Introduction

Ian Keen and Christopher Lloyd

The changing and fraught participation of Indigenous people in the Australian economy since the first European settlement until the present are issues of great significance to Indigenous people themselves and to the wider society and polity. The story of conquest, decimation and marginalisation, while being the fundamental reality, tells only part of the story of the impact on Indigenous Australians of being forcibly incorporated into the worldwide settler-capitalist revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Belich 2001). Another significant part of the story involves the accommodation, adaptation and incorporation of Indigenous people into that new world. Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars have been attempting recently to increase our knowledge and understanding of this history and of the present complex situation. Part of the context of this re-examination has been the debate since Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s 2008 apology speech (Rudd 2008) and the associated ‘Closing the Gap’ policy of the Australian Federal Government. The Rudd Government, together with the States and Territories, developed the National Indigenous Reform Agenda (NIRA; ‘Closing the Gap’) in 2008, much of which is focused on remote Australia. ‘Closing the Gap’, while well intentioned, envisages a top-down and interventionist approach that arises from a modernisation ideology that effectively sees the problem of Indigenous disadvantage as solvable through the ‘mainstreaming’ of Indigenous economic activity. An alternative view stresses the complexity, variety, agency and relative autonomy of Indigenous participation in the Australian economy historically and today, and thus provides a different perspective for the present debates.

This is the second volume to emerge from a significant project on Indigenous participation in the Australian economy, funded by an Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant (grant number LP0775392) involving the cooperation of the School of Archaeology and Anthropology at The Australian National University and The National Museum of Australia. The present volume arises out of a conference in Canberra on Indigenous Participation in Australian Economies at the National Museum of Australia on 9–10 November 2009. The conference attracted more than 30 presenters. The themes were diverse, comprising histories of economic relations, the role of camels and dingoes in Indigenous–settler relations, material culture and the economy, the economies of communities from missions and stations to fringe camps and towns, the transitions from payment-in-kind to wage economies and Community
Development Employment Projects (CDEP), the issue of unpaid and stolen wages, local enterprises, and conflicts over development. Professor Jon Altman presented the keynote address at the conference.

Sixteen of the conference presentations have developed as chapters of this book, which stands as a companion volume to the earlier Indigenous Participation in Australian Economies: Historical and anthropological perspectives (ANU E Press, 2010). We have organised the chapters in this volume under three main headings: Indigenous people and settlers, labour history and stolen wages, and Indigenous enterprises and employment schemes.

The Introduction to the earlier volume noted the invisibility of Indigenous Australians in many economic histories in the light of the very considerable body of research on the participation of Indigenous people in many sectors of the Australian economy, including marine industries, early settlements and farms, the pastoral industry and mining, and research on Indigenous labour history more generally. It sketched a number of anthropological approaches to the analysis of Indigenous economic relations and of the articulation of Indigenous economies and market capitalism in Australia. Approaches to internal economic relations have included obligations to kin, reciprocity and demand sharing. Approaches to economic relations between Indigenous people and the wider Australian economy have included the concepts of internal colonialism, welfare colonialism and the hybrid economy.

In this volume, we take up the central theme addressed by Jon Altman in his keynote address, concerning the use and significance of the hybrid economy model for the analysis of Indigenous economic participation. This concept has been widely used in the social sciences (Kraidy 2005). Altman’s refinement and application of the concept to Australian Indigenous economic history, especially in remote Australia in recent times, have proven fruitful to research and policy debates (see his recent restatement in Altman 2009). In his keynote address at the conference, Altman explained that he had developed the hybrid economy model because of the inadequacy of a market/non-market dualism, which underestimates the role of the state and under-theorises the process of governmentality. He was also motivated by the history and cultures wars, which he saw as manifestations of ‘the neo-liberal ascendancy’. This ascendancy emphasises, in effect, the agenda of moving Indigenous Australians further into the capitalist market economy as the only way forward. But people on the ground, rather than in Canberra, have a growing recognition of the inability of private capital to deliver development opportunities in remote Australia. These regions appear, through economic-rationalist eyes, to be essentially unproductive regions but this ignores their potential as sites of Indigenous culturally based, hybrid production activity.
Altman takes the hybrid economy model to be dynamic and flexible, both spatially and temporally, and to be more complex than is immediately apparent. The model is able to reflect Aboriginal agency, and to challenge the blindness of state and private interests to what happens in the non-monetised informal sector. The fruitfulness of the model is shown by its use in several chapters in this volume, including Christopher Lloyd’s chapter, in which he attempts to show its relevance to historical as well as contemporary analysis, about which more is said below.

Indigenous communities in remote areas are non-mainstream, and there is no evidence that larger communities—as present Federal Government policy dictates—would provide better economic prospects. As Altman suggested in his address: ‘the state project is to homogenise communities and discourage small dispersed settlements and mobile populations that are hard and expensive to govern.’ The state ‘looks to eliminate non-state spaces and to meet the labour and resource needs of mature capitalism’. The smaller remote communities, however, provide opportunities for alternative life-worlds and livelihoods.

Altman regards the NIRA (‘Closing the Gap’) as worrying from the perspective of remote communities, for several reasons. First is the intention to incorporate those living in remote locations into mainstream education and training, and the market economy, ‘encouraging’ residents to move to larger communities ‘where to-be-delivered education and job opportunities exist for an imagined gap-free future’. Second is the oversimplification of complex development issues as mere technical problems. Third is the locking in of resources to the detriment of those living in small communities who are in greatest need.

Altman has used the hybrid economy model to suggest some development alternatives for people living culturally and geographically beyond the mainstream. First, some mining companies have recently recognised the economic hybridity of Indigenous communities. Second, a grassroots ‘caring for country’ movement has seen the use of Indigenous and local knowledge in the paid provision of environmental services—for example, on lands at risk of species contraction and threats from feral animals, exotic weeds and pollution (see chapters in this volume by Concu, Dalley, Memmott and Stolte). The institution of Indigenous Protected Areas has facilitated the maintenance of hybrid economies and the commodification of culture. In sum, as Altman said, ‘the politics of the hybrid economy project aims to empirically demonstrate sectoral overlaps and intersections that can be used by Indigenous interests to advance arguments for more equitable access to resources in the quest for substantive, not statistical equality’.
There is a need, Altman argued, to recognise customary and communal rights over resources on Aboriginal lands (and waters) in areas as diverse as climate change, the carbon economy, water rights, the arts industry and wildlife harvesting. The diversity of the hybrid economy is a less risky and more hopeful option than the imagined economic integration of remote-living Aboriginal people into the mainstream.

Several of the chapters in this volume take up the hybridity theme, particularly those in the third section, although not all focus on remote communities. The chapters begin with perspectives on Indigenous people in Australian economic history.

**Economic Histories**

In Chapter One, Christopher Lloyd takes up the challenge of the hybrid economy model, along with two other concepts applied in settler economic history: ‘conquest’ and ‘production regimes’. Distinguishing between the hybrid economy model and the concept of hybridity more generally, Lloyd argues that hybridity needs to be part of a larger set of concepts if it is to carry the weight placed on it. It is a useful concept, but potentially overly general and misleading in its application. Not all examples of socioeconomic articulation, blending, merger and fusion are hybridisations. Moreover, generalising concepts of this kind need to be tempered by detailed descriptions of particular cases. A major difference between biological and social hybridity, he suggests, is that the former is of closely related species and subspecies, whereas the latter occurs between social forms of very different types. The essential point about social hybridity is that of combining elements from the ‘parental’ contributors in ways that produce new, emergent entities, processes and structures, and that these are viable—which is to say that they reproduce themselves through time. Hybrid forms are not simple articulations but have emergent properties.

The utility of the concept of hybridity, Lloyd argues, depends on its implicit or explicit relations to a field of other concepts including ‘conquest’, ‘articulation’, ‘fusion’ and ‘agency’. Lloyd traces the importance of processes of conquest in colonial history, for conquest and transformation were common features of settler colonies. Hybridity might be seen as a survival strategy on the part of Indigenous peoples, for hybrid forms had to be developed if local autonomy was to be maintained to some degree.

Lloyd constructs a model of alternative historical pathways, from conquest or articulation to mestizoisation, hybridisation, creolisation and other outcomes. In the settler economies a variety of outcomes between settler and indigenous peoples resulted in the emergence of new production regimes of many kinds,
and these were usually different from the ‘mainstream’ settler-capitalist economies. Indigenous-based hybrid production forms have to be understood, Lloyd argues, within larger capitalist production regimes—a concept with Marxian and Polanyian origins. The idea of a regional or national production regime points to the interconnections between the forms of production, each with its own particular structure. In the settler economies, there developed an increasing degree of systematic integration of local forms of production, resulting in the emergence of an integrated system of capitalist dominance by the early nineteenth century. The possibilities of non-capitalist and non-globalising forms and zones were increasingly closed off and the space for indigenous and other local autonomy began to disappear.

Lloyd examines two particular cases: Van Diemen’s Land in the early nineteenth century, where Aboriginal people supplied kangaroo meat and hunting dogs to European bushrangers and shepherds who sold on these products to the state and the free market, and the case of the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation as analysed by Jon Altman. He goes on to address the overall conditions for hybrid economies in the light of ultra-modernism and globalisation. He concludes that the scope of societalisation through hybridity has greatly narrowed, and is perhaps closing. Social change will take place to an increasing degree through endogenous local processes of evolution within the global system. This conclusion has implications for the possibilities of hybrid economic solutions to development as envisaged by Jon Altman, and is taken up in the last section of this book. The next four chapters illustrate some of the conditions within which hybrid economic formations could develop or were inhibited on the Australian colonial frontier.

Chapter Two, written by John White, is set in colonial New South Wales and details the reactions of Yuin people to colonial incursions, intended or unintended. White argues that Yuin people incorporated settlers into their social relations by means of exchange. Drawing on Taussig’s writing, he suggests that the fear of Aboriginal people beyond the frontier precipitated a ‘culture of terror’. Rumour had it that Yuin were ‘hostile savages’ and indeed cannibals, so rationalising the violence inherent in settler society. In contrast with such rumours, on several occasions Yuin people came to the rescue of non-Indigenous survivors of shipwrecks between 1797 and 1841, and provided seafood to people at Broulee between shipments of supplies. White interprets the help given to survivors as an extension of Indigenous sociality—of obligations based on ‘relatedness’ (drawing on Myers’ [1986] use of the term). It could be, however, that survivors rescued at Tuross were believed to be ghosts of the (Aboriginal) dead. Later episodes of so-called ‘begging’, when work and fish were scarce, are further evidence of the incorporation of settlers into Indigenous patters of mutual obligation and the extension of demand sharing. This particular experience of
colonisation, White argues, was highly localised. His chapter is thus an account of hybrid economic relations in which Aboriginal people incorporated settlers into their own network of exchange and mutual obligation.

In Chapter Three, Anthony Redmond discusses the incorporation of aspects of settler society into traditional exchange relations. He addresses first the dichotomy drawn in twentieth-century anthropology between economic and ritual/cultural relations between Aboriginal groups and country, reflected in the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* (1976). He links this dichotomisation to the distinction between ‘ceremonial exchange’ and barter or trade. The *wurnan* exchange network of the Kimberley involves both ritual and everyday objects including food and implements. This network links patrilineal clans and individuals in customary paths of exchange in which trade may be through trading partners or ‘private’ between individuals, and integrates trade with relations through initiation rituals and marriage exchange. Individual leaders control segments of the *wurnan* routes, which now incorporate clothing, vehicles and money. *Wurnan* has become a symbol of a continuing desire for autonomy in relation to the ‘corporatisation’ of Aboriginal political life, Redmond argues. A condition for this continuity, however, is the recognition of Indigenous rights to trade in the resources of native title claim areas by the courts. Rather than ‘hybridity’, this case illustrates the articulation of a traditional mode of exchange with the market economy.

Petronella Vaarzon-Morel’s discussion of the mediating role of camels in the eastern Western Desert (Chapter Four) encompasses a lengthy time frame. These introduced animals played a pivotal role in the colonisation of the desert and in the development of the settler economy, Vaarzon-Morel argues. The use of camels by explorers, surveyors and prospectors among others was pivotal to colonial development in the region, due to their capacity to survive in the hot and arid environment, and they played a part in the incorporation of Indigenous people into the encapsulating society. The animals were in turn gradually incorporated into the domestic economy of the Pitjantjatjara people and their neighbours. Indigenous engagement with camels in the Australian desert changed over time, however, and was more varied and complex than has been recognised hitherto. The chapter covers Indigenous responses to camels in early encounters with Europeans, and during the transition to mission and pastoral stations, and then discusses engagement with the market for camels and camel products during the 1980s and 1990s. Vaarzon-Morel thus outlines a complex set of economic relations in which the customary sector intersected with a wide variety of market sectors and the state through its support of missions and stations, through the bounty for dingo scalps, and through more recent programs.
Alan O’Connor (Chapter Five) traces changes in the economy of Anangu people of the Ernabella region (Pitjantjatjara, Yangunytjatjara and Ngaanyatjarra languages); the Ernabella mission was established in 1937. Here, engagement in the trade for dingo scalps (enabled by the government bounty) was combined with hunting and gathering and work as shepherds. The commercial craft industry began in 1948, with Anangu women learning to adapt their own spinning techniques to wool, and learning to weave the yarn to make floor rugs and other items. Men worked as shepherds and in wool production, and made artefacts for sale. O’Connor states that ‘in the early years of the mission, Anangu were moving between the customary and market economies with the mission authorities gradually assuming the roles of the state in areas such as education, health services and rations’. Indigenous, market and state/mission sectors came together at this time.

Some men were also employed off the mission on cattle stations and in mines, and fruit picking provided employment at least for a period in the late 1960s. There was also an internal mission economy, with men employed, for example, in gardening, construction and maintenance of infrastructure, the last underpinned by an industrial training school. The state was increasingly involved in the local economy from the 1970s following the incorporation of the Ernabella community; O’Connor reports limited employment for a growing population, however, and a decreased ability to rely on hunting and gathering for subsistence. Unemployment benefits and other transfer payments became available.

O’Connor reports the growth of a number of small businesses run by Anangu following the incorporation of Ernabella, and in the late 1970s a number of community employment programs were in place. Meanwhile the outstation movement began in the late 1970s, encouraged by policies introduced by the Whitlam Government, but now languishing due to lack of government support and service delivery. The state sector dominates the current economy, in O’Connor’s view, and the market sector is very limited, although new enterprises around tourism, the recycling of vehicles and clothing as well as existing arts and crafts enterprises are under development. The next five chapters turn to the history of Indigenous labour in Australia, including the issue of stolen wages.

**Labour History and Stolen Wages**

The concept of a hybrid economy tends to be silent about the coercive relations involved in economic relationships in which the customary sector plays a major role. The theory of internal colonialism (Hartwig 1978) depicts as exploitative the relationship between, for example, the pastoral industry on the one
hand, and, on the other, Indigenous people who partly met the costs of social reproduction of the labour force through hunting, gathering and fishing, who were paid in kind or with very low wages, and whose labour in effect subsidised the pastoral industry. From this point of view, at the extreme end of exploitation were Aborigines captured on the frontier and who became convict labourers. Resistance to invasion was classified as criminal because colonial authorities did not recognise the existence of a state of war on the Australian frontier.

The colony of New South Wales began, of course, as a penal colony, and, as Krystyn Harman points out in Chapter Six, it is generally overlooked that a small but significant proportion of convicts were Indigenous. The chapter begins with the recent perspective of the convict era as an integral part of Australian economic history rather than as ‘an unsavoury aberration that preceded free settlement’, in the words of Bob Hawke. Aboriginal convicts possessed few marketable skills, and, except for trackers, were usually relegated to the status of ‘labourer’, though with a wide range of occupations. The chapter examines in some detail the cases of Musquito and Bull Dog, who were involved in actions to repel the colonial incursions on the Hawkesbury River and shipped to Norfolk Island, and who were put to work as charcoal burners. Musquito was later assigned to settlers as their convict servant. Duall or Dewal was captured during the punitive expedition ordered by Governor Lachlan Macquarie in 1816 following conflict to the west of Sydney. He was repatriated to Cowpastures to work as a translator for an expedition to find a direct route to Bathurst. A similar process occurred in Victoria, where Harman traces the case of Yanem Goona, sent to Norfolk Island and then to the coalmine at Saltwater River. The aim from mid-century was to Christianise and civilise Aboriginal people, as well as to make examples of them.

Indigenous convicts were relatively few in number; far more common in Australia was the incorporation of Indigenous people into mission economies. Gwenda Baker (Chapter Seven) argues that Yolngu workers on Methodist missions in north-east Arnhem Land were not only vital to the development and survival of the missions, but also that over time ‘they became an increasingly skilled, competent and reliable workforce’. By the end of the mission era, Indigenous participation in mission economies had led to an increase in the skill base (meaning skills outside the customary sector) among most workers, but they were ‘to be a skilled labour force lost’. This skill base was lost after the end of the mission era in the early 1970s, she argues. Baker traces the history of the mission and township economies from the beginning of the north-east Arnhem Land mission in the 1920s through to the 1970s.

Yolngu leaders now see the period of transition at the end of the mission era as a ‘government takeover’, according to Baker, and Yolngu see the mission past as a joint enterprise between Yolngu and the Methodist (later Uniting Church)
mission. Baker argues that Yolngu strove to develop working skills within the mission system. A large number of industries were closed, however, and the workforce drastically reduced with the creation of award wage positions at the end of the mission era (in the early to mid-1970s). The uptake of social service benefits made creating a new Indigenous economy more difficult. At the end of the mission era, when the councils became incorporated, fledgling industries faltered, proposals for Indigenous-run enterprises were rejected and the Aboriginal workforce shrank.

In Chapter Eight, Fiona Skyring addresses the introduction of equal wages for Aboriginal pastoral workers in the Kimberley region in 1968–69. This event has usually been interpreted (for example, by Bill Bunbury) as the main factor leading pastoral stations to lay off Aboriginal workers and to evict Aboriginal communities. Skyring shows, however, that the extension of award wages to Aboriginal workers was but one factor in a much more complex story. Other factors, including the introduction of helicopter mustering, led to the lay-off of Aboriginal workers. But there is more to the story than that. Stolen wages and pension moneys were crucial factors in the economic collapse in the Kimberley from the late 1960s, Skyring argues. The pastoral industry had benefited from what was in effect a tripartite subsidy. The first was cheap Aboriginal labour. The second was very low pastoral lease rents, and the third was the misappropriation of Commonwealth pension cheques intended for Aboriginal people. The end of these three modes of subsidy coincided, with devastating effects on the Kimberley economy.

This tripartite subsidy ended by the 1970s with the introduction of award wages and realistic lease rents. The effect was devastating, and the decline of the local economy affected Aboriginal people most, with the eviction of Aboriginal communities from stations and the creation of what Skyring terms ‘refugee camps’, coinciding with the right to consume alcohol. Aboriginal people had little money and food, and lived in abysmal conditions. Thus, it was not only the introduction of award wages that led to the evictions of Aboriginal workers, but also a more complex conjunction of circumstances.

Turning to Queensland, Ros Kidd (Chapter Nine) shows that each State government, and the Federal Government with regard to the Northern Territory from 1911, enacted legislation controlling Indigenous lives and labour, and put in place surveillance systems to force individuals to abide by them. If you were a person of Aboriginal descent, governments ‘could dictate where and when you worked, the type and conditions of that work, what you might be paid and if you could spend it’. In Queensland until 1979 with respect to government settlements, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legislation overrode industrial protections enjoyed by all other Australian workers. With the enactment of the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* of 1897, what Ros
Kidd calls a ‘system of enforced labour’ was introduced into Queensland. The legislation was intended to protect Aboriginal people from abuses, but in doing so it granted the Government powers to control their lives. Kidd argues that the resulting settlements in Queensland were not closed institutions but were essential to the development of the State in providing pools of rural labour. The needs of rural industries were ‘the prime motivator for the Aboriginal labour market’. By 1907 there were more than 3000 contracted Aboriginal workers across the State.

Kidd traces abuses both in conditions of work and in the control and appropriation of Indigenous wages. Not only were wages for Indigenous workers lower than those for white employees but also workers were systematically cheated out of a substantial proportion of those wages, Kidd argues. Successive governments appropriated moneys from trust funds, and Commonwealth child endowment paid to Aboriginal mothers after 1941 was also appropriated. The history of attempts to recover stolen wages is equally dismal in Kidd’s account.

Andrew Gunstone (Chapter 10) relates a similar story for the State of Victoria in his review of Victorian Government legislation, regulations and inquiries relating to Indigenous wages and employment for the period of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines from 1869 to 1957. The Aborigines Protection Act of 1869 created the Board for the Protection of Aborigines (BPA), and established controls, including over employment and wages. Under 1871 regulations, the board and employers could negotiate contracts and the BPA could order wages to be paid to a third party such as a guardian. People on Coranderrk, for example, were paid only one-third of the going rate from 1874, and Aboriginal people at Lake Condah received only a nominal wage and were unable to obtain certificates to work off the reserves. Aboriginal people in private employment off the reserves, Gunstone shows, were often paid less than non-Indigenous workers. Gunstone reports an absence of accountability and poor financial administration of reserves, and indeed inadequate accountability of the BPA to the Victorian Parliament, and for many years it rarely convened. Abuses continued to occur in the era of the Aborigines Welfare Board and the Ministry for Aboriginal Affairs.

The six chapters of the third section of this volume examine a range of Indigenous enterprises, past and present. They provide examples of economic structures in remote and semi-remote areas, which have had some success in linking Indigenous skills and values to the market and to government funding. Several of these chapters describe development alternatives for those living culturally and geographically beyond the mainstream, as discussed by Jon Altman. The section begins with a focus on art and craft.
Indigenous Enterprises and Employment Schemes

Peter Thorley and Andy Greenslade (Chapter 11) trace the history of the Papunya art movement in the Western Desert. In the initial phase of desert art, the market was smaller and more restricted geographically than it is today; prices were low and there were few investors. Their main interest lies in how the paintings came into being, and the dynamics of their production in terms of interpersonal relationships—through what they call ‘interpersonal histories’. The establishment and maintenance of valued relationships by means of which artists were able to exchange paintings for cash and other desired items were crucial. These relationships were investments, and were protected. Production has been a collective process involving providers of materials, the documentation of artists’ stories and packaging for the market. The authors focus on one particular artist, Kaap Tjampitjinpa, and his relationship with Gwen and Owen Daniels, who were Papunya residents from 1976 to 1977. Gwen Daniels became a collector of Kaapa Tjampitjinpa’s work as his broker and sponsor, provided space for him to paint, recorded stories and supplied materials during a lull in Papunya Tula activity. Thorley and Greenslade relate the importance to museum collections of documenting such relationships. One of the challenges for museums is the incorporation of a sense of the personal and interpersonal into their collections and exhibitions, they argue.

In Chapter 12, Maria Nugent provides a history of decorative shell-work produced by Indigenous women of La Perouse in Sydney, and situates her discussion within the context of the debate about the relationship between ‘tourist art’ and ‘fine art’. Shell-work has no clear link to ‘traditional’ art practice and its aesthetic value has not been universally accepted, but the work has become collectible. Some of this work involved collaboration between shell-workers and art collectors or curators, and has been exhibited as urban Aboriginal art. Nugent argues that the ‘new celebratory accounts about shell-work’s development from tacky souvenir to art object’ rely on ‘staging a break between past and present’. The work no longer counts as souvenirs for tourist consumption, but as artworks worthy of collection and discussion. The break is not sustainable, Nugent argues, and she traces the development of markets for shell art to support this argument, demonstrating continuities between past and present. Aboriginal women have negotiated changes in taste and in markets, which have been diverse and ever changing, with subtle changes to their work. Art and craft production was thus a key to a degree of economic independence for Aboriginal families living on the fringes of Sydney.

Gretchen Stolte (Chapter 13) echoes Altman’s critiques of the one-size-fits-all tendency in Federal Government policy—here in relation to Indigenous art centres, especially the tendency to seek a uniform model for such centres.
She does so by examining a section of the 2007 report of the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, *Indigenous Art—Securing the future*. The committee investigated the size, sustainability and future needs and opportunities of the Indigenous visual arts and crafts sector. Stolte is particularly concerned with the ‘one size fits all’ model. Indigenous art centres, she suggests, go beyond being simple service providers; some have become ‘the cultural hub’ of a community, fostering the renewal and continuation of language, ceremonies and other traditions. Their roles have been defined in many ways, she argues, and they do more than engage in art production. Some art centres are run as commercial enterprises, while others have a development focus. A single business model is therefore inappropriate.

In particular, Stolte compares Papunya Tula Artists (PTA) with Maningrida Arts & Culture (MAC). The Senate Committee appears to have favoured PTA as a model, for its commercial success and ‘aggressive and disciplined approach’ to the market. This financial success, Stolte argues, is not readily reproduced elsewhere, for Papunya art has a unique history and is in high demand, and PTA sponsors a limited number of artists. To force MAC into the PTA model would reduce the number of people involved in the arts and compromise the reproduction of cultural knowledge. The search for a ‘one size fits all’ model is therefore misdirected.

In Chapter 14, Paul Memmott begins with the challenge for remote Indigenous communities to generate economies that are embraced by the Indigenous communities themselves, are grounded in Aboriginal culture and social capital, and that reconcile viable enterprise with the motivation to participate voluntarily. Such motivation, he argues, can arise from the demand for and provision of services, and he takes the Myuma Group based in western Queensland as a model. This is a group of three interlinked Aboriginal corporations established by Indjalandji-Dhidhanu people, and based in Camooweal and Mount Isa. Like Thorley and Greenslade, Memmott gives attention to the personal qualities and relations behind the enterprise—namely, the background of members of the Saltmere family who have been instrumental in setting up the Myuma Group. One might argue that the Myuma Group represents an example of a hybrid economic structure embedded in the wider economy, for it has been supported by government funding, engages in the market economy across northern Australia, provides support for the local Indigenous community, and the Myuma Group’s practice, Memmott writes, is based on a strong commitment to Aboriginal law and culture. It is an intercultural organisation with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in senior positions—an important mix in negotiating in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal domains.
In her study of Indigenous environmental rangers at Mornington Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Cameo Dalley (Chapter 15) raises the question of how autonomous Indigenous culture can be in a context of intercultural relations. Rangers’ perceptions of dugong management, she argues, do not always match those of the Federal Government through which they are employed. Dalley traces some of the changes the ‘Working on Country’ program has brought to the lives of the rangers and their families, especially through the more than doubling of the rangers’ incomes from those available in the existing CDEP scheme. Major items of expenditure include four-wheel-drive vehicles, which are used to access remote parts of country and gather bush foods.

Rangers have been critical of local hunting practices, especially over-hunting for social status, using outboards and speedboats, and the failure to share meat along traditional lines. They have been constrained, however, by a desire not to infringe on the autonomy of hunters. The use of ‘management speak’ such as ‘monitoring’ has facilitated a stance against direct interference. At a communal level, there is some resistance to any government control of dugong hunting, with a desire to gain private funding for rangers, but Dalley sees the idea of total autonomy as unrealistic. She surmises, however, that were the Government to increase restrictions on hunting, the relationship of rangers to their community would change radically.

Moving to Arnhem Land, Nanni Concu (Chapter 16) examines in detail the working of the Payments for Environmental Services (PES) program in remote Australia—a scheme that is linked to Indigenous natural resource management (NRM) carried out by traditional owners and custodians and Indigenous land and sea management groups, and increasingly formalised through Indigenous Protection Areas (IPAs)—a program established in 1996 and based on voluntary agreements between the Commonwealth and traditional Aboriginal owners. Concu describes in particular the workings of two IPAs: those of Dhimurru in north-east Arnhem Land and Djelk in north-central Arnhem Land.

Concu argues that in remote areas job opportunities are limited, and economic participation of the kind envisaged by government would require relocation or increased mobility, potentially resulting in further economic disadvantage. The low agricultural potential in many parts of the Indigenous estate inhibits investment in the sector. Furthermore, Indigenous people often have distinct sets of incentives and cultural demands that preclude the direct transfer of non-Indigenous models of entrepreneurship and employment. PES schemes, Concu argues, provide an alternative form of Indigenous participation, based on the commercialisation of environmental goods and services and through government-supported NRM activities. By trading environmental goods and services through market exchange and public funding, Indigenous communities would be able to access financial resources for the creation of culturally appropriate NRM
employment. As well as combating environmental degradation, the IPAs have economic, educational, social and health benefits for Indigenous communities, and their outcomes compare more than favourably with other NRM initiatives. Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation and Djelk Rangers both have experience in PES schemes, and both manage important IPAs. His chapter outlines their structure and activities in detail.

Several factors have contributed to the success of the IPA program, Concu suggests, including the support of government funding and the role of Indigenous knowledge in guiding conservation. The IPA programs, however, need to be coordinated with other government programs and overarching policy frameworks. There are also limitations: there is a need for projects to fit Indigenous values and responsibilities, and modes of Indigenous governance; and there have been limitations in government policies.

The Introduction to the first volume concluded that the chapters contributed to the body of research and writing on the engagement of Indigenous people in the economy of the colonial era and through the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and expressed the hope that research and writing of the kind presented therein would foster a dialogue between the perspectives of economic history, ethnography and historical anthropology on Indigenous participation in Australian economies. Such dialogue was certainly fostered during the 2009 conference on which the present volume is based. This volume adds considerably to that body of research and writing, and links empirical studies both to theoretical frameworks and to pressing policy issues.

References


