

**Submission on Wild Rivers Bill 2010.**

**To: Standing Committee on Economics,  
House of Representatives, Parliament of Australia,**

**Re: Inquiry into Indigenous economic development in Queensland and review of  
Wild Rivers Bill 2010.**

**From: Emeritus Professor John Holmes,  
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Date: 7 February, 2011.

Two issues are central in assessing the merit of the Wild Rivers declarations. These relate to property rights and to economic impacts, primarily for Indigenous people. This submission is directed towards economic issues. There are two questions requiring informed consideration. The first is to provide realistic appraisals of the immediate and longer-term economic opportunities in the declared catchments and riparian zones. The second is to determine the likely economic impacts of the declarations, including both positive and negative outcomes, particularly for the Indigenous people.

**Regional Economic Appraisal: Cape York Peninsula**

There are inescapable geographical impediments militating against broadscale agricultural and pastoral enterprises and against capital-intensive tourism on the peninsula. The peninsula lacks any lands of significant agricultural potential, comparable with extensive tracts in the Ord, Fitzroy or Douglas-Daly districts, capable of meeting any major impulses towards rural development in the tropical savannas. Environmental constraints are reinforced by formidable accessibility barriers, where, again, the peninsula is disadvantaged when compared with these other districts. There is a steep accessibility gradient towards the peninsula's northern cul-de-sac. Inaccessibility leads to prohibitive cost burdens on agricultural inputs, notably fuel and fertilisers and also on marketing of outputs. In addition to the cost burdens, there are logistic impediments in ensuring reliability, frequency and timeliness in transport systems, reinforced during the Wet Season.

These burdens are mitigated only in the southeast boundary communities, notably Lakeland Downs, Hopevale and Wujal Wujal, with relatively accessible pockets of arable land. These areas are well outside the currently and prospectively declared Wild Rivers catchments.

**Divergent Regional Trajectories in the Tropical Savannas**

Any informed development scenarios for the tropical savannas need to recognise the increasingly divergent regional potentials, linked to the 'multifunctional transition', by which a variable mix of consumption and protection values has emerged, contesting the former dominance of production values (Holmes, 2006). In the tropical savannas, the emergence of Indigenous land rights has added further complexity, diversity and dynamism in regional trajectories.

Table 1 Australia's tropical savannas: Regional indicators of resource values and land tenures

Region	Index of Resource Orientation	CSIRO Productivity Index (Inverted)	CSIRO Risk Index	Percent Area Not Private Pastoral Lease	Percent of Area with Tenure Change
<i>Marginalised (Frontier)</i>					
North Kimberley	9	95	39	61	44
Cape York Peninsula	8	85	39	44	42
N.T. Gulf	7	90	44	43	41
<i>Productivist(Pastoral)</i>					
S/E. Kimberley	5	50	40	36	26
Victoria River	6	45	44	32	31
Q'ld Gulf	5	40	22	10	9
Barkly	3	0	6	2	2
<i>Urban Amenity</i>					
Darwin	7	Not assessed	Not assessed	80	68
<i>Aboriginal Homeland</i>					
Arnhem	9	Not assessed	Not assessed	100	98

*Notes:*

*Index of resource orientation is sourced from Holmes (1997, 2002), with higher scores indicating a higher amenity versus commodity orientation.*

*CSIRO productivity and risk indices are adapted from Stafford Smith, Morton and Ash (2002), requiring a weighting according to the relative proportions of biogeographic regions encompassed within the regions delineated in this article. Productivity scores have been re-scaled to percentages. The Darwin and Arnhem regions were not included in this regional assessment.*

*Source: Holmes, 2010b*

Over the last few years, I have found value in scrutinising the highly differentiated regional economic potentials within the tropical savannas, highlighting the increasingly contrasted trajectories of the core pastoral regions (Queensland Gulf, Barkly, Victoria River and south/east Kimberley regions) with the more marginal, 'frontier' regions (Cape York Peninsula, N. T. Gulf and north Kimberley regions). See Holmes (2010a, 2010b). An initial scrutiny was undertaken by this writer, tied to a simple three-point scaling of regional potentials for agriculture/pastoralism, mining, tourism and Aboriginal land rights, with higher scores indicating greater emphasis on amenity values and Aboriginal land rights potentials vis-vis agricultural/pastoral and mining potentials. See Holmes (1997, 2002). Regional scores are shown in the first column in Table 1, published in Holmes (2010b). While these scores have an element of subjectivity, this writer obtained the views of a panel of informed researchers prior to publication.

Prompted by my pioneering regional assessment of resource orientation, three leading CSIRO rangeland scientists adopted a comparable procedure to compile indices of risk to pastoralism and to public values (Stafford-Smith, Morton and Ash, 2000). Their scores, shown in columns two and three, have been adapted to fit a different set of regional boundaries and inverted, with high scores indicating high risk. The final two columns show percentage areas held in all tenures other than pastoral leases and also percentage areas experience a change of tenures between 1976 and 2006. These tenure measures are the most useful objective indicators of divergent regional trajectories, strikingly revealed in tenure stability on the Barkly Tableland compared with flux in the most marginal 'frontier' regions, including Cape York Peninsula.

This writer has had lengthy, first-hand experience observing the challenges in running profitable rural enterprises in the tropical savannas. My first encounter occurred in 1950, as a research student at the University of Sydney, scrutinising the management challenges and strategies on cattle stations in the Einasleigh and Queensland Gulf districts. My savannas research resumed in the early 1980s, initially probing into the logistic and sociodemographic adaptations to their isolated location made by the large company-owned cattle stations on the Barkly (Holmes, 1984). This led to a series of intensive fieldwork studies and policy-oriented research, mainly into pastoral potentials, logistical problems, land tenures and property rights in the savannas, including a series of commissioned consultancies. Among the most relevant of these was my 1995 detailed appraisal of the survival prospects of all cattle stations in the Northern Territory Gulf Country when confronted with the herd management provisions of the national Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Campaign. This pioneering research, commissioned by the N. T. Department of Lands, has set guidelines for appraisals at property and regional scales elsewhere in the savannas. See Holmes (1986, 1990a). Primary research in the Barkly and Gulf regions, with markedly contrasting development potential, has enabled a scrutiny of current regional trajectories, driving forces, core attributes, socioeconomic outcomes, power relations and decision processes. These are presented in summary form as tables in Appendix I.

### **Regional trajectories and changing land tenures on Cape York Peninsula**

Since 1985, I have made a series of reconnaissance investigations embracing most cattle stations in the northern CYP, assessing their viability using methods developed in my earlier Gulf study. I have linked these to issues of land tenures, land ownership and property rights appropriate for extensive rangeland settlement in the non-Indigenous domain. See, for example, Holmes (1990b, 1994, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 2000). This work has led to a series of invited consultancies on pastoral lease tenure reform in New South Wales, Northern Territory and South Australia. Other relevant consultancies include a critical review of the role of pastoral lease tenures as contemporary land policy instruments, undertaken at the invitation of the Queensland Department of Lands (see Holmes 1996) and an inquiry into land tenure issues as viewed by Cape York Peninsula interest-groups, undertaken for the Cape York Peninsula Land Use Strategy in 1994 (see CYPLUS 1994). As cited above, I have used land tenure changes as a useful piece of evidence in monitoring regional trajectories in the tropical savannas.

I am currently extending regional appraisals to include the peninsula (Holmes in press, submitted). Appendix II shows the land tenure maps for the peninsula in 1970,

1990 and 2010. These maps are used as benchmarks for a scrutiny of changes in land tenures, land ownership and property rights, as indicators of the peninsula's markedly changing regional economic trajectory over the last forty years. They also provide insights into likely future directions in the CYP. I can forward the two completed scripts on the peninsula, if requested. In any case, in Appendix III, I include four tables summarising land occupance mode, trajectory, driving forces, core attributes and power relations for the three benchmark years, also projected forward to 2020. These are to be included in a further article, in preparation.

### **Variability within regions**

As an experienced field researcher, I am very conscious of local variability which cannot be shown in any broadscale regionalisation. This needs to be recognised in assessing alternative options proposed for the entire peninsula region or for individual catchments or for sites within these catchments. In my 1985 Gulf survey variability was appraised within properties and aggregated to the property level, including measures of carrying capacity, ease of mustering, fencing and watering costs, paddock size, herd manageability and capital costs per beast to satisfy herd control requirements but also with some consideration of alternative interpretations of economic viability as well as outcomes from alternative levels of capital investment and standards of livestock and property management. Half of all Gulf leases were assessed as non-viable under any realistic future scenario. In 2006, only one of these leases was operating commercially and then only in conjunction with other income sources. Other non-viable leases were either under Aboriginal ownership without a commercial herd, or held for National Park declarations, with a few owned speculatively with near-zero management and desultory contract 'harvesting' of semi-feral cattle.

In CYP, comparable variability in pastoral potentials can be ascertained. Pastoral lease rentals per square kilometre provide an informed indicator of income-earning potentials, taking into account both the natural resource and also accessibility and related cost burdens. See Figure 4 in Appendix II, showing 1989 rentals. It is relevant to note the very low rentals imposed on all lessees across the region, consistent with their assessed low potential, also that all leases in Wild River catchments have rentals of 0.49 dollars or less. While the map shows some local variability, there is a consistent decline northwards, and along the east coast, on lands with the lowest potential. The retreat of pastoralism from the most marginal lands is revealed in a comparison of the maps showing tenure change with the 1989 rental map. Of the ten leases with rentals below 0.125 dollars per square kilometre in 1989, only three remained in private pastoral ownership in 2010. The three northernmost leases are held in the default tenure of state resource reserve pending likely transfers to a mix of Indigenous and conservation titles. Three others currently remain as pastoral leases, one with Aboriginal ownership and the other two held privately for conservation. The final lease was divided between Aboriginal freehold and National Park. While the switch to other tenures is facilitated by the low transfer costs in lease purchase, the prime driving force is the high value of these lands for both traditional Indigenous and conservation purposes. On the other hand, the eight pastoral leases in the southern peninsula region and also the adjacent six leases shown in Figure 4, all with rentals of over 0.5 dollars per square kilometre, have continued as viable pastoral enterprises.

### **Economic Prospects in the Wild Rivers Catchments**

Unfortunately, it is impossible to provide an authoritative appraisal of either feasible or probable economic directions in the declared catchments. There are only two certainties. The first is the indomitable survival of overoptimistic appraisals of potentials and immediate prospects. The other certainty is that these will be wrong. The history of rural settlement in Australia's tropical savannas can be characterised as a procession of overoptimistic appraisals, prompting a succession of grand projects, followed by failure. Even the one possible exception, the Ord River irrigation project has achieved only modest, belated 'success' though advantaged by its exceptionally low-cost water storage, its relatively fertile soils and major injections of public funds.

Nevertheless, there remains no shortage of optimistic assessments, from supposedly authoritative sources. See for example the land suitability assessments, published by Q.D.P.I in 1997 and cited in the Report of the Social Responsibilities Commission, Anglican Diocese of Brisbane. 'Suitability' is a term capable of very generous interpretation, as appears to be the case with this estimate. For example, 82,057 square kilometres in the peninsula are classed as suitable for irrigated horticulture. To place this area in perspective, the peninsula area shown in the tenure maps in Appendix II is 163,880 square kilometres.

Estimates of cattle carrying capacities are capable of a more focussed scrutiny. The Q.D.P.I. 1997 estimates of up to one beast per 8 hectares on unimproved pastures and one per three hectares on improved pastures are reminiscent of those first proposed in the 1960s by leading CSIRO pastoral researchers who envisaged that the pasture revolution would support an extra 52 million cattle in the North. At least a stronger case could be made in the 1960s, prior to recognition by trial and error of the agronomic and logistical problems. From hard experience, these problems are now so well known that overoptimistic forecasts must be considered misleading, indeed irresponsible. While the provisions in the Wild Rivers Act may potentially create some impediments to development, these are minor compared with the formidable geographical obstacles which continue to stifle local development other than large-scale bauxite mining.

As recorded in the maps and tables for the years 1970, 1990 and 2010, in Appendix III, there has been a persistent move away from broadscale production goals towards greater recognition of Indigenous and conservation goals, with tourism gradually emerging as a useful economic driver, yet to be adequately resourced. This transition has been most pronounced in northern CYP, including the declared Wild Rivers catchments. We need to balance the published appraisals of supposed production values with more informed studies of the local economic benefits from the Indigenous customary economy, caring for country, wilderness management and distinctive tourism potentials. Guidelines for such appraisals have been developed recently by several researchers, with Jon Altman and his team being most prominent. For these economic sectors, the Wild Rivers declarations may well prove beneficial.

Currently, the peninsula is fortunate to have dedicated, articulate Indigenous leadership, capable of delivering positive outcomes for peninsula communities. The work of Noel Pearson, in particular, is already having a major impact with anticipated further benefits, particularly in education, health and community welfare. I agree with Pearson that community empowerment can only be achieved by access to 'real jobs'. However, in my view, Pearson's has unrealistic expectations on the economic

directions particularly in northern CYP for the foreseeable future. In turn, this leads to misplaced opposition to the Queensland government's Wild Rivers legislation.

Thank you for receiving this submission. I am happy to make a further response if requested.

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## **List of Appendices**

### **Appendix I: Barkly and Gulf occupance trajectories**

(Tables I and 2 not included).

Table 3: Barkly Tableland: rural occupance mode and trajectory

Table 4: Northern Territory Gulf Country: rural occupance mode and trajectory

### **Appendix II: Cape York Peninsula land tenures**

(four maps emailed as separate attachments)

Figure 1: Cape York Peninsula land tenures: 1970

Figure 2: Cape York Peninsula land tenures: 1990

Figure 3: Cape York Peninsula land tenures: 2010

Figure 4: Cape York Peninsula pastoral lease rentals: 1989

### **Appendix III: Cape York Peninsula occupance trajectories: 1970, 1990, 2010, 2010 to 2030**

Table 1: Cape York Peninsula occupance mode and trajectory: 1970

Table 2: Cape York Peninsula occupance mode and trajectory: 1990

Table 3: Cape York Peninsula occupance mode and trajectory: 2010

Table 4: Cape York Peninsula projected occupance mode and trajectory: 2010 to 2030.

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## Appendix I

**Table 3 Barkly Tableland: Rural occupance mode and trajectory.**

*Mode* Productivist pastoralism

*Trajectory* Entrenched monofunctionality based on extensive, large-scale, company-owned cattle breeding and fattening stations acting as first-stage production units in multilocal operational chains

*Incidence* Coincident with the most productive pastoral lands comprising extensive Mitchell tussock grasslands and bluebush on heavy cracking clays

*Driving Forces*

*Production* An exceptionally favourable environmental and locational context for large-scale productivist pastoralism, with the land resource effectively locked into large production units by historical land subdivision, by subsequent processes of capital accumulation and by lack of any viable alternative occupance mode or trajectory

*Consumption* An exceptionally unfavourable environmental and locational context for tourism, recreation, residential or other lifestyle values, reinforced by the operational priorities of large-scale production units where consumption-oriented activities are disruptive to work schedules and by lack of any service infrastructure to facilitate consumption sectors

*Protection* Extensive, relatively waterless grasslands with only limited intrinsic value either for biodiversity preservation or Indigenous occupance, leaving protection subordinate to production goals, with a focus on sustainability

*Core Attributes*

Income sources tied to landownership: nexus between landholdings and enterprises save for those providing construction and transport services

Large size of production units as a response to extreme isolation, providing not only scale economies but also self-sufficiency in most services needs together with direct linkages to distant service points

Nucleated rural settlement, focused on the homestead complex containing an array of service functions

Internalisation of service provision, with a specialist service workforce equaling the production workforce

Strong external links in an integrated multilocal production, transport, marketing and management structure

Corporate ownership, with stability, resilience and a career path for workforce

Minimal reliance on public infrastructure, other than external transport and communication networks

*Socioeconomic Outcomes*

Negligible unemployment and near-zero welfare dependency

Transient workforce recruited from distant sources; no permanent residents

Truncated demographic structure, mainly young, single males but with a growing proportion of single females

Encapsulated working/living context with the role of manager comparable to that of a freight ship captain

Near-total loss of former Aboriginal workforce

*Regional Impacts*

Settlement 'inversion', dominated by rural settlement units and with miniscule 'urban' service units

Underdeveloped public regional infrastructure

*Power Relations and Decision Processes*

An uncontested arena dominated by pastoral corporations, removed from public scrutiny and lacking any agenda or procedures for outside interest groups other than Aboriginal living areas and native title claims



## Appendix I

**Table 4 Northern Territory Gulf Country: Rural occupation mode and trajectory.**

*Mode* Transitional from marginalised pastoral towards complex multifunctionality

*Trajectory* Entering a transitional phase from extensive, low-input marginally viable pastoralism towards a complex interplay of pastoral, Aboriginal, tourism and conservation values

*Incidence* Coincident with the nutritionally inferior tall-grass savanna woodlands on infertile leached and skeletal soils of the Gulf Fall and Coastal Plain

*Driving Forces*

*Production* During the productivist era, pastoralism was considered to be the only means of gaining any income from marginal lands; however, environmental and locational disabilities ensured a flimsy mode of occupation characterised by near-zero inputs of capital, labour and management

*Consumption* Lack of success in production values should facilitate the entry of amenity-oriented modes; however, remoteness and lack of infrastructure has limited consumption primarily to numerically small, mobile, self-sufficient, short-term tourism and recreational fishing activities, with only modest local economic benefits

*Protection* Complex, near-pristine ecosystems with high biodiversity and traditional spiritual values have value for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous conservation modes of occupation, with a transition being eased by limited competition from production and consumption forces

*Core Attributes*

Extreme inaccessibility, exceeded only by the remote core of the Western Desert

Lack of private infrastructure with only flimsy public infrastructure

Limited income sources from land-ownership: many enterprise-free landholdings and some non-landholding enterprises needing access rights rather than property rights

Near-zero investment in the land resource

Continuing incapacity to attract private investment towards either production, consumption or protection goals

Increasing predominance of Aboriginal population, including those displaced from Barkly stations

Recent flux in land tenures and ownership with major transfers to Aboriginal and conservation estates

*Socioeconomic Outcomes*

Very high unemployment and welfare dependency with associated severe problems of dysfunctionality

Population growth confined to the Aboriginal population

*Regional Impacts*

Near-total dependence on public infrastructure investment and welfare support (the obverse of the Barkly Tableland)

*Power Relations and Decision Processes*

Exposed to an exceptionally complex, often discordant array of influential national and extra-regional decision-makers including: National Native Title Tribunal, Indigenous Land Corporation, Central (Aboriginal) Land Council, Federal Government and its various agencies, Territory Government and its agencies and many metropolitan-based non-government organisations concerned mainly with Aboriginal welfare and advancement or conservation issues

Also with contested internal power relations within Aboriginal communities involving traditional rights, allocation of funds, community management, resolution of disputes and solving problems tied to welfare dependency

Sporadic contests between pastoralists, tour operators, freewheeling safari tourists and indigenous traditional owners about access and use rights

## Appendix III

**Table 1: Cape York Peninsula Occupance Mode and Trajectory: 1970**

*Mode* Productivist pastoralism and mining with remnant Indigenous occupance in managed reserves.

*Trajectory* Projected enhancement of production values tied to large-scale bauxite mining, to pastoral expansion through productivity gains and enhanced infrastructure, to localised agricultural projects, supported by immigration and managed local Indigenous workforce.

### *Driving Forces*

*Production* National and state goals of northern development were tied to emerging agricultural and mining projects and to pastoral investment through research-based innovation in herd nutrition, focussed on introduced grasses and legumes, in herd efficiency using Brahman and other resilient, tick-resistant breeds and improved road transport, leading to a short-lived private investment boom

*Consumption* Isolation, an adverse climate and lack of services precluded any impetus towards amenity-led consumption investment

*Protection* No national parks or conservation reserves; ‘protection’ was perceived as solely a matter of paternalistic control of Indigenous peoples in managed reserves.

*Indigenous* The last region in Queensland where Aboriginal people were able to maintain traditional cultural and material ties to their country, though resident on managed mission stations and often as a support workforce on local pastoral stations.

### *Core Attributes*

- Extreme isolation with a steep inaccessibility gradient northwards
- Deficient regional infrastructure with exceptionally high service costs
- A fragile, ‘frontier’ regional economy, with limited income sources
- Undeveloped labour market with continuing reliance on local Indigenous labour
- Limited governmental intervention into the private sector, save for administrative controls on pastoral leases
- Strong governmental management of Indigenous communities, often outsourced to church missions

### *Power Relations and Decision Processes*

- Lack of autonomous power circuits capable of shaping regional futures
- Pre-eminence of mining and pastoral interests in influencing government policies and programmes
- Dominance of state political and bureaucratic decision-makers, most notably in Indigenous communities; limited role of federal government or its agencies
- Despotic powers held by non-Indigenous managers on Indigenous reserves but retention of subordinated traditional networks within Indigenous groups

### Appendix III

**Table 2: Cape York Peninsula Occupance Mode and Trajectory: 1990**

*Mode* Marginalised productivist, tied to pastoralism and mining with imminent Indigenous engagement

*Trajectory* Environmental and locational constraints had defeated pastoral and agricultural expansion. Marginalisation of pastoralism created an expansive space for the low-cost entry of alternative uses, including tourism, speculation, recreation, lifestyle, conservation and Indigenous values heralding a further transition towards complex, multifunctional occupance

*Driving Forces*

*Production* The failure of the ‘pasture revolution’ and the management problems exposed by the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Campaign had ensured a reversion towards extensive grazing on low-quality native grasses, with limited inputs of capital, labour and management. Apart from bauxite mining at Weipa and coastal/estuarine fishing from mainly non-local ports, no other significant activity in the production sector had been initiated.

*Consumption* Improved roads and the popularity of self-sufficient 4WD tourism and recreation activities was impacting on the region’s landscapes, but with negligible benefits to the regional economy. Land markets experienced a speculative boom, prompted by proposals for a spaceport and coastal resorts and facilitated by lax administration of pastoral lease tenures, with no benefits to the regional economy.

*Protection* The peninsula’s near-pristine rivers and landscapes were gaining belated recognition, signalled by the first conservation campaign, leading to the preservation of the dunes and swales of Shelburne Bay. The first major declarations of National Parks occurred in the 1977-79 period, with at least some being designed by the state government to thwart lease transfers to Indigenous ownership.

*Indigenous* Compelled by federal legislation, the state government was reluctantly moving towards Indigenous land rights and self-management, with further reform promised by the Labor government elected in late 1989, further prompted by a new generation of Aboriginal leaders pursuing land rights, self-governance and economic development agendas

*Core Attributes*

Continuing problems tied to isolation, climate, deficient infrastructure and a fragile regional economy

Reduced Indigenous employment in pastoralism and emergence of welfarism

Increasing responsibilities undertaken by both federal and state government, with reduced emphasis on resource development and more attention to social welfare, land rights and preservation of landscapes of high conservation value

*Power Relations and Decision Processes*

Emergence of a new generation of capable, articulate Aboriginal leaders, able to negotiate effectively with federal and state governments in shaping regional and community futures.

Loss of political influence by the formerly powerful pastoral constituency

Increasing political influence of conservation groups, expressed in specific campaigns, and also, most powerfully, in state election campaigns

Greater role played by federal government and its agencies, through its external powers and powers relating to Aboriginal matters

Loosening of the state’s former authoritarian role on Indigenous matters

### Appendix III

**Table 3: Cape York Peninsula Occupance Mode and Trajectory: 2010**

*Mode* Complex multifunctionality with strong Indigenous engagement

*Trajectory* A recent, rapid transition to increasingly complex multifunctionality, with the emergence of consumption, protection and Indigenous values shaping regional futures.

#### *Driving Forces*

*Production* Further diminution in the role of non-Indigenous pastoralism in the regional economy. Actions towards enhanced Indigenous engagement in the resource sector, through participation in the mining workforce. Expectations, yet to be realised, for new Indigenous ventures in agriculture, forestry, pastoralism and other enterprises.

*Consumption* Very modest regional income from self-sufficient 4WD and safari tourism, with continuing dearth of tourism infrastructure. Welfare payments to Indigenous communities remain the dominant consumption sector, second only to mining in the regional economy.

*Protection* Effective campaigning by conservation organisations has awarded national iconic status to the peninsula's ecosystems, with preservation of these ecosystems becoming a pivotal element in the continuing electoral success of state Labor governments over the last two decades.

*Indigenous* With strong leadership, Indigenous aspirations are increasingly influential in shaping peninsula futures, as well as national agendas, though handicapped not only by the peninsula's resource and infrastructure limitations but also by welfare dependency and labour incapacity and by the growing schism between traditionalist/localist and modernist/regionalist visions of Indigenous futures.

#### *Core Attributes*

Continuing problems tied to isolation, climate, deficient infrastructure and a fragile regional economy

Ongoing incapacity to attract private investment save in bauxite mining

Enhanced national profile as an iconic bioregion with intact rivers and landscapes

Also a pivotal region in efforts to set new directions in Indigenous futures, with contested visions about these directions

Interventionist, inconsistent state policies directed towards both resolution of Indigenous disadvantage and preservation of peninsula landscapes, rivers and coasts

#### *Power Relations and Decision Processes*

Regional futures revolve around contests between and within Indigenous and conservation constituencies, with power exercised through influencing the policies, programmes and legislation of the state and, to a lesser extent, the federal government

Currently, the prime contest cannot be seen as between Indigenous versus conservationist agendas, but between modernist/reformist/regionalist versus traditionalist/localist visions of Indigenous futures, with conservation organisations aligning their divergent policies towards either of these visions

In response to contesting pressures, the state government has adopted interventionist policies, specific to the peninsula, involving radical changes to land tenure, land ownership and environmental control. Inconsistencies in policies have led to heightened contests, with the goal of conflict resolution towards achieving an effective multifunctional future based upon coexisting production, consumption, protection and Indigenous values remaining beyond reach.

### Appendix III

**Table 4: Cape York Peninsula Projected Occupance Mode and Trajectory: 2010-2030**

*Mode* Complex multifunctionality with pre-eminent Indigenous engagement.

*Trajectory* Modest increments in production and consumption values and further entrenchment of protection values, with the production values pursued mainly by modernist Indigenous leadership and protection by traditionalist leadership.

*Driving Forces*

*Production* Persistent strategies towards increased contributions from mining, pastoralism, horticulture and aquaculture to the regional economy, linked to enhanced Indigenous engagement, but with modest and mixed outcomes.

*Consumption* Continuing predominance of mobile, self-sufficient, non-local safari enterprises and private 4WD visitors yielding few regional benefits, but with some modest growth in local Indigenous ventures offering a distinctive 'peninsula' experience; welfare and servicing income will remain the main, but proportionately diminishing, source of regional income other than mining.

*Protection* Increased management inputs into conservation lands, rivers and coasts, under joint state-Indigenous control, with an Indigenous workforce, engaged in 'caring for country'.

*Indigenous* Increased engagement in all sectors of the regional economy, with mining and a few service sectors remaining the only sectors reliant mainly on a non-Indigenous workforce.

*Core Attributes*

A continuing fragile regional economy burdened with insurmountable environmental and locational disabilities and handicapped by sparse population and deficient infrastructure. Some progress in enhancing the capabilities of Indigenous workers in all sectors of the economy in both traditional and non-traditional work.

Limited private investment, directed mainly to mining, infrastructure and tourism.

Resolution of currently contested issues about land ownership, tenures, environmental regulation.

Expansion of the Indigenous estate to embrace at least 75 percent of the bioregion's area.

Emergence of small Indigenous and non-Indigenous enterprises, with some occupying leases on Aboriginal land

*Power Relations and Decision Processes*

Further strengthening of the Indigenous role in shaping regional futures.

Continuing contests within Indigenous leaderships and communities with the most consequential being between traditionalist/localist versus modernist/regionalist leaders, with modernists committed to the production and servicing sectors, traditionalists to protection values and both selectively to consumption opportunities..

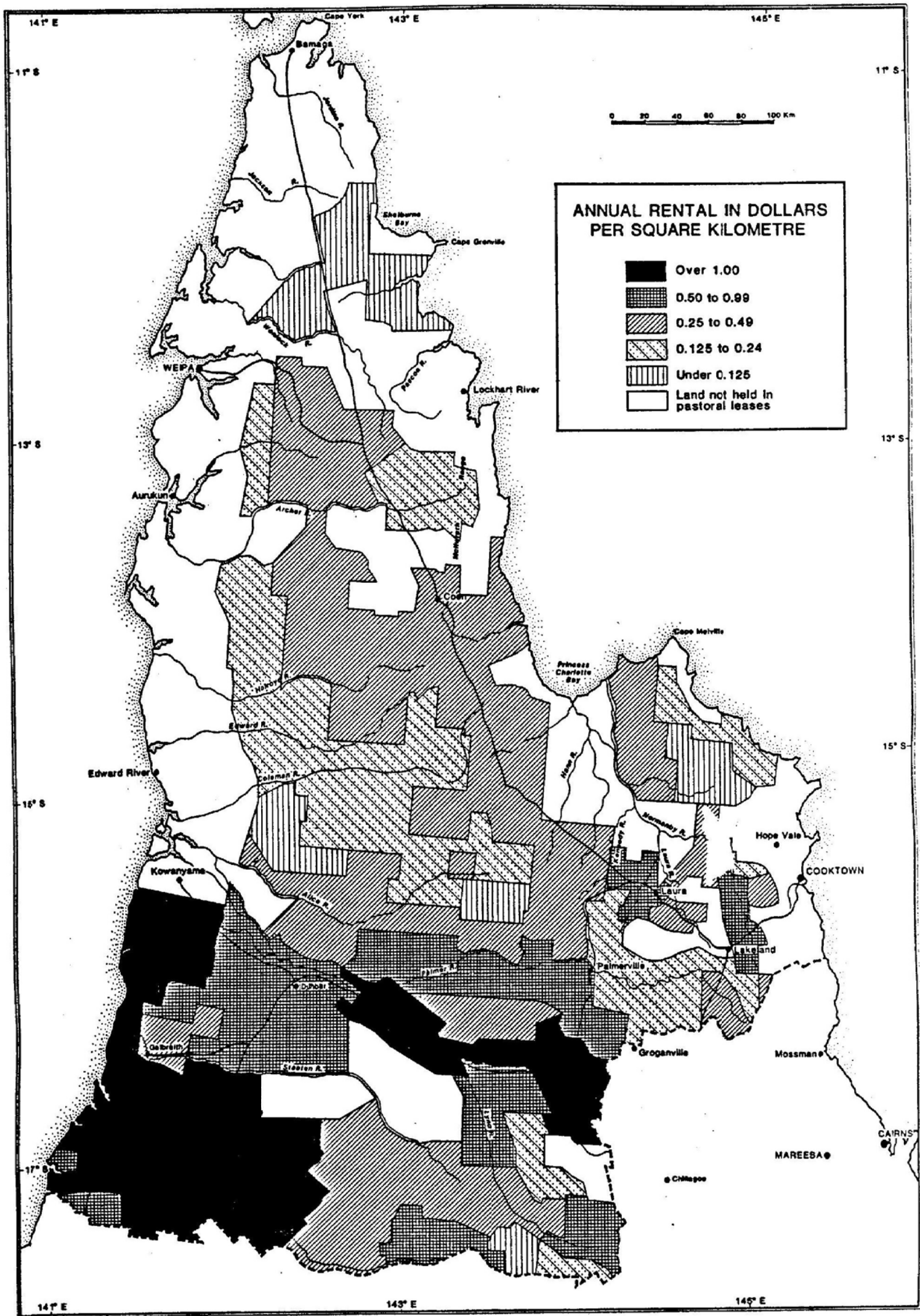
Diminishing role of the peninsula as a pivotal electoral asset, given the near-finalisation of low-cost, high-return conservation policies and programmes.

Diminishing role of state government, following finalisation of the most complex outstanding issues concerning land ownership, property rights and environmental protection.

Sporadic contests about developments in protected zones and proposed bids for World Heritage listing.

Increased federal intervention mainly through joint federal-state-local programmes to mitigate dysfunctionality tied to welfare dependency.

END







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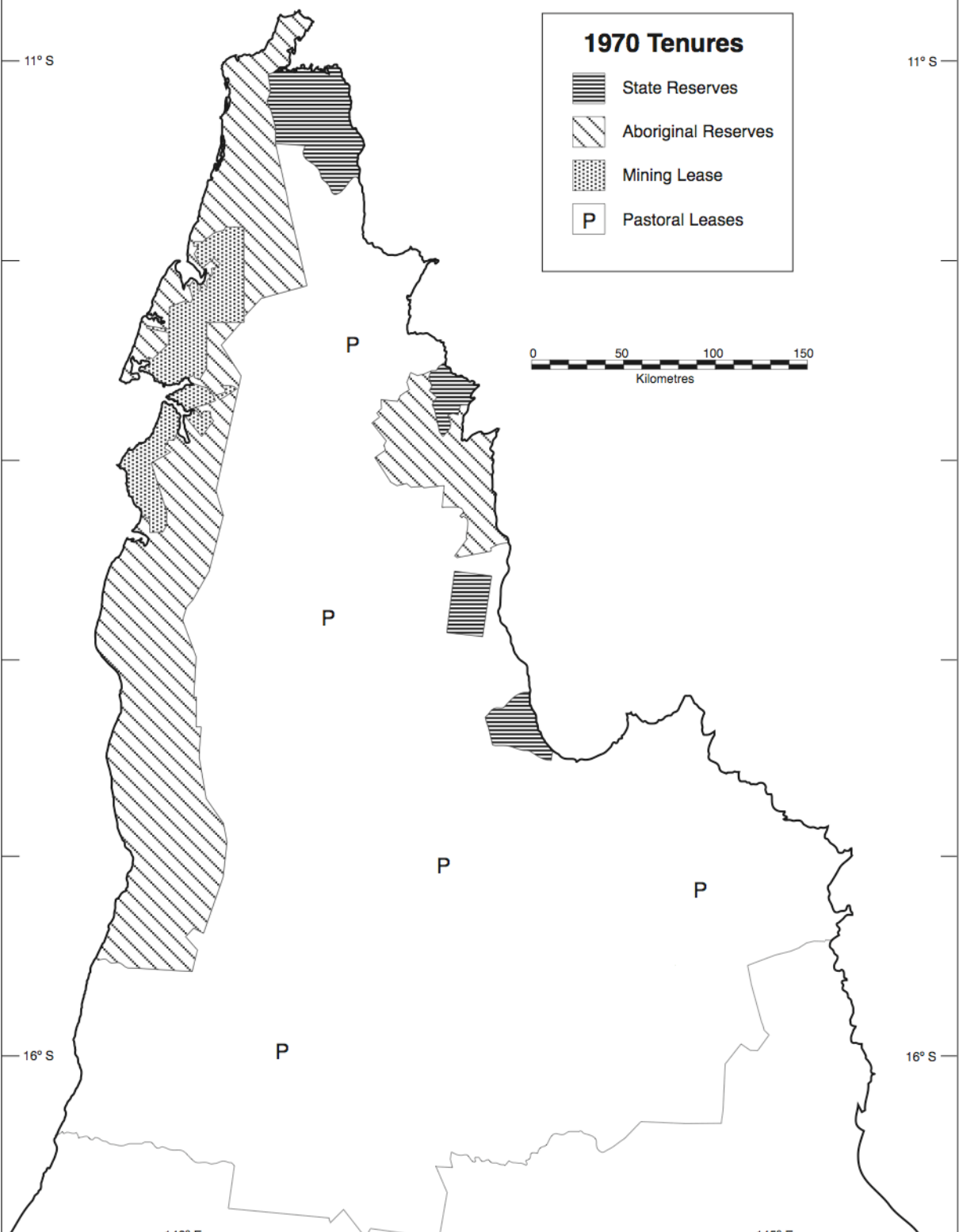
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### 1970 Tenures

-  State Reserves
-  Aboriginal Reserves
-  Mining Lease
-  Pastoral Leases



LJI 2010

142° E

145° E

16° S

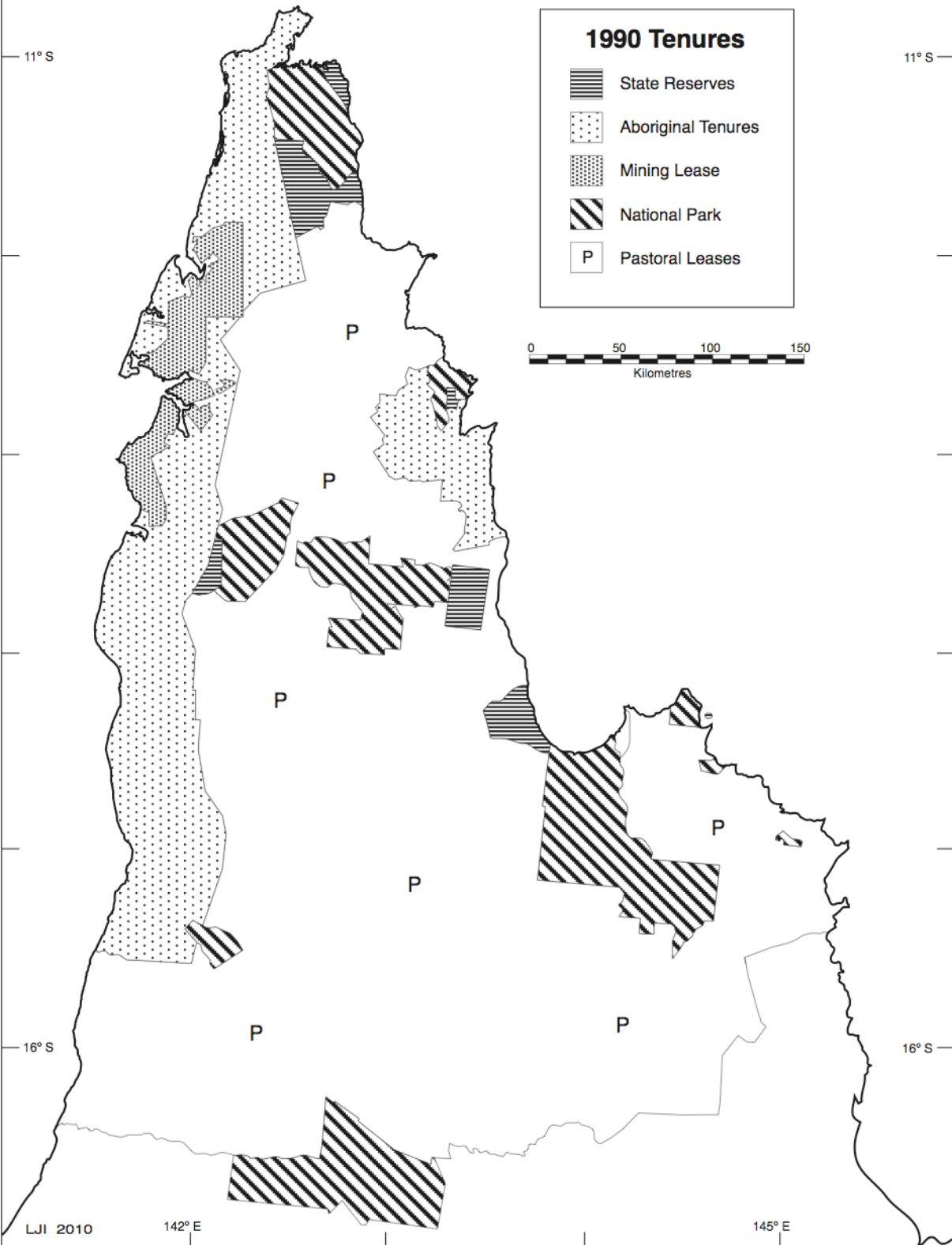
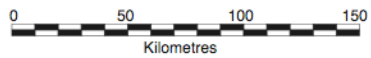
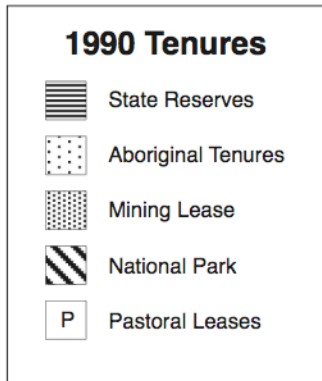
16° S

142° E

145° E

11° S

11° S











16° S

16° S



## 2010 Tenures

-  State Reserves
-  Aboriginal Tenures
-  Mining Lease
-  National Park
-  National Park (CYPAL)
-  Pastoral Leases
-  Aboriginal-owned Pastoral Leases
-  Pastoral Leases owned for conservation goals

