outside observer can never fully
get the ‘feel’ of a place - although they may come close. Furthermore, most research
concerned with cultural heritage is unlikely to have the luxury of time that is available in a
program of Doctoral research. Importantly though, the (long) time the current author spent
participating in everyday experiences with Dajarra people and other Aboriginal people from

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the Georgina, experiences such as sitting down in yards and camps, gathering around cars, partying in pubs, and hunting out bush, has provided the opportunity to describe a diverse selection of the people-environment interactions of this community and something of the complexity of these places. Long-term, wide-ranging, criss-crossing sets of journeys over the landscape at issue are necessary if one is to gain an understanding of this diversity (Malpas 1999:41). It is exactly such a diverse range of people-environment interactions to which effective cultural heritage legislation would respond.

9.2 GIDYEA FIRES ON THE GEORGINA - PROPERTIES OF PLACE

To understand the ‘everyday’ experiences of place of an Aboriginal group it is necessary to first gain a basic understanding of the environment and recent history of that group. The contact history of the Georgina River highlighted the complex and dynamic nature of the Aboriginal geography of Northwest Queensland and it introduced aspects of that geography that may have otherwise been overlooked. For example, it is possible to discern Aboriginal geography at the foundation of what is ordinarily assumed to be introduced cattle station geography. Certain Aboriginal place properties have been fully integrated into cattle station geography and some place properties introduced by the pastoral industry have been integrated into Aboriginal geography. This is most apparent in the pastoral incursions on the Georgina waterholes and the role of the introduced system of dams, tanks and bores in the Aboriginal geography. Despite this there exists disjuncture between pastoralists and Aboriginal people centred on issues of values, ownership, control and access in relation to country and place. Cultural heritage legislation should be capable of responding to these moments or incidents of disjuncture. The history of the region highlighted Aboriginal resistance to imposed changes, it illustrated the maintenance of Aboriginal places and it illustrated the adoption of place properties and the creation of new place properties. This history illustrated the importance of understanding that while Aboriginal people aspire to maintain some places, they also readily transform places and create new places.

An important undercurrent to the contact history of the Georgina River is that the major changes imposed on Aboriginal places were not of a physical nature but of a social, behavioural and economic nature. These changes were largely instigated by various State Government Acts and the pastoral industry, and the police as agents of the State, as ‘local protectors’, were often used to enforce them. The contact history of the Georgina clearly introduces the need for cultural heritage legislation to also respond to social, behavioural and economic properties of place and the types of actions that negatively impact on them.

Places
This study has revealed that Dajarra people experience a diversity of individual places and engage in a diversity of people-environment interactions with them. The lifeworld of Dajarra
people includes contemporary actions in place and past actions in place, it includes new Aboriginal places and places of longstanding Aboriginal associations. This study has shown that Aboriginal place properties can be found (and are maintained) in backyards, in towns and on roads and footpaths as readily as they can be found (and are maintained) on creeks and rivers, in camps, on plains and hills and at archaeological sites. Studies of Aboriginal place properties must move between the domestic and the sacred, the small scale and the large scale, the present and the past. This is the first study of this type to systematically engage with backyards as potential sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage. In so doing it has revealed the existence of numerous Aboriginal place properties that are neglected by the literature on Aboriginal place and cultural heritage.

This study has illustrated a range of behavioural properties that contribute to the creation and maintenance of places experienced by Dajarra people: some places are temporarily articulated by activity, others are maintained by the actions around them rather than within them, and some places have standing patterns of behaviour associated with them. It also illustrated a range of place visitation: short periods of visitation, repeat and regular visitation, visitation at long intervals and there are places that are never physically visited though people may interact with them mentally.

The lifeworld of the Dajarra people includes a range of interactions with physical properties of place: some places were characterised by minimal transformations of the physical environment, some places were in a physically dormant state and were maintained by knowledge properties, and there were places that people wished to protect from physical disturbance even when they were rarely visited. It was illustrated that the observations of the physical environment by outsiders to the Dajarra community does not necessarily inform whether a place exists, did exist or will exist.

The lifeworld of Dajarra people includes a diversity of knowledge properties associated with places. Dajarra people gain place knowledge through visitation and experience of place. There exist powerful mutual interactions and identification between Dajarra people and certain places. Places hold memories. Visiting places stimulates memories and memory can be experienced in place. The externalization of memory and knowledge and the potential to ‘experience’ memory and knowledge in the environment is a highly significant Aboriginal place property, particularly given the lack of a strong written tradition in the Dajarra community (see Fox’s ‘Topogeny’ 1998).

The case studies reveal the important role of ongoing people-environment interactions, that is the ongoing role of ‘implacement’ (Casey 1993:3-20), the ‘prossensual’ nature of place (Myers 1991:53) and the importance of ‘meaning-making’ (Ortner 1999:9). Dajarra people also learn about places by listening to others share their memories and knowledge of place in
the form of place-based narratives. The case studies reveal that narrative and physical and
mental movement between places are inextricably intertwined. Narratives (knowledge
properties) are created and maintained through movements between places. There is thus an
important link between knowledge maintenance, enculturation and access to country. The
lifeworld of Dajarra people includes places bounded by time properties, behavioural
properties, knowledge properties, and physical properties and Dajarra people also experience
physiological boundaries to place. Physiological boundaries are experienced by the body,
examples include the experience of the extent of shade, the extent of the warmth of a
windbreak space, or the extent of soft ground sensed by bare feet. The diversity of place
experience and place knowledge of the Dajarra community is held by the community as a
pool of knowledge that is accessed when needed or shared via narratives.

There are three key types of place change experienced by Dajarra people; naturally occurring
changes in the physical environment, changes that Dajarra people choose to make at places
and changes imposed on places or changes from outside forces (from a cultural viewpoint
these can be negative or positive changes that are adapted to, adopted or resisted). It is
noteworthy that the desire to protect some places from changes to their physical properties
was but one of over forty findings drawn from the selection of places described and analysed
in Chapter 5. The diversity and multiplicity of place properties, and the dynamic nature of
places reveal that places cannot be simply and clinically categorized. Furthermore, these
characteristics emphasise the need for theoretical models such as those employed in this study
that can be employed sensitively in relation to them.

This study has illustrated that whilst Dajarra people experience places that are complexes of
multiple inter-related and overlapping properties, they also experience both pragmatic and
profound inter-relationships between places. The current author has employed the term ‘place
complexes’ to refer to a number of places that are inter-related (also see Myers 1991:58; &
Sullivan c1996:2). Most places do not exist in isolation; instead they are inter-related with
other places to form place complexes. Aboriginal place complexes are created and maintained
by human actions as well as the actions of Ancestral Beings. Physical and mental movements
between places and place visitation are keys to the creation, maintenance and transformation
of many of the inter-relationships between places. Behavioural properties including
sequences of events and activities can inter-relate places. Physical properties (geographic,
ecological and artificially constructed) inter-relate places and most places are part of a
physical system or complex. Individuals and groups of people and their social relationships
contribute to the creation, maintenance and transformation of inter-relationships between
places. This is partly achieved through narratives, but people also learn of and maintain these
inter-relationships by experiencing them. Some properties that create inter-relationships
between places are of short duration whereas others are longstanding. The place complexes of
the Dajarra community are essentially dynamic; they are created, maintained and transformed
by people-environment interactions and the constituent inter-relationships of a place complex may involve one or a combination of behavioural, physical or knowledge properties. The multiple place complexes that Dajarra people experience can be described as ‘an organic network’ or a ‘complex woven fabric’.

The case studies in this thesis demonstrated that places are not easily separated from the complexes of which they are a part. Furthermore, the case studies illustrated that a place may be inter-related with multiple places and there may exist multiple properties that inter-relate the places within a complex. The obvious term ‘place complex’ reminds one of this interconnectedness and of the complexity of place. This is why it has been preferred for use in this thesis rather than the current term ‘cultural landscape’. It is only in examining this extended network of places and overlay of properties that the place experiences of a group of people can be fully understood. Any study of Aboriginal people-environment interactions must consider the broader place complex or complexes within which individual places are embedded and across which Aboriginal people operate.

A distinct type of place complex experienced by Dajarra people comprises those that are lineal in nature, and this thesis has introduced the term ‘lineal place complexes’ to refer to such places in lieu of alternatives such as ‘cultural itineraries’ (UNESCO 1999) and ‘systems of settings’ (Rapoport 1991). Some lineal place complexes are comprised of contiguous places whose physical relationship is linear, whilst other lineal place complexes are defined by the sequential experience (physical movement) or sequential remembering (mental movement) of places, and still others are a combination of these properties. This thesis has shown that the everyday experience of place of Dajarra people includes lineal place complexes created by Ancestral Beings, lineal place complexes created by people in the past, and new lineal place complexes including those introduced by pastoralists and governments but which now have distinct Aboriginal place properties. A distinctive category of lineal place complexes comprises those that are created by the enactment of an established sequence of behaviour. The multiple lineal complexes that Dajarra people experience can also be described as ‘an organic network’ or a ‘complex woven fabric’. Place narratives play an important role in the maintenance of this network but so too does visitation. It has been shown that visitation and place narrative (or place knowledge) are often inextricably intertwined. The significance of this category of place is that it highlights the role of movement and visitation in the creation, maintenance and transformation of units of place and importantly it highlights the role of movement in place education or enculturation.

This study reveals that lineal place complexes of various scales are important elements in the place repertoire of an Aboriginal group. Yet apart from the Dreamtime travel routes of Ancestral Beings lineal place complexes have largely been neglected in the literature concerned with Aboriginal place and cultural heritage. There is still much to be learnt for
example about the role of Aboriginal ‘pads’ in settlements and contemporary Aboriginal trade and travel routes: What are the Aboriginal trade and social relationships that extend along Queensland roads such as the Barkly Highway, the Flinders Highway, or the Burketown-Camooweal Road?

The final category of places described in the dissertation was that of ‘greater place complexes’. These are places that display an extensive repertoire of place properties (multiple transformations and experiences) or a large array of sub-units of place (places, place complexes and lineal place complexes), or they are places of substantial spatial scale encompassing numerous geographical features and units. This thesis introduced the term ‘greater place complexes’ to refer to such places in lieu of the term ‘cultural landscape’, as it better reflects the multiple places, people-environment interactions and interrelationships between places within such a complex. Identity provides an important boundary property to greater place complexes. This thesis has described the development of new and complex forms of Aboriginal group identity that involve traditions of interaction as well as shared experiences of displacement and diaspora. There are ‘beats’ which are greater place complexes defined by the limits of familiarity. There are greater place complexes of native title claimant groups and language groups. There are greater place complexes that incorporate introduced boundaries in their definition. New types of greater place complexes and place identification do not sit easily with the proponents of classical models of Aboriginal Australia, yet these new modes of identity are strongly embedded in the everyday experiences of Aboriginal people in Northwest Queensland. These new modes of place identity are distinctly Aboriginal, and room must be made for them within studies of Aboriginal Australia.

9.3. ASHES OF GIDYEA FIRE - CULTURAL HERITAGE

People-environment interactions
A common feature of the various scales of place experienced by the Dajarra community and described in this dissertation is that they are made or maintained through one or a combination of physical properties, behavioural properties, or knowledge properties. How then can cultural heritage lie just in the physical properties of place and the protection of such properties from change? Clearly it does not. There are culturally specific patterns of behaviour and knowledge properties that are also part of the cultural heritage of an Aboriginal community. Aboriginal cultural heritage is found in ‘everyday’ people-environment interactions that involve a diverse range of places including backyards, towns and settlements, as much as sacred sites and places that hold Aboriginal artifacts from the distant past. Cultural heritage is found in one or a combination of physical, behavioural and knowledge properties.
Once this position is reached it is evident that there exist a wide range of conditions that can negatively impact on the cultural heritage of a community. Examples include incidents that effect the staging of, or participation in, significant Aboriginal regional events, strangers entering certain places, inappropriate behaviour at certain places, locked gates and other restrictions on access to country and a raft of government policies and economic strategies. Thus, the categories of modification to the physical environment prescribed under the current Act which limit the need for cultural heritage assessment and define what types of activities are likely to harm Aboriginal cultural heritage, are clearly redundant. It is necessary to modify the cultural heritage duty of care of the current Act so that it covers all activities that affect Aboriginal cultural heritage, not just those that are of a physical nature.

Consider the example of the design of Aboriginal housing. For over thirty years a small group of architects and anthropologists have argued for houses that respond to and support the particular cultural requirements of the group they are for whom they are designed. Those houses that fail to do so have been described as culturally inappropriate and in such circumstances there is a negative impact on the cultural heritage of the community involved. A thorough cultural heritage duty of care would place a real responsibility on government agencies, companies managing Aboriginal capital works programs and designers, to ensure that house designs meet the cultural requirements of their Aboriginal occupants including preferred patterns of domiciliary behaviour.

A key step towards enhancing cultural heritage studies and legislation is to employ an interactive (or transactional) model of place as a basis to such studies and legislation. In doing so a wide range of Aboriginal place properties, many of which sit outside of the model of heritage embedded in current legislation, would be accommodated. However this would present a significant yet surmountable problem for policy makers/legislators - if Aboriginal cultural heritage is found in everyday people-environment interactions, how then would impacts on cultural heritage be managed? It was not the aim of this thesis to address this question nonetheless key responses to this question/problem include (1) recognizing Aboriginal ownership of Aboriginal cultural heritage (Aboriginal groups have demanded this for many years), (2) placing greater control of Aboriginal cultural heritage in the hands of Aboriginal people (Aboriginal people have also demanded this for many years), and (3) developing the mechanisms that place a responsibility on individuals and organizations to avoid negatively impacting on Aboriginal cultural heritage. This may involve enhancing the statutory cultural heritage duty of care and the development of standards of care. The development of a statutory duty of care in relation to the environment is a complex legal issue and additional mechanisms may be required (see Bates 2001).

**Dynamics**

An overarching characteristic of the place experiences of the Dajarra mob is that they are inherently dynamic. It is significant that all of the scales of place described in the dissertation
displayed dynamic properties. In the first instance places are made and maintained by interactions between people and the environment. The dynamic properties of places include naturally occurring changes such as lower than normal rainfall, the advent of cool southerly winds, the flooding of the River, the drying and cracking of black soil plains, the movement of animal species and changes in their physiological condition, the production of bush fruits, the seasonal smells produced by vegetation, and the shimmering heat of the day transforming to the cool of night.

Dajarra people change places: they move about them, they interact with them, they move from one place to another, they alter the environment within places, they interact with each other at places, they create new places and maintain existing places. Dajarra people have transformed the types of activities they carry out in certain places, they have developed new properties with existing places and they have developed new identities with places. ‘the DJ Rockers’. Place maintenance and place change are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Dajarra people are forced to change places. Dajarra people have experienced a history of displacement by the pastoral industry and government agents. People have been forced to leave places, they have been forced to transform the types of activities that occur at places, and they have been prevented from accessing places. Forced or imposed changes to the people-environment interactions of the Dajarra community continue in various forms.

Cutting across all of the scales of place is the coexistence of contemporary and past people-environment interactions. In some instances there is an intensity of such properties especially where there is a coexistence of Ancestral Beings (their presence and actions), the actions of people’s immediate ancestors (and their presence in places) and people’s own actions. This coexistence represents a unique dynamic property of Aboriginal places whereby it is possible to experience the past actions of ancestors and the powerful energies of Ancestral Beings in the present. This represents a collapsing of time properties so that the past and present coexist.

In chapter 2 it was argued that place must be understood as process and not as static phenomenon. The case study material demonstrates the fundamental necessity to recognize the dynamic nature of cultural heritage; it too must be understood as process. Cultural heritage must be thought of in terms of change; change must be part of its definition. At issue here is culturally defined and controlled change as opposed to imposed change. Following this there are three key types of change that effective cultural heritage legislation should respond to. Firstly, such cultural heritage legislation would support the freedom of Aboriginal people to enact the types of changes they wish to enact including the creation of new places. Secondly, cultural heritage legislation would facilitate the aspirations of Aboriginal people to maintain changes, that is, it would support the ongoing interactions of contemporary
Aboriginal people with their environments. Thus cultural heritage legislation would support access rights. Thirdly, cultural heritage legislation would support the ability of Aboriginal people to control changes to place and this includes protecting their cultural heritage from unwanted change, including disruption, damage or destruction to physical, behavioural and knowledge properties of place. Thus effective cultural heritage legislation would provide for instances where it is necessary to restrict or prohibit certain types of people-environment interactions, this may involve a total access restriction at certain places. These three types of change constitute ‘active’ cultural heritage rights; that is, they are rights to interact with places and rights to control action in places. These rights arise from relationships between people and relationships between people and places (see Peterson & Long 1986:63). Ideal cultural heritage legislation would recognize these active rights and provide for Aboriginal control of change.

Cultural heritage and the complexity of place
This dissertation has clearly shown that it is difficult to separate places in time and space from other places with which they are co-dependent or inextricably intertwined. Within the context of cultural heritage research and legislation, there are pragmatic and theoretical reasons for attempting to produce discrete units of place. In pragmatic terms one might ask: what is the extent of a place covered by legislation? Governments will want to limit places, to isolate places, to have them tightly bounded. However, part of the complexity of Aboriginal people-environment interactions is that places are known and experienced in combination and they are always a part of wider physical and cultural complexes. Any study of Aboriginal people-environment interactions (cultural heritage) and legislative measures must consider and respond to the broader place complex or complexes within which individual places are embedded and within which the everyday experiences of place occur. Longstanding place complexes and constituent inter-relationships must be recognized as well as relatively new ones.

Cultural heritage communities
The places visited in this thesis and the social groups associated with them suggest rights under cultural heritage legislation do not have to be established on the same basis as native title rights or land claims, which seek to identify land owning groups that conform to classical models of Aboriginal socio-territoriality. The formation and maintenance of new collective identities such as the Dajarra Mob are not something extraordinary but something quite normal to Aboriginal people of this region (and indeed, other regions). These collective identities, some relatively new others longstanding, are in fact part of the cultural heritage of the region – the interactions of people from various language groups at particular places comprise a significant part of the ‘everyday’ experience of place. Rigid classical anthropological models of land ownership that are called for under land legislation can interfere with the maintenance of these collective identities that are in many cases maintained
with full knowledge of country identification under the classical system. Native title processes have eroded some of these new forms of group identification. Yet various modes of identification can coexist. There is an exciting opportunity for cultural heritage studies and legislation to encompass the range of ways that Aboriginal people identify with places (and each other) and recognize boundaries to places in their everyday experiences: from individual identification, to identification as traditional owners, identification as native title claimants or native title holders, to other forms of group identification with greater place complexes. Thus, there exists a range of ways that an Aboriginal cultural heritage community can be defined and a range of Aboriginal people that might have interests in the cultural heritage of an area.

**Gidyea fire**

Dajarra people continue to create new gidyea fires. They clear the ground to make fires at new places, they make fires on old hearths, they stoke the ashes of fires, they make fires in existing cooking holes and they dig new cooking holes, they sit down and yarn around warming fires, they cook foods in the ashes of gidyea fires, they remember fires of the past, and Dajarra people walk away leaving the ashes of some fires to the wind never to return. Cultural heritage is found in the diverse people-environment interactions of Aboriginal individuals and communities. In 1979 Memmott (1979:501-502) wondered if the model of place as a form of people-environment interaction that he found amongst the Lardil of the southern Gulf of Carpentaria would also be found amongst other Aboriginal groups. The material contained in this study illustrates that such a model can be found amongst culturally distinct Aboriginal groups from geographically distinct areas; it holds for both the Lardil of an island community and for a community based on a semi-arid inland river system. What remains is for an interactive model of place to be adopted in the area of Aboriginal cultural heritage in order to understand and legislatively respond to the cultural heritage of individuals and groups of Aboriginal people as they themselves experience it and wish to experience it. Until this is undertaken Aboriginal rights in place will continue to be impeded and conflict, and legal tensions over place will prevail.

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2 This is an inversion of an argument of Peterson & Long (1986:71-72).
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Appendix 1
Ethical Issues

I was required to make a submission for ethical clearance to the University of Queensland Behavioural and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee. Whilst this formality was essential, in the end the researcher and the community govern ethical issues. I have made a commitment to act at all times in an ethical manner; this means conducting research not only in the manner expected by academia but more importantly behaving in a manner which is expected by the Dajarra community.

I have made a personal commitment to the Dajarra community. This commitment is expressed through, (i) supporting the community when possible, (ii) returning to the community when possible, (iii) spending time and personal resources interacting with community members, (iv) maintaining appropriate behaviour in the community, and (v) being cautious and sensitive when writing about certain types of people-environment interactions.1

While in Brisbane, I have maintained contact with Dajarra people through regular phone conversations2, letters, facsimiles and occasional community notices. Ongoing communication has been essential to the development and maintenance of relationships with members of the community. The relationship that has developed with the community is reciprocal in nature. In such a relationship, key factors include the development of trust, the exchange of information, and the provision of assistance. It has been important to maintain this reciprocity whilst distant from the community. To date this has included providing support for members of the community visiting Brisbane for various reasons including medical treatment3, assisting community organisations in the preparation of grant applications, communication with government departments and other agencies, and the sourcing of archival information.

Early in the project I obtained written support for my research from the Jimberella Co-operative. During the first field trip (1996) I posted an information sheet explaining the project and myself. Later (1997) I posted a more detailed information sheet that explained the aims of the research, involvement of participants, outcomes of the research, storage of, access to and use of data. I went through this information sheet verbally with a number of

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1 It is ethically appropriate to provide some form of compensation for Aboriginal consultants/ interviewees involved in research projects (see Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies). Unfortunately I was unable to secure a grant that allowed me to do this in the conventional form of monetary compensation. This had implications to the manner in which I worked. It meant that I had to make a more personal commitment to the community and reciprocate in other ways. Working with a community without a substantial grant has meant that I had to make a personal financial commitment to the research. Aside from my own field costs (including transport from Brisbane), this has included purchasing items for people and sharing resources with people. I continue to make copies of photographs and other material for Dajarra people at my own expense.

2 Since 1997 I have spoken with one community leader by phone on average every second week.

3 Some Dajarra people have been hospitalised in Brisbane for lengthy periods.
community leaders. It was made clear that participation in the research is voluntary, that people have the right to refuse participation, and that people may withdraw at any time.

Initially I though that it would not be necessary to use personal identifiers in the dissertation. Later, I thought personal identifiers would be used in the dissertation, and informed the community of the consequences of identification. When I returned a draft of the thesis to Dajarra in early 2005, numbers of people were keen to know if their name, or ‘their story’ had ‘made it’ into the thesis.

The use of material gained through fieldwork was negotiated with the community. Photography of people and places was undertaken with the consent of the appropriate persons. Photographic material was only used with prior consent from the appropriate persons.

It is the firm view of the author that research involving a community should have direct benefits to that community. In the process of this research the author was able to provide some assistance through; the sourcing of historical and contemporary literature concerning the Warluwarra and country, Dajarra and the Northwest Region; the sourcing of historical photographic material of the Warluwarra and country, Dajarra and the Northwest Region; assistance in the preparation of genealogies; assistance in the documentation of peoples ‘stories’; and documentation of places.

Over the past five years a number of historical documents have been retrieved and passed on to members of the community. Approximately 600 slides and 1200 photographic prints were made over five years. Copies of all prints were returned to members of the community. A digital copy of all images will be produced in the future and returned to the community.

One way to gauge the value of the raw data gathered is to consider the small folio of photographs that Memmott made in the 1970s. In the 1990s, these photographs were highly valued by members of the community. In the late 1960s and early 1970s Breen made a number of recordings of people speaking Warluwarra and other dialects, these too are highly valued. The material that I have gathered can only really be judged within these time frames.

My relationship with the Dajarra community has also produced benefits through my contribution to significant projects associated with the community including the design of houses. I would like to think that the relationships that I have developed with people and the knowledge I have gained of the local geography has assisted in this process, including the production of documents that accurately reflect the desires and concerns of those involved.
## Appendix 2
### Timing, purpose and length of field trips to Northwest Queensland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>LENGTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Pilot trip</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September-October</td>
<td>Field Study</td>
<td>10 days</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November</td>
<td>Social Impact Assessment,</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>September-October</td>
<td>Field Study</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>Field Study</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Field Study</td>
<td>5 days</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Field Study</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September-October</td>
<td>Field Study</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Warluwarra Georgina River Native Title Claim</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September-October</td>
<td>Field Study</td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Warluwarra Georgina River Native Title Claim</td>
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<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Warluwarra Cultural Heritage Study</td>
<td>5 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Warluwarra Native Title Claim</td>
<td>10 days</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Gulf Communities Cable: Work Clearance and Cultural Heritage Management.</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Field Study</td>
<td>10 days</td>
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<tr>
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<td>December</td>
<td>Williejuddara house design, Camooweal</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Camooweal undergraduate field study</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>Jimberella House Design</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Greater Mt Isa Anthropological Research Project</td>
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<td>NAHS EHP Dajarra Housing</td>
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<td>October</td>
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<tr>
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<td>March/April</td>
<td>Indigenous Mobility in Remote Australia Study</td>
<td>11 days</td>
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**TOTAL** 20 weeks field study and 34 weeks other study/ projects
DAJARRA COMMUNITY
by Steve ‘Monagetti’, ‘Monascetti’

I had a safe drive back to Brisbane. Drove through Boulia to Winton. Between ‘Middleton and Winton’, just after sunset I saw the Min Min light. It wasn’t the Min Min light, it turned out to be a road train. It was raining all the way between Roma & Brisbane.

I enjoyed my stay in Dajarra.

I had a good time sitting around yarning with people.

One of the problems with being back down in Brisbane is no gidgee fire when it gets cold. No gidgee down here. Anyway if you lit a fire in your yard someone might ring the fire brigade!

I went out on a couple of bush trips while I was up there.

Went out looking for didgeridoos a few times.

Some people down here asked me how people make the hole in the didgeridoo.

Went out looking for witchetty grubs. First time I’d tasted grubs in my life.