

**Constructive Engagement:  
Impacts, Limitations and Possibilities during a  
National Emergency Intervention.**



Rock Art at Jabilyarri- Permission Courtesy of Wayne Campion

**P.I.A. Consultants  
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## *Introduction:*

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 2007 the Australian government announced a ‘national emergency’ response to protect Aboriginal Children in the Northern Territory<sup>1</sup>. In so doing, they produced a raft of changes to key areas of social policy including bans on alcohol, pornography and sweeping changes to welfare, land tenure, education and health policy<sup>2</sup>. The Australian government also set up a taskforce to deal with these changes, which at the time of writing had visited Maningrida twice.

Four weeks after the announcement, PIA consultants were engaged by BAC’s executive to examine some of the impacts these changes may have on BAC and its constituents. The terms of reference were as follows:

1. Assist the BAC staff and members to understand measures and consequences of the emergency response
2. Provide research and advice on the emergency response to BAC
3. Prepare a report on Maningrida’s alcohol management plan
4. Prepare a report on the current workings of the ‘permit system’ and impacts of changing it
5. Collaborate with BAC to consider improved services to outstations
6. Prepare a report on income management, outlining approaches to assist constituents in managing their finances
7. Prepare a report on a community rubbish plan

The day after starting the consultancy, the Australian government announced the abolition of CDEP. It was decided that given the cross cutting nature of the impacts this would have, the issue would require inclusion in the final document the consultancy produced. It was also decided that the final document may be of great use to the Australian government’s ‘survey team’, whose arrival in Maningrida was expected within two weeks.

With these challenges and timeframes in mind, we have endeavored to produce a document that will be of use to a diverse audience. We particularly hope that it will provide a starting point for constructive engagement in an incredibly complex context, at what must be considered a very difficult time in Indigenous Affairs. Ultimately, it is the authors’ desire that any changes in Maningrida provide a safe and hopeful future for Maningrida’s children.

The authors would like to acknowledge the ongoing support and help of the people of Maningrida. In particular, we would like to thank The BAC Executive, the Maningrida Tribal Justice Committee, Peter Danaga, Wayne Kala Kala, Chris Davies, Phil and Jenny Nichols, The Maningrida police and the Djelk Rangers. Special thanks goes to Ian Munro and Felicity Douglas for provision of essential services and advice during the production of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> Referred to herein as the Intervention.

<sup>2</sup> See Outline of Intervention (p. 9)

## **Out of Scope Issues**

The following issues are considered as cross cutting and vital issues that are out of the scope of this document's specific analysis and terms of reference. This in no way diminishes the importance the authors place on them, and many are commented on throughout the report. These issues include, but are not limited to: Education, Health, Housing, Leasing arrangements and Youth.

### *Executive Summary:*

On the 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2007 the Australian government announced a ‘national emergency’ response to protect Aboriginal Children in the Northern Territory<sup>3</sup>. In so doing, they produced a raft of changes to key areas of social policy including bans on alcohol, pornography and sweeping changes to welfare, land tenure, education and health policy. The following report analyses a range of impacts, limitations and possibilities in key areas of the ‘intervention’. The findings of the report are that the impacts and limitations of the Australian government’s intervention are likely to adversely affect the socio-economic fabric of the Maningrida region. The research also suggests that many aspects are likely to have an adverse affect on the safety of children in the region. In particular, the report finds structural defects in proposed policy changes that are of major concern to BAC, its constituents and the wider Maningrida community.

### *Impacts and Limitations of Intervention:*

The authors have found that the impacts of changing aspects of the permit system are likely to have adverse socio-economic impacts. The opening of the township to unfettered access may severely damage a \$2 million art industry and undermine the Australian government’s focus on law and order through associated increases in crime.

The report finds problems with the Australian government’s quarantining proposals. One of the more serious problems with the proposed quarantining of incomes is that it takes responsibility away from Indigenous parents. It is unclear how the Australian government’s plan will deal with the non-nuclear nature of Indigenous families and t high mobility poses a difficulty for the introduction of quarantining measures. Questions also arise as to the capacity of Centrelink to be able to deal with the government’s proposed quarantine arrangements.

The extensive research base on CDEP has led the authors to believe that the Australian government’s decision to abolish the program will have extensive socio-economic impacts upon the constituents of BAC. Many of these impacts will be unintended, far reaching and difficult to predict. Most people going from CDEP to the Work for the Dole (WfD) program are likely to experience a significant drop in pay which could act as a serious disincentive to work. Of particular concern is that the abolition of CDEP may lead to a depopulation of the Outstations in the region. This is due to severe problems in the workability of the WfD program. The report finds that the impacts are not in the interests of the people of the region or the nation as a whole as they may lead to:

- **Increased pressure on a currently insufficient number of houses and associated infrastructure.**
- **Increased levels of social dysfunction and child abuse.**
- **Increased law and order issues.**
- **Intergenerational loss of Indigenous knowledge base and cultural difference.**
- **Risks to longevity of successful employment developments.**

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<sup>3</sup> Referred to herein as the intervention.

Case study data in the region finds that the STEP program is unlikely to be workable in its current form and will achieve extremely poor outcomes.

The research base also suggests that the decision to appoint government business managers poses a threat to BAC's existing development model and governance structures.

**Possibilities:**

A number of existing developments and strategies in the Maningrida region are analysed including a unit dedicated to the protection of children (MCAPP), a working alcohol management plan (MAPS) and a successful ranger program (Djelk). The authors find these to be models that should be considered as best practice and worthy of consideration for other remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory.

The authors' findings suggest that there are many areas for 'constructive engagement' between BAC and the Australian government. Many of these areas require major adaptations to existing program requirements and management arrangements. This is particularly true of the WfD program, the STEP program and quarantining arrangements. Many of the possibilities require localized arrangements and inter-institutional or intra-institutional partnerships. The authors consider that these arrangements are critical to avoiding short and long term socio-economic problems of a significant magnitude.

Finally, the authors intend this report to be read as a whole and that the information contained within should become a platform for constructive engagement around the Australian government's intervention. The authors hope that all parties involved consider this report seriously in light of its possible implications for the future of children in the Maningrida Region.

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## Acronyms:

ALRA – Aboriginal Land Rights Act  
BAC – Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation  
CDEP – Community Development Employment Projects  
DEWR – Department of Employment and Workplace Relations  
FaCSIA – Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs  
FIM – Family Income Management  
MAC – Maningrida Arts and Culture  
MAPS – Maningrida Alcohol Permit System  
MCAPP – Maningrida Community Action Plan Project  
MCEC – Maningrida Community Education Centre  
MTJC – Maningrida Tribal Justice Committee  
NGO – Non-Government Organization  
NT – Northern Territory  
RTO – Registered Training Organization  
STEP – Structured Training and Employment Projects  
WfD – Work for the Dole

## **Recommendations<sup>4</sup>:**

- 1. That MCAPP continues to be supported and developed.**
- 2. That community protocols for reporting child abuse continue to be developed.**
- 3. That MCAPP continues to work to engage men in the community to participate in the project.**
- 4. That MCAPP employees assist in a liaison type role between the community and the health check team.**
- 5. That the government and BAC work with the MTJC.**
- 6. That the Maningrida Alcohol Permit System (MAPS) remains in its current state, with recourse to review in 12 months time if desired.**
- 7. That more Indigenous women be appointed to the Maningrida Alcohol Committee.**
- 8. That further research be conducted into the successful nature of the Maningrida Alcohol Permit System with a view to expanding this management program to other communities in the Northern Territory.**
- 9. That the current permit arrangements be maintained in the greater Maningrida region, including the township and the main road.**
- 10. That BAC considers strengthening the permit system at a local level.**
- 11. That Centrelink contracts out the management of quarantined money to BAC.**
- 12. That BAC consider the delivery of the MoneyBusiness program.**

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<sup>4</sup> Recommendations are arranged in the order they appear in report not by priority



**13. That immediate and sustained financial assistance should be sourced to replace the CDEP component of BAC's development base. BAC and its constituents should continue to own, manage and control the enterprises in any financial arrangement.**

**14. That a workable version of STEP be developed to suit the local socio-economic environment.**

**15. That if major impediments in the delivery of STEP, can be negotiated or mitigated BAC consider becoming Maningrida's STEP provider.**

**16. That BAC consider and investigate becoming a Registered Training Organization to deliver STEP and mitigate problems with external RTO provision.**

**17. That BAC and the Australian government work together to develop a modified and localized version of WfD for the outstations. This is of immediate and pressing concern for Outstation residents<sup>5</sup>.**

**18. That BAC consider entering a partnership, Memorandum of Understanding or contractual agreement with Mission Australia to become the WfD provider (not sponsor) in the outstations.**

**19. That BAC consider entering into a partnership, Memorandum of Understanding or contractual arrangement with a large Job network provider to become Maningrida's Job network provider.**

**20. That BAC consider becoming a Registered Training Organisation or partnering with a local RTO.**

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<sup>5</sup> See Future of Outstations in the Maningrida Region (p.34) for further recommendations.

- 21. That a workable and modified version of WfD be developed to suit the local socio-economic environment. This is of immediate and pressing concern for Outstation residents.**
  
- 22. That an individual incentive payment of \$100 per week be considered for an Outstation WfD program**
  
- 23. That a 'Skip to the Tip' rubbish program be implemented as soon as possible**
  
- 24. That a community clean-up is organized**

## Background Information:

Maningrida Township lies on the banks of the Liverpool River in North Central Arnhem Land. It is approximately 550km east of Darwin, 250 km west of Nhulunbuy and 300km north east of Jabiru.

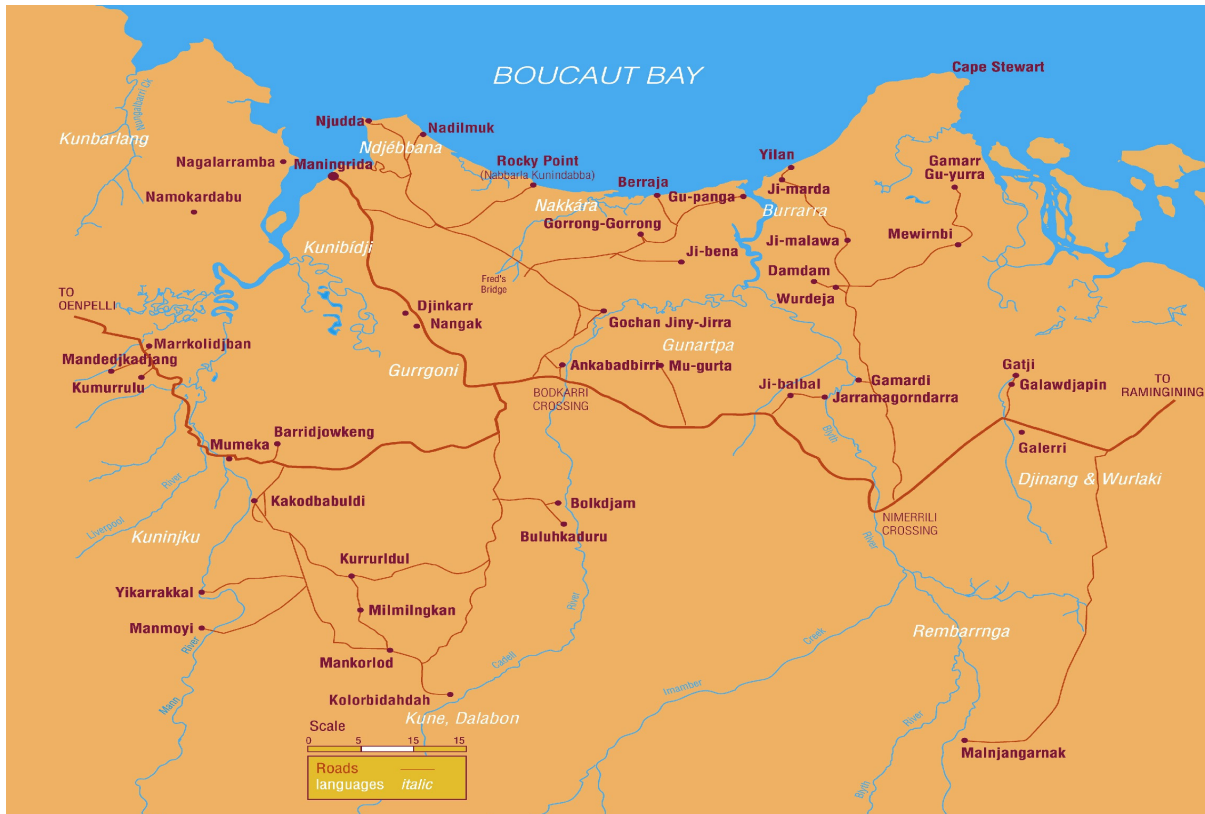


Figure 1: Map of Maningrida Region

Maningrida was initially constructed as a trading post in the early 1950's and in 1957 was officially established as a government settlement by the Native Affairs Branch (Doolan 1989). Prior to this the region was part of the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Reserve with entry limited by the Aboriginals Ordinance (Altman 2005). The 1970's was a period of great change in the region that constructed the basis from which Maningrida works today. During the early seventies there was a people's movement, commonly referred to as the 'outstation movement', which saw Aboriginal people reject 'centralization, modernization and assimilation' and return to live in small decentralized groups on their clan estates (2005). In order to support people during this period, an outstation resource centre called Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation (BAC) was established. Aboriginal people in the Maningrida region were granted inalienable freehold title to their lands following the passing of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. As a result of the legislative change, BAC was incorporated in 1979 under the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976*.

BAC currently supports 32 outstations in the Maningrida region that fall within an area of approximately 10,000 sq km (BAC 2007). BAC's constituency is made up of

approximately 800 people from over ten distinct language groups<sup>6</sup> and over 100 different clan groups. The population of the entire Maningrida area is approx. 2950, with approximately 200 of those people being non-Indigenous (ABS 2007). The community itself is made up of Dhukurriji people, visitors from other clan areas residing in the township and non-Indigenous people.

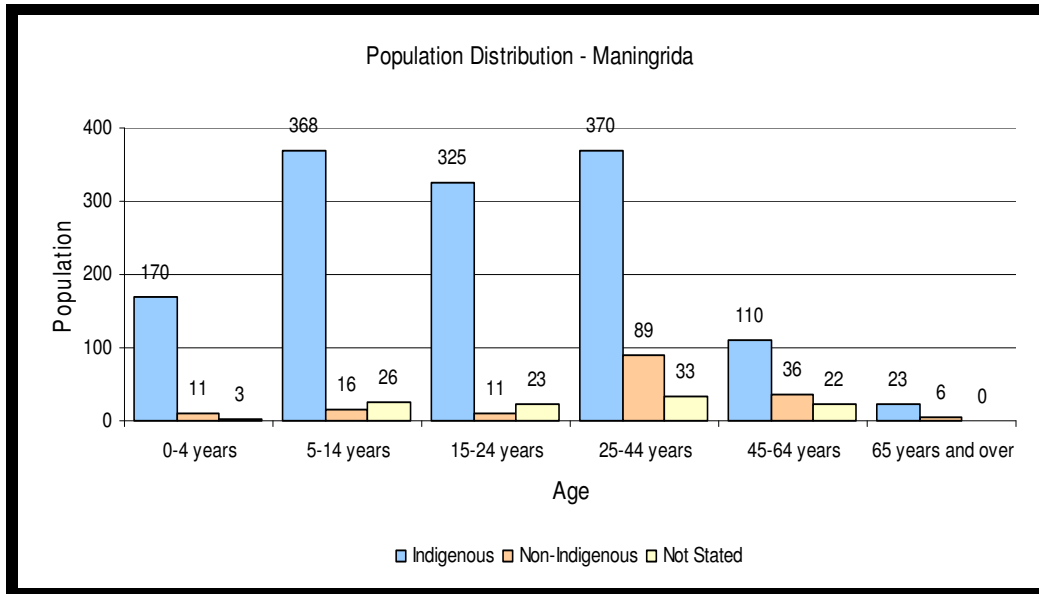


Figure 2: Population Distribution Maningrida (NTDEET 2007)<sup>7</sup>

The community of Maningrida has nine employers, of which BAC is the largest (LGANT 2006). BAC employs approximately 600 people, the majority of which participate in the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP). CDEP was first introduced to the region in 1989 when outstation residents were paid primarily to maintain their outstations (BAC 2007). In 1996, BAC began operating and administering the CDEP program. There are now some 550 CDEP participants in the Maningrida region<sup>8</sup>.

In 1996, BAC began investing in enterprise development when it took over as the operator of the town's fuel supply (BAC 2007). Profits from this business provided the organisation with its first discretionary income. Over the years discretionary income has been used to further fund the development of a variety of new trading enterprises to create meaningful employment for all CDEP participants and to foster the growth of unsubsidised jobs (2007). BAC now runs 20 different businesses which contribute to more than 50% of total turnover (2007). Turnover has grown from \$150,000 in 1979 to over \$26m in 05-06. The profits from these businesses are used to "top-up" the wages of CDEP employees who want to work more than the 18 hours per week and to reward with a higher rate of pay those workers who take on extra responsibilities or have specific skills (2007).

<sup>6</sup> Some of these languages include Ndjebbana, Burarra, Djinang, Rembarrnga, Kunwinjku, Nakarra, Gorgoni and Kune.

<sup>7</sup> This population data does not include Outstation Residence.

<sup>8</sup> See Work Arrangements (p.26)

BAC's structure and businesses are outlined below:

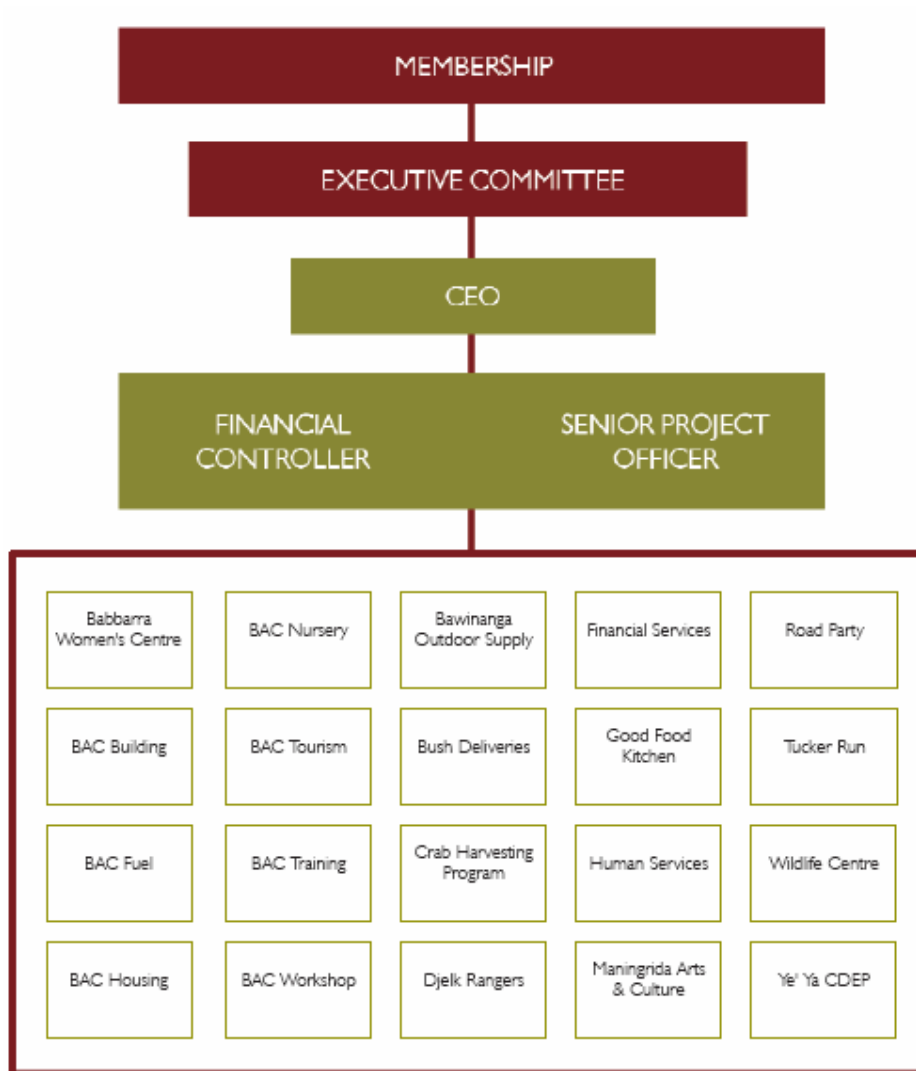


Figure 3: BAC Organizational Structure and Businesses (BAC 2007)

## Outline of Intervention:

On the 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2007, the Australian government announced a response to the national emergency confronting the welfare of Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory (Brough 2007a). The intervention was called in response to the 'Little Children are Sacred' (Anderson & Wild 2007) report into the protection of Aboriginal children from sexual abuse.

The following are the emergency measures outlined in Hon. Mal Brough's media release (2007a):

- Introducing widespread alcohol restrictions on Northern Territory Aboriginal land.
- Introducing welfare reforms to stem the flow of cash going toward substance abuse and to ensure funds meant to be for children's welfare are used for that purpose
- Enforcing school attendance by linking income support and family assistance payments to school attendance for all people living on Aboriginal land and providing meals for children at school at parents' cost
- Introducing compulsory health checks for all Aboriginal children to identify and treat health problems and any effects of abuse
- Acquiring townships prescribed by the Australian Government through five year leases including payment of just terms compensation
- As part of the immediate emergency response, increasing policing levels in prescribed communities, including requesting secondments from other jurisdictions to supplement NT resources, funded by the Australian Government.
- Requiring intensified on ground clean up and repair of communities to make them safer and healthier by marshalling local workforces through work-for-the-dole
- Improving housing and reforming community living arrangements in prescribed communities including the introduction of market based rents and normal tenancy arrangements
- Banning the possession of X-rated pornography and introducing audits of all publicly funded computers to identify illegal material
- Scrapping the permit system for common areas, road corridors and airstrips for prescribed communities on Aboriginal land, and;
- Improving governance by appointing managers of all government business in prescribed communities
- The national emergency response will be overseen by a Taskforce of eminent Australians.

Since these measures were announced, the government has amended certain aspects of its intervention, which have been addressed throughout this report. In addition to these reforms the government has also announced the abolition of CDEP (Brough 2007b). These changes have been discussed in the Work Arrangements section of the report (p.26). The measures stated above have formed the basis of the analysis on the impacts, limitations and possibilities of the national emergency in relation to BAC's constituents.

# **Maningrida Community Action Plan Project**

## *Current Situation:*

BAC's Maningrida Community Action Plan Project (MCAPP) is a community driven initiative set up to address child sexual abuse. MCAPP is a non-statutory community owned child protection service. It is currently funded until December 2007 by the NT Department of Health & Community. The MCAPP maintains a mutually informative and supportive partnership with visiting NT Family & Children's Services (FACS) Officers, Child Abuse Taskforce (CAT) Officers and General Practitioners (GPs). Partnerships also exist with the Malabam Health Board, Maningrida Health Centre, Maningrida Community Education Centre and the Maningrida Police.

The MCAPP was highlighted in the Little Children are Sacred Report (Anderson & Wild 2007) as an effective approach in the development of a community response to child sexual abuse. The Project's achievements to date are in accordance with several recommendations made in the Report. Specifically, the MCAPP is demonstrating or, with extended funding, has the capacity to address recommendations 29, 37, 46 (b), 47, 48, 59, 73, 75, 78, 79, 81, 82 and 94 (b) and (c).

MCAPP is made up of seventeen Aboriginal people who are committed to improving the safety and wellbeing of children. Their work, supported by the Project Officer, is an organised intertribal response that reaches all language groups represented in the Maningrida community.

Using a Strengths approach which is embedded in a framework of justice and respect, MCAPP has identified visions, goals and initiatives that are based on existing community strengths. Future and current initiatives of MCAPP include education programs at the school, producing an educative DVD in local languages for the broader community, developing and supporting youth activities in the community, carrying out local awareness campaigns, developing a constructive working relationship with police and referring young people at risk to the Malabam Substance Misuse Program.

The women involved in the project have regular meetings which act as a forum for discussion about issues such as sexual abuse, child safety and other community concerns. Since the project started in October last year (10 months prior to the intervention), the women have met on 23 occasions. One of the initial goals identified by the woman was to form a women's patrol, which commenced in May this year. The Maningrida Community Women's Safety Patrol currently has a membership of sixteen people and has conducted 86 patrols to date. Each patrol is conducted by an average of seven women, although this number tends to fluctuate according to family responsibilities. The patrol is also responsive to changes in the community's circumstances and numbers of youth on the streets at night.

The women use a second hand vehicle donated by the Maningrida Progress Association and maintained by the Maningrida Council to carry out the patrols. CDEP provides the critical base for employment for 16 of the women. This employment arrangement also provides the flexibility needed for women who work in

other jobs, to patrol on a casual basis. MCAPP also has an office, which provides a safe and comfortable environment where information can be shared and strategies generated around practical approaches to enhancing child safety.

Community involvement in the development of the MCAPP has been critical to its sustainability and its achievements so far. Each of the members of the group briefs their respective family on their work daily thus generating important discussions about child safety. Over the ten months that this project has been running there has been an increase in notifications which has been identified as an indicator that this approach is effective.

*Possibilities for constructive engagement:*

The MCAPP is critical to the success of the Australian government's intervention aimed at protecting children from sexual abuse. It is important that the community continue to have ownership of the approaches and strategies if progress is to be made in terms of increased reporting and protecting children from sexual abuse.

MCAPP and other organizations in Maningrida are currently working together to develop community based protocols for reporting child abuse. The aim of these protocols is to assist community members, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to make decisions in relation to reporting child abuse. The authors believe that these protocols will be of great value in assisting the community to tackle child sexual abuse.

MCAPP employees could assist in a liaison type role between the health check teams and the community. The intertribal reach of the group could assist the teams in demystifying and translating the processes and issues, such as informed consent, that surround the health checks. MCAPP employees could also work to encourage families to bring their children to the health checks. They could offer support and translation services when needed to the families and the health check team.

*Recommendations:*

- 1. That MCAPP continues to be supported and developed.**
- 2. That community protocols for reporting child abuse continue to be developed.**
- 3. That MCAPP continues to work to engage men in the community to participate in the project.**
- 4. That MCAPP employees assist in a liaison type role between the community and the health check team.**



# Maningrida Tribal Justice Committee

## *Current Situation:*

The Maningrida Tribal Justice Committee (MTJC) is a new entity that was set up by the senior Aboriginal leaders in Maningrida to help co-ordinate a ‘whole of community’ approach to ensure the safety and welfare of children (MTJC 2007). The MTJC are members of the governing committees and boards of all the main organizations that operate in Maningrida. This allows them to influence and direct those organizations to ensure that activities and operations are conducted in a way that prioritizes the welfare and safety of children. The Committee is a completely independent and community based initiative that has been helping to provide information to the community to deal with the raft of complex issues and dramatic policy changes.

This Committee has elected a Chairman and woman. There have been no other formal elections to positions as yet.

The Committee experienced some negative publicity recently regarding the ‘appointment’ of a member, however, that member has since been asked by the MTJC not to be involved in any aspect of the Committee.

## *Possibilities for Constructive Engagement:*

The MTJC should be one of the first points of call for the government as they roll out their intervention. The collective knowledge of this large representative group would be valuable to both BAC and the government in advising, assisting and implementing the government’s intervention.

## *Recommendations:*

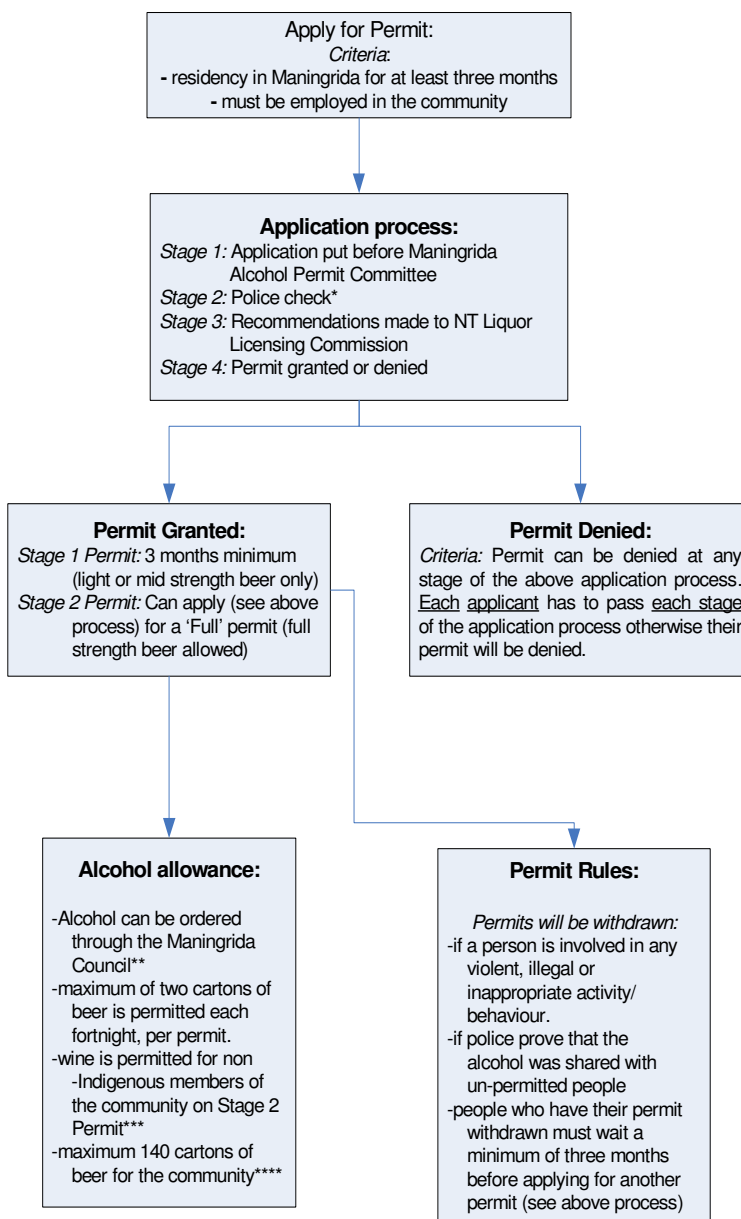
**5. That the government and BAC work with the MTJC.**

# Maningrida Alcohol Permit System

## Current Situation:

Maningrida has an Alcohol Permit System (MAPS) that aims to encourage responsible patterns of alcohol consumption. The MAPS was introduced in 2001 following extensive research and community consultation<sup>9</sup>. The MAPS model is outlined below.

Figure 4: MAPS Model.



\* Police Check – This consists of a review of criminal history, domestic violence history, mental health history, person of interest with regard to illicit drugs check and a check of associations to people with any of the previously listed histories.

\*\*Alcohol can be ordered through liquor outlets in Darwin, although order has to comply with Maningrida alcohol permit and allowance rules. The order from Darwin has to come in on the same barge that brings in the council order to ensure one grog handout every fortnight.

\*\*\*This decision was made by the Maningrida Alcohol Permit Committee through consultation with the community and Traditional Owners of the Maningrida Region. For non-Indigenous people on a Stage 2 permit, 6 bottles of 750ml wine can be substituted for a carton of beer.

\*\*\*\*This number is flexible – number can be changed by either Police or Maningrida or Alcohol Permit Committee.

A recent study of Maningrida Adult Health Checks<sup>10</sup> (Burgess 2007) which sampled 301 Indigenous people, found that 29% of participants self-identified as drinkers. If this sample is generalized to the extended community then there are approximately 406 people<sup>11</sup> who are potential drinkers – compared to non-drinkers or ex-drinkers. Indigenous people in the community account for approximately 67 (48%) of the Council's fortnightly orders. So, as a result of the MAPS, only 16% of the 406 potential drinkers in the community have fortnightly access to alcohol.

While approximate, this data clearly demonstrates the ability of the MAPS model to minimize harm from alcohol consumption. While there are still some instances of alcohol related violence<sup>12</sup>, these have been greatly reduced since the introduction of the MAPS. With the support of the government this model can continue to be strengthened and further minimize harm through the promotion of responsible drinking.

An integral part of the alcohol permit system's success has been the Maningrida Alcohol Permit Committee. This committee is made up of representatives, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, from each of the organizations in Maningrida. Senior Police and Traditional Owners are also members of the committee. The Committee's job is to review and make recommendations on all permit applications to the Northern Territory Liquor Licensing Commission. The Committee and the police also have the power to cut the supply of alcohol at any stage of the order if there is concern regarding the impact that alcohol may have on the community. These powers have been enacted in the past in relation to critical incidents in the community, where a 'grog handout' has been deemed by the community to be inappropriate for a given period of time. In this respect, the MAPS empowers the community to self-regulate.

### *Impacts and Limitations of Intervention:*

Initially the Australian Government announced widespread alcohol restrictions on Northern Territory Aboriginal land (Brough 2007a). The Hon. Mal Brough later suggested the possibility of opening so-called "wet canteens" as a way to control drinking in Aboriginal communities (ABC News 2007).

The community of Maningrida had a 'wet canteen' in the late 1970's. This lasted six weeks when the situation got so bad that women in the community insisted that it be shut down. Most discussions with BAC constituents regarding the introduction of a 'wet canteen' in Maningrida have met strong opposition from both men and women. It is interesting to note that the 'Little Children are Sacred' Report (Anderson & Wild 2007) found that in communities with clubs; most, if not all, men over the age of 18 were drinkers. If Maningrida was to have a 'wet canteen' it could have devastating socio-economic impacts. Evidence from a report that discussed the Gunbalanya Sports and Social club outlines the neglect of children, chronic high levels of consumption and expenditure, violence, car accidents, and alcohol dependence as impacts from drinking at the club (d'Abbs & Jones 1996). The report found that over three years, clinic records showed that between 41% and 64% of trauma presentations were

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<sup>10</sup> The study was based on participants aged 15-54 years old.

<sup>11</sup> This is based on the adult (over 18 years old) population of approximately 1400 people.

<sup>12</sup> This results in immediate loss of permit.

alcohol related (1996). Work hours in Gunbalanya are also dictated largely by the opening hours of the club (1996). This report and similar evidence on alcohol related impacts are the reason that the residents of Maningrida strongly oppose a 'wet canteen'. This evidence directly juxtaposes Maningrida's successes in relation to alcohol management, through MAPS.

Previous experience of the prohibition of alcohol in Maningrida proved to be unsuccessful, prompting the development of the current MAPS. The period of prohibition lasted for six months. Anecdotal evidence suggests that during prohibition, the community experienced a marked increase in illicit supplies of alcohol, particularly spirits, and there was constant reference to a significant rise in cannabis use. These two particular limitations of prohibition are particularly concerning as a result of the government's proposed changes to the land permit system (see Changes to the Permit System p. 17). The majority of illegal drugs and alcohol are brought in by road during the dry season. By opening the roads and townships, there is significant evidence to suggest that these problems will be exacerbated. Another impact of prohibition experienced by Maningrida was an out-migration of residents to Darwin. This had the effect of significantly disrupting local employment outcomes, family structures and also resulted in a number of alcohol related deaths in Darwin.

#### *Possibilities of Constructive Engagement:*

In light of Maningrida's past experience with the prohibition of alcohol and the evidence relating to the negative impacts of 'wet canteens', it is clear that neither option is an appropriate response to alcohol management in this community. After reviewing the MAPS alcohol management program, the findings suggest that this is a very successful and unique program. The longevity of the MAPS demonstrates the robust nature of the system and its ability to respond immediately to local circumstances. This is a critical tool in minimizing harm. The evidence suggests that the MAPS has been successful in managing alcohol in the community by promoting responsible drinking and minimizing the harmful effects of alcohol.

#### *Recommendations:*

- 6. That the Maningrida Alcohol Permit System (MAPS) remains in its current state, with recourse to review in 12 months time if desired.**
- 7. That further research be conducted into the successful nature of the program with a view to expanding this management program to other communities in the Northern Territory.**
- 8. That more Indigenous women be appointed to the Maningrida Alcohol Committee.**

# Changes to the Permit System

*'The most important proof of Aboriginal ownership of land will be the right to exclude from it those people who are not welcome' (Woodward 1974).*

## *Current Situation:*

The Australian government's decision to enact legislation changing the entry requirement to Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory will have major socio-economic impacts on the township of Maningrida, the surrounding Outstations and a number of key enterprise developments of BAC. As such, the changes are of great concern to BAC and its constituents.

Outlined below is the current legislation in relation to permits that the government proposed to change:

## **ABORIGINAL LAND ACT (NT):<sup>13</sup>**

### **4. Entry onto, &c., Aboriginal land or road**

(1) Subject to this Part and to any provision to the contrary in a law of the Territory, a person shall not enter onto or remain on Aboriginal land or use a road unless he has been issued with a permit to do so in accordance with this Part.

Penalty: \$1,000.

(1A) Nothing in subsection (1) shall prevent a person who is entitled or permitted under this Part to enter onto or remain on Aboriginal land from using a road that is bordered by that Aboriginal land.

### **8. Entry of dwellings**

(1) Nothing contained in this Part authorizes the entry of a person to a dwelling without the permission of the owner or the occupant.

(2) For the purposes of this section "dwelling" includes the living area of a camp occupied by or belonging to an Aboriginal

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<sup>13</sup> Retrieved 3 August 2007 from [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nt/consol\\_act/ala126/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nt/consol_act/ala126/) , NT Consolidated Acts.

## 11. Open areas

(1) The Administrator may, on the recommendation of a Land Council, declare by notice in the *Gazette*, an area of Aboriginal land or a road to be an open area or open road, as the case may be.

(2) Where a declaration is made under subsection (1), a person may enter and remain on the area of Aboriginal land, or use the road, described in the notice without obtaining a permit.

### **ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS (NORTHERN TERRITORY) ACT 1976**

#### **SECT 73 - Reciprocal legislation of the Northern Territory**

(1) The power of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory under the *Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978* in relation to the making of laws extends to the making of:

(b) laws regulating or authorizing the entry of persons on [Aboriginal land](#), but so that any such laws shall provide for the right of [Aboriginals](#) to enter such land in accordance with [Aboriginal tradition](#);

#### *Impacts and Limitations of Intervention:*

The proposed changes to the permit system were summarized in the Australian government's Discussion paper, 'Access to Aboriginal Land under the Northern Territory Land Rights Act-Time for A Change'(2006). The government proposes to change sections 4,8 and 11 of *Aboriginal Land Act (NT)* as authorized by section 73 of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NT) 1976* (ALRA). The intended outcomes of these changes are stated as:

1. 'Liberalisation would bring economic benefits that would help promote the self- reliance and prosperity of Aboriginal people in remote communities'.
2. 'Increased external scrutiny would be in the interest of victims of crime and the disadvantaged or vulnerable'.

It is unknown to the authors if the Australian government proposes to make additional changes as a result of the emergency intervention.

In examining the intended outcomes that the government has proposed without the benefit of empirical evidence it is difficult to see how any change to the current permit

system could achieve the intended purposes as outlined above<sup>14</sup>. It is, however, possible to predict a number of unintended impacts that will result from this change, based on a large body of research and extensive anthropological observation.

First, the changes to the permit system are seen by BAC's constituents as a weakening of their property rights. Consequently, the imposition of the government's decision to open the township and the road runs a serious risk of disengaging the community in the process of the 'national emergency response'. Indigenous systems of tenure value the right to exclude as an essential property right fundamental to social organization and, critically, to economic development (be it customary or industrial). There is a vast body of literature and research on Indigenous systems of land ownership that are relevant to the permit system as it operates in the Northern Territory. For example, Bromley (1991) asserts that Indigenous constructs of land use are dependant on who has rights and responsibilities in its usage, and by who may be excluded. Ostrom and Schlager (1996), Berkes (1989) and Hardin (1968) concur, all stressing that this clearly distinguishes the basis of a land ownership regime. Crucially, Williams (in Altman et al eds 1999) notes that in the Australian Indigenous context 'to request permission to enter, camp on or use the resources of a particular area is to acknowledge the right of the owners to accede or to deny permission.' In short, the changes to the permit system, in particular the removal of the need to gain permission to enter the township, are seen by many of BAC's constituents as a failing of the state to recognize their land ownership regimes under ALRA. This may seriously undermine efforts of the Australian government to engage the community in the current policy intervention<sup>15</sup>.

A second unintended impact of the removal of permits for access to the township may be the destabilization of a growing development base. This is exemplified in the potential impact this decision could have on a flourishing art industry. The artists of Maningrida are renowned and Maningrida Arts and Culture (MAC), returned 1.3 million dollars directly to artists in the 2005/2006 financial year and purchased art and craft from over 700 producers (BAC 2007). Many of these artists reside on outstations in the local Indigenous estate which are very close to the main road. The opening of the road to unfettered access will almost certainly lead to 'carpetbaggers' negotiating illicit transactions in alcohol and marijuana for the production of art<sup>16</sup>. Similarly, the limited literacy and numeracy of most artists will ensure that direct negotiations with unscrupulous travelers will also lead to art changing hands well below market value<sup>17</sup>. This will increase the supply of poor art for cash, diminish returns to artists and

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<sup>14</sup> Research endorsing the removal of the permit system has offered no empirical evidence, exemplified in publications from the Centre for Independent Studies, <http://www.cis.org.au/> such as: H. Hughes, 2007 *Lands of Shame: The deprivation of Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders*, Centre for Independent Studies, Sydney. Critically, this research confuses native title and ALRA land. It also conflates homelands and townships in a way that deliberately obscures the complexities and diversity of living arrangements within the Indigenous estate. Similarly, the research endorses approaches as outlined in the Reeves Report that were found to be defective in 1999. This research is considered a polemic by the authors and as such contributes little to the evidence base.

<sup>15</sup> In 1999, a bipartisan report by a Parliamentary Committee chaired by the Hon. Lou Lieberman, a Liberal member from Victoria unanimously endorsed the core principle that 'access to Aboriginal land should always take place with proper consultation and negotiation with the Aboriginal people who rightfully own the land under inalienable freehold title' (HSACTSA 1999 cited in Altman 2007).

<sup>16</sup> This practice was widely noted in the area before the enactment of ALRA and the permit system.

<sup>17</sup> MAC currently ensures artists are paid according to market values and has a total acquisition policy ensuring all art produced in the area is purchased.

damage the region's artistic reputation. It is highly likely this will cause a resultant drop in demand from the 'high end' of the market<sup>18</sup>.

Paradoxically, the Australian government's focus on law and order is also likely to be seriously undermined by the opening of the township to unfettered access. At a town meeting the police officer in charge of Maningrida outlined the difficulties inherent in policing issues in the community and its surrounds (Public Meeting 6/02/07). Notably, he said that he and his two colleagues are responsible for policing over 36000 sqkms, three large, remote townships, approximately 60 Outstations and a total of approximately 5000 permanent residents (6/02/07). The policeman concerned said his already difficult job would be made considerably more difficult if the permit system were changed to allow non locals free access. He also noted that even a doubling in police numbers would not counteract expected increases in illegal substance and alcohol trafficking and increases in general crime across the region if the permit system is changed<sup>19</sup>.

Similarly, after extensive discussions with the community it is clear to the authors that the permit system acts as a quasi regulator and enables Aboriginal people to effectively monitor trespass themselves. If a person is on their land that they do not know, local people can check with police to see if they have a permit and are there on legitimate business, or at the behest of the community. This enables police and the community to effectively work together in the management and regulation of land access.

The authors have found that it is difficult for BAC's constituents to understand the argument for legislative change and 'liberalisation', given that access for business and government or people with legitimate business is already de rigeur in Maningrida. In the West Arnhem region, where BAC is located, the Northern Land Council issued over 12,000 permits in 2006, refusing only six applicants, on the basis they were known criminals (Public Meeting 18/07/07). This does not, in our opinion, support any argument that the township is socially marginalized by the permit system.

Our research suggests it is spurious to argue that the permit system has led to 'community disharmony or worse'<sup>20</sup>. We have seen no evidence of community disharmony or dispute related to the permit system. In fact, we believe the system has ensured Indigenous people are still able to maintain some semblance of control over their engagement with the non-Indigenous community. As testament to this, a town meeting we attended regarding the permit system saw approximately 130 people vigorously and unmitigatedly support the current permit system. There was no voice of dissent. It is also difficult to argue that the permit system inhibits media access.

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<sup>18</sup> Similar economic impacts are likely for other areas of BAC enterprise such as the sustainable wildlife enterprise.

<sup>19</sup> In this regard, The Australian Law Council (2007) notes 'Given reports that in a majority of cases drugs are brought into communities by outsiders, it would appear that removing the permit system will deprive Indigenous communities of an important mechanism to protect themselves from perpetrators of such crimes'.

<sup>20</sup> In fact, the removal of the permit system may be more likely to cause community disharmony. The township and road are not necessarily public spaces. Roads and sections of township are often closed off for funerals and ceremonies. These closures are taken very seriously and any infringement or trespass through such closures is a source of potential conflict.



During the period of this consultancy there have been 19 visits from 12 separate media outlets to the community.

By virtue of the ALRA, Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory is effectively private property (Law Council of Australia 2007). The owners are simply exercising their legal right to decide who may enter their property and it is considered that the proposed changes to the permit system compromise this right. Given the research base, it is difficult to find any empirical evidence that changing the permit system will make the children of Maningrida safer. Similarly, the authors find that opening Maningrida to unfettered access may be detrimental to the current enterprise developments of BAC, the wishes of BAC's constituents and the general wellbeing of the community.

*Recommendations:*

**9. The current permit arrangements be maintained in the greater Maningrida region, including the township and the main road.**

**10. That BAC consider strengthening the permit system at a local level.**

## **Income Management:**

### *Current Situation:*

Much of remote Australia has to deal with the complexities of financial management by correspondence. For people living in remote locations, fax machines, telephones and more recently the internet are the predominant methods of interaction with financial institutions. These methods of financial management are sufficient if you are literate, have access to phones, faxes and computers on a regular basis, have regular access to a post office, have learnt or been trained to manage your finances and can speak English. This is not the case for the majority of BAC's constituents. As in mainstream Australia, Indigenous people living in remote communities are trying to keep up with the increasingly complex nature of managing their finances.

For seven years, BAC has been offering services to assist employees in managing their finances. These services include savings schemes, bill payment arrangements, organizing finance and loans, and advice. There is no charge for these services and they are voluntary. Approximately 80% of BAC employees use these services, in particular the savings schemes<sup>21</sup>. It is possible for people from other organizations in the community to use these services, although there are some difficulties in aligning payroll structures.

The voluntary services offered are outlined below:

-Truck Savings: This scheme debits a nominated amount of an individual's wage that is then directed into a savings account which accumulates over time for a deposit on a vehicle. If there are two withdrawals from the Truck Savings account within a fortnight the account will be shut and money returned to the individual's bank account.

-Bill Payments: This service debits a nominated amount from an individual's wage which is then directed into an account that is used to pay bills. There are two payment options: cheque (the bill has to be sighted for cheque to be written) or direct electronic funds transfer (for external institutions). This savings scheme is used for Telstra bills, Power and Water bills, Austar bills, fines and other debts. This service has the lowest level of participation.

-Ceremony/Funeral deductions: This service debits an individual's wage for ceremonies. Individual's nominate the amount they want to put aside each fortnight. The standard amount is \$4. BAC donates \$4 to each person's ceremony account each fortnight. BAC also donates \$2000 - \$3000 to assist funerals.

-School accounts: These are savings accounts specifically for parents to put aside money for things like school trips.

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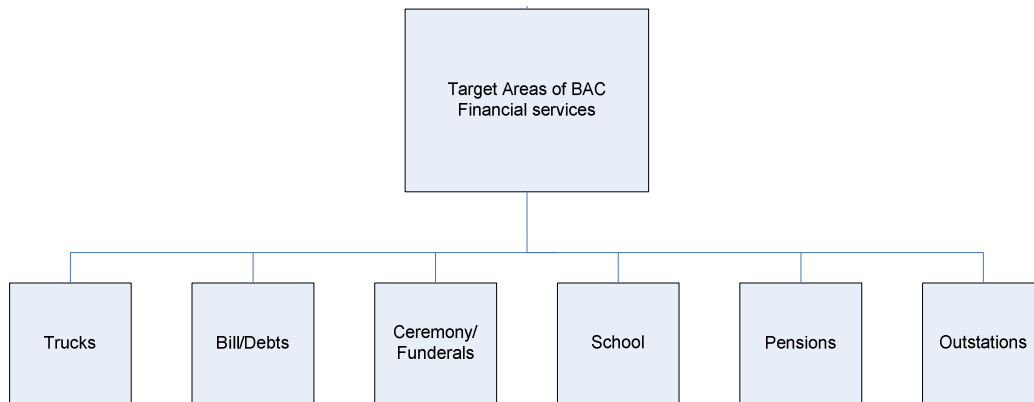
<sup>21</sup> The average income is \$440 per fortnight for people living in outstations and \$800-\$1000 per fortnight for residents in Maningrida. The differentiation between Outstation income and income in Maningrida is predominately due to the availability of 'top-up'.

-Financial advice, banking and internet banking services are offered by BAC. Assistance is also offered to set up accounts and organize loans.

-Pension Management: This service is offered to Aged Care clients. Pension cheques are made out care of the Aged Care manager, cashed, stored in a safe and distributed daily at the amount requested by the client. This voluntary budgeting system has proven to be very successful, with 33% of Aged Care clients currently involved.<sup>22</sup> This service offers flexible, self-directed budgeting.

-Outstation 'Bush Delivery' Program: Pay cheques are taken to Outstation residents by the Bush Delivery truck, which acts as a pseudo-bank. Residents are able to then purchase food, hunting, fishing and camping supplies off the truck. This service not only enables residents to access their cash, but they are able to purchase food. This service already acts in a similar fashion to the quarantining measures and is voluntarily embraced by Outstation residents.

Figure 5: Targeted areas of BAC's financial services.



### *Impacts and limitations of Intervention:*

The Australian government's welfare reforms propose quarantining, through Centrelink, 50 per cent of welfare payments to parents to be used for the purchase of food and other essentials (Prime Minister 2007). These reforms include quarantining 100 per cent of family payments of parents who do not send their children to school (Public Meeting 18/07/2007). There are some significant issues with these reforms for the constituents of BAC.

One of the more serious problems with the proposed quarantining of incomes is that it seems to take responsibility away from Indigenous parents, which is ultimately a disempowering process. This is of concern considering Anderson and Wild (2007) identify disempowerment as one of the factors that inexorably lead to family violence and sexual abuse. As Pearson stated on Lateline (26/06/2007) 'We've got to take charge. We've got to be given back responsibility. Might I say the collapse of responsibility that we see, the wasteland of responsibility in Indigenous Australia is

<sup>22</sup> Aged Care Clients also have the option of having their grocery shopping done for them by Aged Care workers who use a specified proportion of the budgeted cash.

the consequence of government and bureaucracies and welfare organisations, including NGOs, who have intervened in Aboriginal affairs...'. BAC's financial services have been a success and have targeted areas that are not dissimilar to the areas proposed by the government, however, the fundamental difference is the voluntary nature of these services.

Indigenous people face additional challenges in managing their income due to the complex nature of family structures and living arrangements. It is unclear how the Australian government's plan will deal with the non-nuclear nature of Indigenous families. This is an issue that affects not only BAC constituents, but the broader Maningrida community. The average household size in Maningrida is 16 people (Pers. Comm. Nov. 2006). If there are eight adults in the household deciding who's quarantined money is going to pay for essential services (electricity and rent for example) could be problematic. If one family has four children and another family has two children who all live under the same roof, how is Centrelink going to decide who pays for what and how much? What will happen if parents go to meetings in Darwin for a week (something that happens regularly), leaving their children with extended household family, how will money for the children be transferred on such a short-term basis? The answers to these questions are likely to be difficult given the nature of Indigenous kinship structures and the overcrowding of households in Maningrida.

Similarly, mobility poses a difficulty for the government's quarantining measures. High mobility is a consistently recurrent theme of all research on Indigenous issues. It is understood as central to people maintaining social relationships and relationships to places (Foster, Mitchell et al. 2005). The 2006 report on Indigenous Mobility in Rural and Remote Australia (Memmott, Long et al. 2006) found that Aboriginal people from some communities visit regional centers an average of 39 trips a year per visitor. Although the patterns of mobility are different, constituents of BAC exhibit similar trends. There are regular trips to outstations, between outstations, to Maningrida and to Darwin. How are people going to be able to access their money in cases when their living situation temporarily<sup>23</sup> changes? The authors predict that 'visitors' will struggle to access enough money to support themselves (particularly in places like Darwin), unless voucher systems are recognized territory wide. The alternative is that remote Indigenous visitors to urban centres will rely on social services. This may also result in an increased likelihood of the 'visitor' extending their stay because they are unable to return home due to lack of funds<sup>24</sup>.

Serious questions also arise as to the capacity of Centrelink to be able to deal with the the government's proposed quarantine arrangements. In Maningrida, Centrelink has a very small office and employs three people (LGANT 2006). There is likely to be an exponential increase in administrative load placed on this institution. This will bring an associated need for literate and numerate staffing that will most likely need to be imported in the form of non-Indigenous people. There are also associated office infrastructure and housing issues with this.

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<sup>23</sup> Temporarily can be a couple of days to a couple of months, particularly for funerals and ceremonies where people can be absent from the community for long periods of time.

<sup>24</sup> This is a common occurrence now.

The Australian government is currently running two income management programs that are specific to Indigenous people, 'MoneyBusiness' and Family Income Management (FIM). 'MoneyBusiness' offers information and support on money management matters, and has appeared to be quite successful in its approach. FIM is a budgeting program that has been trialed in the Cape York Region over the past few years. This program is part of Noel Pearson's Welfare Reforms. The authors believe it is highly likely that this program will be introduced to communities in the Northern Territory to manage the quarantining of incomes. At the moment there is very little information available that is independent of government about this program. It is obvious from what is available, that there are significant issues with the program and associated welfare reforms, particularly in Aurukun (ABC Four Corners 2007). Considering that this is the largest community the program has been trialed in, on size alone this is of great concern, as Maningrida is over twice as large. There is also concern over the program's ability to be sensitive to local family arrangements and expenditure patterns and priorities.

*Possibilities for constructive engagement:*

As BAC's current financial services and broader enterprise engage in many of these complex issues on a daily basis, it is the authors' opinion that BAC and Centrelink could work together to provide appropriate solutions to the complex issues stated above.

BAC's financial services and the government's targeted areas for quarantine money form a good fit. It is the view of the authors that a possible management structure would position Centrelink as the Quarantine Broker who contracts BAC as the Quarantine Manager to administer the quarantined money.

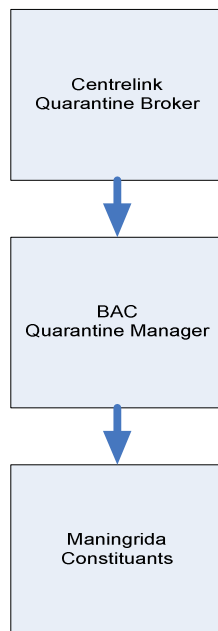


Figure 6: Possible Quarantine Structure

BAC is an organization that is trusted by the community, is transparent and has worked with individuals and families of the Maningrida region for nearly 30 years.

The organization's understanding and long term commitment to the community would create an appropriate setting for the management of quarantined money<sup>25</sup>. Although BAC would have to increase capacity to deal with the contract, it is the authors' opinion that for the long term good of the community and producing an appropriate, constructive and beneficial intervention, these arrangements be considered.

Much of the savings services that BAC offers, particularly for ceremonies and funerals, is based on clan groupings in the community. It is possible that aspects of the government's quarantine measures would need to be handled in a similar fashion. For example, it may be possible to overcome some of the problems of dividing household rent and electricity bills in this way. This is important expertise that BAC could bring as the community's Quarantine Manager.

In tackling the issue of Centrelink delivering services to Outstation residents, BAC's Bush Delivery service has a natural logistical fit. It essentially already performs quarantining arrangements for people in the bush, so it would not require much alteration if BAC was to act as a Quarantine Manager (see above). The Tucker Run team, who are employed by CDEP, have local and contemporary knowledge of outstation residents and their patterns of mobility, which would allow for reliable delivery of the governments measures.

After consultation, the authors believe that BAC constituents would benefit greatly from the FaCSIA's 'MoneyBusiness' program. The objective of the 'MoneyBusiness' program is to provide Indigenous individuals and families with the money management information and support they need to build self-reliance and improve individual, family and community well-being in a culturally sensitive and practical way (FaCSIA 2007).

*Recommendations:*

**11. That Centrelink contracts out the management of quarantined money to BAC.**

**12. That BAC consider the delivery of the MoneyBusiness program.**

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<sup>25</sup> For example, BAC currently works with constituents to pay off truck loans, under the Truck Savings scheme. If these existing loans are not prioritised people run the risk of becoming criminal defaulters.

## Work Arrangements

### *Current situation:*

Since its inception, BAC has expanded and diversified in response to the changing needs of the rapidly growing population, and major shifts in government policy. It is now a large and complex regional development organisation providing services for 32 outstations, administering over 40 grants and operating the largest CDEP program in Australia (See Background). There are currently 300 CDEP participants working in Maningrida for a combination of CDEP wages and 'top-up', and a further 250 working in the bush. Activities are diverse, productive and some are essential.

With such a large and diverse population, complex governance arrangements have naturally evolved over the community's 50 year history. Contestation within the community over development resources and direction is robust. These arrangements influence who decides about what, and when, while non-Indigenous development expertise and higher order administrative skills are incorporated to produce a final model.

### *Impacts and limitations of Intervention:*

#### **Appointment of government business managers**

The Australian Government has proposed as part of the intervention to appoint government business managers to each community.

It is the opinion of the authors that the decision to appoint government business managers poses a great threat to BAC's development model and governance structures. Indigenous aspirations form a central operating force in BAC's development design and can be said to be involved in an ongoing process of 'strategic engagement' with the state (Martin 2003).

It is of concern that local organizations in receipt of government funding, such as CDEP, must comply with any and all directions given to them by the to-be-appointed 'business manager' or risk the withdrawal of funding (CDEP PFA 2007). These directions may effectively usurp local governance structures and local development aspiration. This may also fragment the complex governance arrangements outlined above.

#### **The Abolition of CDEP**

The extensive research base on CDEP has led the authors to believe that the Australian government's decision to abolish the program will have extensive socio-economic impacts upon the constituents of BAC. Many of these impacts will be unintended, far reaching and difficult to predict.

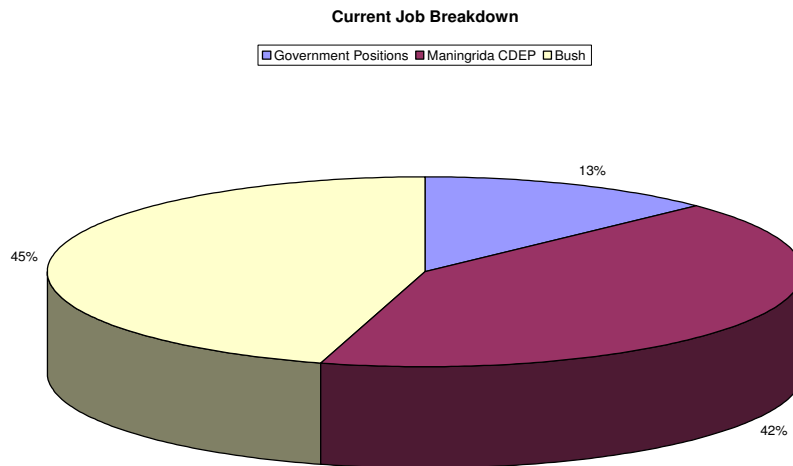
In examining the complexities of what drives BAC's development model, CDEP is an integral part. In attempting to mitigate historical underinvestment by the state, particularly in housing, health, and education, BAC has used a mixed base of transfers

from the state in the form of grant programs and Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP), coupled with income generated from local enterprise and continued customary production to create a successful development base. This base has allowed local aspirations to be incorporated into a range of enterprises and social programs that are enabling distinctly intercultural modes of economic growth. **Given these factors, the abolition of CDEP will adversely affect BAC's current business arrangements and labour supply.**

- *Government Positions*

There are 71 'government positions' subsidized by CDEP in the human services sector of Maningrida alone. The base cost of a CDEP participant is \$17,212. The immediate cost of transferring cross subsidized areas of employment, such as health and education workers in the community, will be approximately \$1.4 million dollars per annum, based on replacing base component of their wages<sup>26</sup>. This figure excludes the 25% on cost associated with government wages and the potential costs of housing subsidy and remote area allowances needed to ensure parity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous workers<sup>27</sup>. Also, early indications of increases in school attendance mean an exponential need for Aboriginal assistant teachers and associated liaison staff will be critical. As CDEP will no longer cross subsidize these positions it likely that cost to both the NTG and Australian government on current numbers of positions will double. The transitioning of government positions will have a minimal impact on outstations as there are currently only 6 part-time Indigenous education workers out bush.

Figure 7: Current job breakdown<sup>28</sup>:



<sup>26</sup> These positions all support Commonwealth funded programs in the areas of health, education, aged care and MCAPP.

<sup>27</sup> Non-Indigenous government staff in remote areas of the NT received a raft of remote area incentives. These include freight rebates, airfares to regional centres and free housing and electricity.

<sup>28</sup> The majority of the 13% are on part-time work.



## **The Introduction of STEP and Work for the Dole:**

The Hon. Mal Brough has stated that "Under the changes, it is expected that some 2000 people will be assisted off CDEP into real work. Others will be given better opportunities for training and participation by being transitioned onto income support, with the normal participation requirements including access to Job Network services, Structured Training and Employment Projects (STEP) or Work for the Dole"(Brough 2007b).

Both the requirements and the delivery of these programs in their current form are unlikely to be successful in Maningrida or the Outstations. Reasons for this are outlined below.

### *-STEP program*

Results of BAC's previous experience with the STEP program and analysis of the program itself, suggest serious issues in regard to the delivery, requirements and possible outcomes of the program in its present form.

Two case studies of the STEP program in Maningrida and their results are outlined below<sup>29</sup>:

### **Case Study 1: The STEP Sustainable Harvest Project**

*On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2003 a STEP contract between DEWR and BAC, referred to as the STEP Sustainable Harvest Project commenced. The contract concluded in August 2005. There were 40 participants over 5 different work areas, each with their own Work Supervisors. The original training plans involved a number of different Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and a range of courses.*

*By stage 5 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year (12 month retention in employment and completion of training), 41<sup>30</sup> participants had dropped in and out of the project at some stage. They had either moved away from Maningrida to outstations or had stopped coming to work and or training. 57 participants eventually went through the program with 22 completing a qualification by the end of the contract. Of these 22, 15 had commenced at the beginning of year 1 (March 03) which means that of the original cohort there was a 38% retention rate.*

*The majority of these were involved in ranger work (see The Future of Outstations p.34).*

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<sup>29</sup> Raw data from STEP program Maningrida.

<sup>30</sup> This figure includes second year intakes not part of the original 40, hence the higher number than original intake.

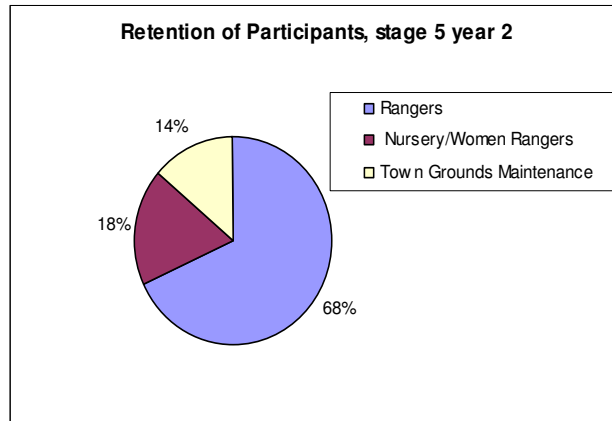


Figure 8: Retention of Participants, stage 5 year 2

An evaluation of the program found significant administrative barriers to delivering STEP (Manners 2005<sup>31</sup>). The administrative load required the appointment of a full time non-Indigenous coordinator. Quarterly reporting could not be met. All RTOs were unable or unwilling to provide the quarterly training reports required by the Contract. Project payments tied to training reports from RTO's also resulted in recipients not being paid. Among other things the review recommended that STEP required 'realistic expectations by government, realistic time frames, realistic outcomes and realistic definitions of employment' if the program is going to be useful in Maningrida.

### Case Study 2

On 4<sup>th</sup> July 2003 a STEP contract was signed between DEWR and BAC. The contract finished on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2005. 12 participants were enrolled in Certificate II Business under a New Apprenticeship agreement and employed in different administrative areas of BAC as per the STEP contract. Results can be seen below:

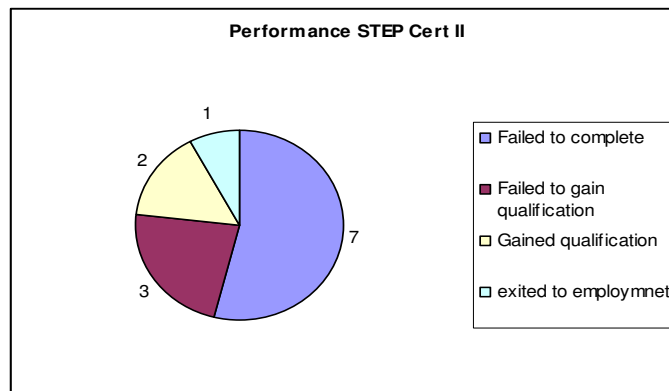


Figure 9: Performance STEP Cert II

<sup>31</sup> Manners W. 2005 'Evaluation of the STEP Sustainable Harvest Project' unpublished report.

### Combined results

The combined results of the two STEP programs show significantly low completion rates with 66 % failing to gain a qualification.

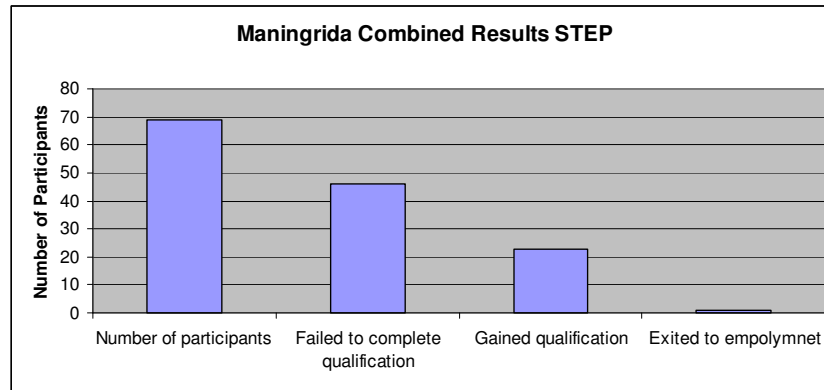


Figure 10: Maningrida Combined Results STEP

**nb** DEWR does not consider exiting to CDEP based work as exiting to employment

Reasons cited for this in evaluations are:

- Inability to regularly commit to work and training because of competing ceremonial priorities and commitments
- Family problems – often these are solved by people removing themselves to an outstation
- Work conflict – arguments over resources – once again people removed themselves from the area of conflict
- Substance abuse
- Poor physical health
- Crowded and noisy living conditions which make it difficult to present to work on time, and mentally ready for work
- insufficient literacy to cope with the training
- personal problems – child minding, problems with the commitment required
- choosing alternative employment

After an analysis of the case study and literature<sup>32</sup> some serious limitations of the STEP program in its current form are outlined below:

- There are no exit points into work from STEP in the outstations and very few in Maningrida<sup>33</sup>. Consultation with BAC constituents concurs with previous research findings that show it is highly unlikely that people will abandon their clan estates in a pattern of work driven ‘out-migration’ (Taylor 2006)<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> See Workplace relations website for details of STEP.

<sup>33</sup> Proposals to transition into positions currently held by non-Indigenous people are a long term proposition due to literacy and numeracy deficits (see LGANT NT 2006).

<sup>34</sup> Research shows that Indigenous people in remote areas reside close to their customary lands and their attachment to such places is reflected in a relative lack of net out-migration. See also Gray 1989; Taylor 1992; Taylor & Bell 1996, 1999.

- Drop outs from STEP cannot be immediately replaced within the current structure. This is problematic as RTO's will not deliver if numbers are too low.
- Time Frames of STEP (12 months) are unrealistic and unachievable (See Case Study).
- Massive literacy and numeracy barriers will preclude many people from entering STEP<sup>35</sup>.
- Massive literacy and numeracy barriers will ensure extremely low completion rates of STEP.
- Mobility patterns of the population cannot be mitigated in STEP's current structure<sup>36</sup>.
- Capacity of current RTO's to cope with the administrative load and current skills shortages.
- Logistics and seasonality of outstation access preclude STEP delivery within current time frames (12 months).
- Current RTO's have no capacity to deliver STEP in the outstations (See Case Study).
- RTO's have little incentive to deliver in remote areas as costs are high and completion rates are low.

- *Work for the Dole*

The Hon. Mal Brough, stated that CDEP participants will now 'be required to participate in community cleanups and basic cleanups of public housing on a Work for the Dole basis' (Brough 2007a). It is clear that this will affect many of the 550 people currently on CDEP. This may be of concern given evidence suggests that 'participation in the WfD program is found to be associated with a large and significant adverse effect on the likelihood of exiting unemployment payments' (Borland and Tseng 2004). This is described as 'lock-in' effect (2004).

Most people going from CDEP to the WfD program are likely to experience a drop in pay which could act as a serious disincentive to work<sup>37</sup>. In addition, these employees of BAC will have 50% of their fortnightly pays quarantined for a 12 month period (see Income Management p.20). 300 CDEP participants currently earn a total of \$867,000 in 'top-up' annually. This income will be lost if these people are transferred to WfD programs<sup>38</sup>. In the view of the authors there is a real risk of significant

<sup>35</sup> Many people in the region have a below yr 8 standard education. This makes entry at even Certificate 1 levels difficult.

<sup>36</sup> The propensity for frequent mobility over the short-term is one characteristic of the Indigenous population which is widely acknowledged as having implications for the delivery of health, housing, employment, education and training services (Memmott, Long & Thomson 2006; Taylor 1998; Taylor & Bell 2004 cited in Taylor 2006)

<sup>37</sup> Figures from <http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet> as at July 1 2007.

<b>Status</b>	<b>Rate Per Fortnight</b>
Single, no children	\$424.30
Single, with children	\$458.90
Single, aged 60 or over, after 9 months (includes *PhA)	\$464.70
Partnered	\$382.80 (each)

<sup>38</sup> 'There is evidence that CDEP participants have higher average incomes than do the unemployed and those not in the labour force. There have been a number of case studies of CDEP organisations in different areas of Australia at different times, of which almost all have come to the conclusion that the

damage to Maningrida's existing development base unless great care is taken to modify new arrangements to suit the local economic environment.

The following are possible limitations of the WfD program:

- Job network providers have no capacity to deliver WfD to Outstations.
- There are no areas of civil society or charity existent in the Outstations to provide WfD activity.
- Centrelink Maningrida has no capacity to administer WfD in the Outstations.
- Outstation residents<sup>39</sup> may be subject to participation failures and lose their income support because:
  - a) They will not be able to attend Centrelink for weekly administration requirements due to lack of transport and inaccessibility of roads.
  - b) They will be unable to complete 'job diary' requirements because of lack of language proficiency, literacy and numeracy<sup>40</sup>.
  - c) They will be unable to attend job interviews due to lack of transport and inaccessibility of roads.
  - d) They will be unable to look for suitable work because the work does not exist in the locality.
  - e) Language, literacy and numeracy barriers will prevent understandings of WfD requirements.
  - f) WfD managers will have no capacity to deliver WfD in the Outstations.

### *Possibilities for Constructive Engagement:*

**In the opinion of the authors, the preferred way forward would be a re-newed mix of training and employment with the CDEP development base kept intact and the continued use of existing three tiered wage structures in the community<sup>41</sup>.** This would provide a safer base from which to implement reform. However, as the Australian government has already announced the end of CDEP we will outline some possibilities for consideration.

These are complex and detailed changes and programs that require further exploration and research.

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program has positive effects on individual participants' wellbeing and on community development.' (Altman, Grey and Levitus 2005).

<sup>39</sup> Many of these limitations may also apply to WfD participants in Maningrida, however, delivery to Outstations is of immediate concern.

<sup>40</sup> A study by Kral and Schwab (2003) at an Arnhem land outstation found over 70 per cent of adults surveyed stated that they could read and write in English, yet when assessed it was found that 65 per cent of males and about 44 per cent of females were not yet competent at National Reporting System level 1. The NRS is a nationally recognised assessment mechanism for identifying adult English language, literacy and numeracy competencies in industry, facilitating student pathways, and generating curriculum and assessment procedures.

<sup>41</sup> CDEP base rate, CDEP plus 'top up' and CDEP bush rate.

*Recommendations:*

**13. That immediate and sustained financial assistance should be sourced to replace the CDEP component of BAC's development base. This is of particular importance for existing business enterprises and the employment they generate. BAC and its constituents should continue to own, manage and control the enterprises in any financial arrangement.**

**14. That a workable version of STEP be developed to suit the local socio-economic environment.** This must increase flexibility in the programs administrative requirements. In particular, a localized arrangement for STEP should include:

- a) Major increases in time frames.
- b) The flexibility to engage new participants at any point along the step continuum.
- c) A broad definition of 'emerging employment opportunities' in order to allow for the long term development of employment in the region.
- d) Major amendments in expectations of the program to realistically allow for massive literacy and numeracy barriers participants will face.
- e) Realistic understandings that most people in the Maningrida will not 'out migrate' for work.
- f) A major consideration of how STEP could possibly work for outstation residents.
- g) Locally developed arrangements for apprenticeships and traineeships.
- h) Articulation with a local Job Network arrangement.

**15. If major impediments in the delivery of STEP, can be negotiated or mitigated it is recommended that BAC consider becoming Maningrida's STEP provider.**

**16. That BAC consider and investigate becoming a Registered Training Organization to deliver STEP and mitigate problems with external RTO provision.**

**17. That BAC and the Australian government work together to develop a modified and localized version of WfD for the outstations. This is of immediate and pressing concern for Outstation residents<sup>42</sup>.**

**18. That BAC consider entering a partnership, Memorandum of Understanding or contractual agreement with Mission Australia to become the WfD provider (not sponsor) in the outstations.**

**19. That BAC consider entering into a partnership, Memorandum of Understanding or contractual arrangement with a large Job network provider to become Maningrida's job network provider.**

**20. That BAC consider becoming a Registered Training Organisation or partnering with a local RTO to provide outstation WfD participants with alternate pathways through decentralized training opportunities and localized employment opportunities.**

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<sup>42</sup> See Future of Outstations section for further recommendations.

## **The Future of Outstations in the Maningrida Region**

*'It's interesting that when you go and visit the outstations, quite often they have a much more disciplined lifestyle and school attendance is not the issue that it is in the larger centres. So quite often they are far more functional, without alcohol and without the problems besetting the larger circumstances'* (Brough 2007c).

### *Current Situation:*

The Outstations of the Maningrida area have a long history and are populated by a diverse range of culturally and linguistically distinct people (see Background p.6). Outstation people in the region are significantly healthier and have less issues with substance abuse (Burgess 2007). Despite an ongoing struggle for parity of infrastructure and servicing, as a result of a significant policy gap between the Commonwealth and NT governments, Outstation amenities have grown exponentially in the region. This is due primarily to BAC's use of CDEP arrangements. Much of the economic development growth of the Maningrida region is a result of Indigenous knowledge bases stemming directly from skill sets learned in the outstations. This is exemplified in continued economic growth of art and land management enterprises. Outstations also provide the cultural base of most of Maningrida's population, who consider the surrounding land as critical in the ongoing maintenance of ceremonial practice.

Outstation people are highly mobile (see Income Management p.20) and may occupy a number of locations within their immediate region depending on seasonality. This is determined by customary production requirements such as hunting for geese, turtles or fish. These activities form an important part of the Outstation economy. However, Outstation people are far from socially isolated. They are highly engaged in many aspects of modernity and are widely traveled, both domestically and internationally. Consequently, the residents of Maningrida's Outstations exhibit a distinctly intercultural mode of engagement with the wider Australian community. This is underpinned, nonetheless, by a very strong desire to continue the management and future development of their traditional clan estates. Recent consultations with people lead us to believe this is unlikely to change.

The continued occupation of people 'on country' in the Maningrida region is important to the nation's maintenance of its biodiversity and security. Outstation people, in conjunction with an already successful Ranger program (see Ranger case study) maintain the Indigenous estate through activities including customary burning, weed management and feral animal control. They also provide a vital early warning system on the introduction of foreign diseases and pests. The Maningrida area has a coastline of approximately 180 kms in length. Many of BAC's constituents reside on this coastline and regularly spend time in a position where they can monitor and report on illegal activities in our Northern waters. There is a great deal of research on the benefits to the nation of all these activities that supports its continued and strengthened recognition (For example see Altman & Cochrane 2003).

Similarly, risks to Australia's biodiversity can be mitigated by people living in outstations. For example, Fordham (in press) has found that in less than 50 years

extirpation (local extinction) of turtles is likely in the region due to feral pig predation. Outstation people have a crucial and increased role to play in mitigating issues such as this through feral animal control programs. This is a work opportunity that should be maximized.

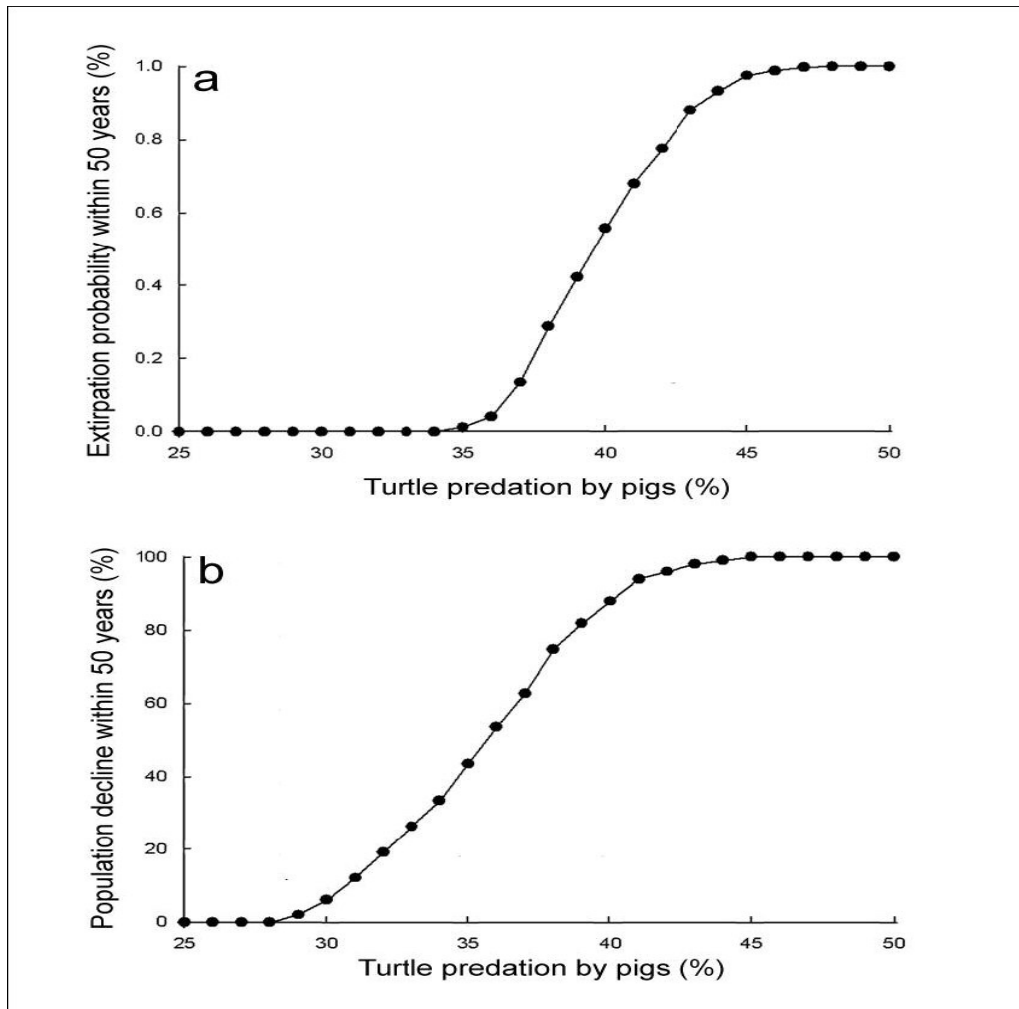


Figure 11: Turtle and Pig Predation (Fordham in Press)

There has been a significant investment by both the state and BAC in the long term development of Outstations. BAC currently has \$35 Million dollars worth of infrastructure servicing the outstations of the region. This includes:

- Housing for 800 people
- Solar bores, pumps and tanks
- Ablution blocks
- Generators
- A motel
- Machinery sheds
- A laboratory
- Associated outstation business premises
- A Bell helicopter and a fixed wing aircraft



- Solar electricity units
- Ranger Stations
- Gravel Roads
- Airstrips

This infrastructure currently provides contemporary housing that meets client's needs and aspirations; a reliable safe water supply that is reticulated to housing and shared community facilities; an electricity supply that provides lighting and refrigeration and waste disposal facilities that meet contemporary public health requirements (BAC 2004). This is augmented by investments from the state in schools and telecommunications<sup>43</sup>. BAC also has also invested in a helicopter and plane for emergency evacuations from Outstations. Depopulation of the Outstations would see a fast deterioration and destruction of this infrastructure base with a current replacement cost of \$35 million.

### *Impacts and Limitations of Intervention:*

The Australian government's range of interventions and the abolition of CDEP may have the impact of a depopulation of the Outstations (see Work Arrangements p.26).

This may have immediate negative impacts in the region and longer term negative impacts on issues of national importance.

Immediate impacts on the region are likely to be:

- *Increased pressure on a currently insufficient number of houses and associated infrastructure*

There are currently 240 residents of Maningrida on the house waiting list. Current backlog is estimated at a cost of \$85 million, not including repairs and maintenance to existing stock (Pers. Comm. 2006). There is currently an estimated 16 people per household. An permanent influx of approximately 600 extra people would cause a critical accommodation crisis requiring emergency provision. Similar impacts can be predicted in the school, Maningrida CEC, which currently has the capacity to service only 450 students<sup>44</sup>. Conversely, the current \$35 million infrastructure of BAC, and investments by the state in schools would be wasted.

- *Increased levels of social dysfunction and child abuse*

Overcrowding produces environments conducive to child abuse, substance abuse and increased levels of social dysfunction, as well as having negative impacts on education and health outcomes (Anderson & Wild 2007).

- *Increased law and order issues*

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<sup>43</sup> There are currently 14 schools in the outstations and solar pay phones at each Outstation.

<sup>44</sup> Similarly, the impact of quarantining is likely to see an exponential rise in attendance and resultant pressure on staffing levels and classroom space. This needs immediate consideration but is out of scope

Outstations act as a 'pressure release valve' for inter-clan and inter-tribal disturbances as a result of critical incidents in the community. The removal of an income support base in the Outstations will negate the possibility of people leaving the township for extended periods to avoid the escalation of such disturbances. This will have ramifications for policing and the general safety of the community.

*- Reduced economic development and employment*

The disruption to the production of artwork should Outstation residents be relocated threatens an industry in excess of \$2 million annually (see also Changes to the Permit System p.16). A growing land and sea management program, with sustainable enterprise and employment outcomes, will be irreparably disturbed leaving government to cover costs of land management which have been estimated at \$25 per acre per annum. In the Maningrida region this translates as a potential cost to government of \$62 million a year<sup>45</sup>. A \$20 million carbon abatement scheme negotiated with Conoco Phillips, the West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement project, based on strategic fire use by people 'on country' may also be threatened. The broader industry of greenhouse gas abatements in the region is also at risk.

Longer term impacts of national importance are likely to be:

*- Intergenerational loss of Indigenous knowledge base and cultural difference*

Indigenous knowledge bases are essential in the future of Australian scientific development and commercial exploration. An estimated 10,000 native plants can be used for food, and only a fraction of these are currently used by non-Indigenous people. Sales of 'bush tucker' were worth A\$1.4 million in 1996, but are continually growing. A commonly accepted estimate in the literature indicates that 77% of all plant related pharmaceutical products are produced through Indigenous knowledge. The figure of 77% becomes even more significant when one considers that the World Bank recently estimated that plant related medicinal products would reach a global value of US \$5 Trillion dollars by 2050 (Hunter & Jones 2006). Combining the Indigenous contribution to pharmaceutical medicine with its traditional use world wide indicates that Indigenous knowledge may be responsible for over 60% of medical treatment in developed nations and 85% in developing nations. It is in the nation's interest that we maximise and grow our competitive advantage in this area.

Locally, such development depends on the maintenance of Indigenous knowledge bases and intergenerational transfer. In order for this to occur, Aboriginal people must be able to forge futures on their estates and have the opportunity to teach young people about traditional uses of plants and animals. This knowledge transfer happens through continued occupation of the Outstations and the maintenance of local linguistic and cosmological practice. In the view of the authors, it is in the national interest that such pursuits are supported by the state. There is a very real risk that such transfer will be irreparably disrupted if the Indigenous estate surrounding Maningrida is depopulated through a loss of workable income support. The costs to the nation of this occurring, while, presently unquantifiable, are certain to be high and ongoing.

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<sup>45</sup> 2471043.9 acres x \$25per Acre

*- Risks to longevity of employment developments such as the Ranger Program*

The Ranger program is built on an Indigenous knowledge base. The program requires the continued intergenerational transfer of this knowledge through people's occupation 'on country' in Outstations.

### **Case Study: BAC Djelk Rangers**

*The ranger program has grown directly from the desire of outstation people to manage their country and the recognition of this work's value and potential to create employment. The Djelk Ranger program was established in its original form 16 years ago and extended to include a marine ranger program in 2003. A woman's ranger group was started in 2002 and, importantly, nearly half of the current Djelk Rangers are under 25 years of age. The program dovetails Indigenous knowledges about land and sea with western-scientific conservation and a rigorous economic development regime. The successes of this approach can be seen in the variety of work this model has generated.*

*In 2007 the Djelk rangers won a lucrative contract with Customs to provide regular border security patrols along the 180 km long coastline in the area. The contract is a recognition of years of unpaid work in which the rangers regularly detected and intercepted foreign fishing vessels from Indonesia. In 2006, for example, the rangers were instrumental in the interception of 26 illegal foreign fishing vessels. Partnerships with other agencies include a fee for service arrangement with the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service for reporting and monitoring potential threats from foreign debris and mosquito born disease. In a similar vein, NT fisheries have a long standing contract with the rangers in which they regularly report on illegal domestic fishing activity, monitor marine pests and provide a quasi policing role on the water.*

*Contractual financing of the rangers is augmented through increasing and innovative enterprise development. Much of this work is based around sustainable commercial use of natural resources harvested from the local Indigenous estate. A good example of this is an established and successful crocodile industry, incubating eggs and selling hatchlings to crocodile farms in Darwin. Similarly, turtle hatchlings and tropical fish are sold to the pet trade, a wildlife centre for the sale of selected animals has been established, crab aquaculture is being trialled and a commercial crab licence has been purchased and is operational. Other enterprises include a plant nursery that collects and germinates native seeds and an award winning tourism enterprise that has been running for the past two years. All of this manifests in a daily work regime of land patrols, weed eradication, feral animal control, strategic burning, targeted training, marine debris collection, ghost net monitoring, turtle nest monitoring, sacred site recording and flora and fauna surveys.*

*Programs like the Djelk rangers are critical in engaging an exponentially increasing population of youth in educative and employment endeavor. A ranger job is seen by many young people as a real and desirable employment option because it is legitimised in Indigenous cosmologies of land and sea management, is financially*

*rewarding and is held in very high esteem by the greater community. Competition for positions is fierce and comparatively high levels of education are a prerequisite for gaining employment. Importantly, this education must also be underpinned by a strong Indigenous knowledge base learned through experience and acquisition of skills on the local Indigenous estate. For example, the two latest recruits to the Djelk program spent most of their schooling in outstation schools learning 'on country'. They are two of only eight year 12 graduates in the community last year and are now engaged in real and important work in their community. Youth unemployment is high in Maningrida and educational engagement is low. Increased investment in developments like the Djelk rangers should be seen as instrumental in tackling these issues.*

### *Possibilities for Constructive engagement:*

Due to the issues and limitations discussed above (as well as the many issues out of scope) we believe it is in the interest of BAC, the Australian government and the wider population of the Maningrida region that workable alternatives to the current intervention plan are considered in the Outstations. The short time frame of this consultancy has not allowed for a full investigation of all the possibilities, however, we are able to propose some key ideas for further discussion with all concerned. The authors strongly recommend that any alternatives considered should be implemented with the informed consent of BAC's executive, its constituents and the wider Outstation community.

Proposal for WfD arrangements in the Outstations (see Work Arrangements<sup>46</sup>).

### **21. That a workable and modified version of WfD be developed to suit the local socio-economic environment. This is of immediate and pressing concern for Outstation residents.**

Given that it is in both the national and local interest that people remain in their outstations, it is suggested that a WfD program be developed around work involving land management and sustainable wildlife development. This may involve, but not be limited to a daily work regime of land patrols, weed eradication, feral animal control, strategic burning, marine debris collection, ghost net monitoring, turtle nest monitoring, sacred site recording and flora and fauna surveys<sup>47</sup>. This type of work is likely to lead to skills and work in a growing area of development on the Indigenous estate. The Outstation WfD program could also include programs of rubbish collection, clean ups and landscaping of the outstations and jobs for the schools. This income base should be augmented by the ongoing production of art. Due to the

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<sup>46</sup> Work Arrangements and Outstation proposals are interlinked, but for concentration on specific outstation issues it was decided they be separated.

<sup>47</sup> Australia has so far failed to adapt its income support schemes to the outstations movement and to the Indigenous hybrid economy. International best practice is decades ahead of Australia in this regard. In the 1970s, for example, the Canadian Cree Income Security Program (ISP) was introduced to provide income to underwrite wildlife harvesting and adaptive management (see Altman & Taylor 1989).

seasonality of art production a WfD program in the outstations should be exempted from income tests<sup>48</sup>.

It is recommended that a localized arrangement for WfD should include:

- a) A major change in the Centrelink requirement of weekly office attendance.
- b) A local Job network provider that has the capacity to work with WfD in the Outstations.
- c) Major changes to the administrative requirements of the WfD, including alternate job diary and interview arrangements.
- d) Significant amendments to participation failure rules for Outstation people.
- e) Amendments to WfD requirements to recognize language, literacy and numeracy barriers.

**22. That an individual incentive payment of \$100 per week be considered for an Outstation WfD program.**

Increasing the WfD income support for outstations may act as an immediate incentive to Outstation people currently in Maningrida. This would help alleviating immediate housing pressure, infrastructure pressure and many of the associated social problems in Maningrida. It would also be a recognition of the fact that Outstations 'are far more functional, without alcohol and without the problems besetting the larger circumstances' (Brough 2007c), have a higher cost of living and of the role they play in managing the Indigenous estate. This could become a key strategy in protecting the children of Maningrida, given the strong links between overcrowding and sexual abuse. Health, Education and Aged Care services already exist in the Outstations and a commitment to maintain these services has been given by the NTG. This would have associated increases in service delivery issues for BAC, but current capacity is sufficient for the short term.

If implemented, these arrangements within WfD should in no way be considered as an end in themselves. Rather, they should be seen a transition point in a growing development base within the region, as well as the beginnings of a renewed recognition of the role Outstations can play in Australia's future.

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<sup>48</sup> It would be rare that artists would exceed the limits of WfD, however, this could act as a disincentive to production for a few key artists who share income with family.

# Rubbish

## *Current Situation:*

Maningrida has a serious rubbish problem, which undoubtedly contributes to ill-health, causes extensive environmental damage and is in no way aesthetically pleasing. The Australian government identified the rubbish problem in communities and ‘community clean-ups’ as one of the points of intervention. Summed up, the issues that seriously contribute to Maningrida’s rubbish problem are capacity and stability. Due to serious overcrowding, wheelie bins that are emptied once a week simply don’t have the capacity to hold the amount of rubbish produced from each house. This is quite obviously insufficient. The other serious contributor to the towns rubbish problem is the dogs and pigs. They easily knock over the wheelie bins, scavenging for food and spread the rubbish everywhere.

After consultation with BAC constituents a plan to fix the rubbish problem is outlined below. The community needs skips strategically placed around the community, which would solve both the issues of capacity and stability. The serious issue around skips though, becomes transporting the rubbish to the tip. The current council trucks that empty the few skips currently in the community are insufficient as they only take one skip at a time to the tip<sup>49</sup>. This is expensive, time consuming and minimizes output from employees. A new rubbish truck specifically designed to lift and compact rubbish from many skips is needed.

## *Possibilities for constructive engagement:*

Program: ‘Skip to the Tip’ rubbish program.

Cost: \$500 000 for rubbish truck and 70 skips<sup>50</sup>.

Figure 12 is an outline of the possible positioning of skips within the community. This is a preliminary plan for positions, however, it gives some idea of how this system would work.

It would be appropriate if this program was put in place to have a mass community clean up, with all organizations in the community contributing. Skips would be needed for this mass clean up as wheely bins would simply not have the capacity to deal with the amount of rubbish. It would be recommended that each household is asked to clean-up their yard, each organization puts their staff on a rotational roster<sup>51</sup> over the period to ensure that businesses continue to function. In the authors view, this is a sustainable solution that would significantly contribute to cleaning up the community.

## *Recommendations:*

**23. That a ‘Skip to the Tip’ rubbish program be implemented as soon as possible**

**24. That a community clean-up is organized.**

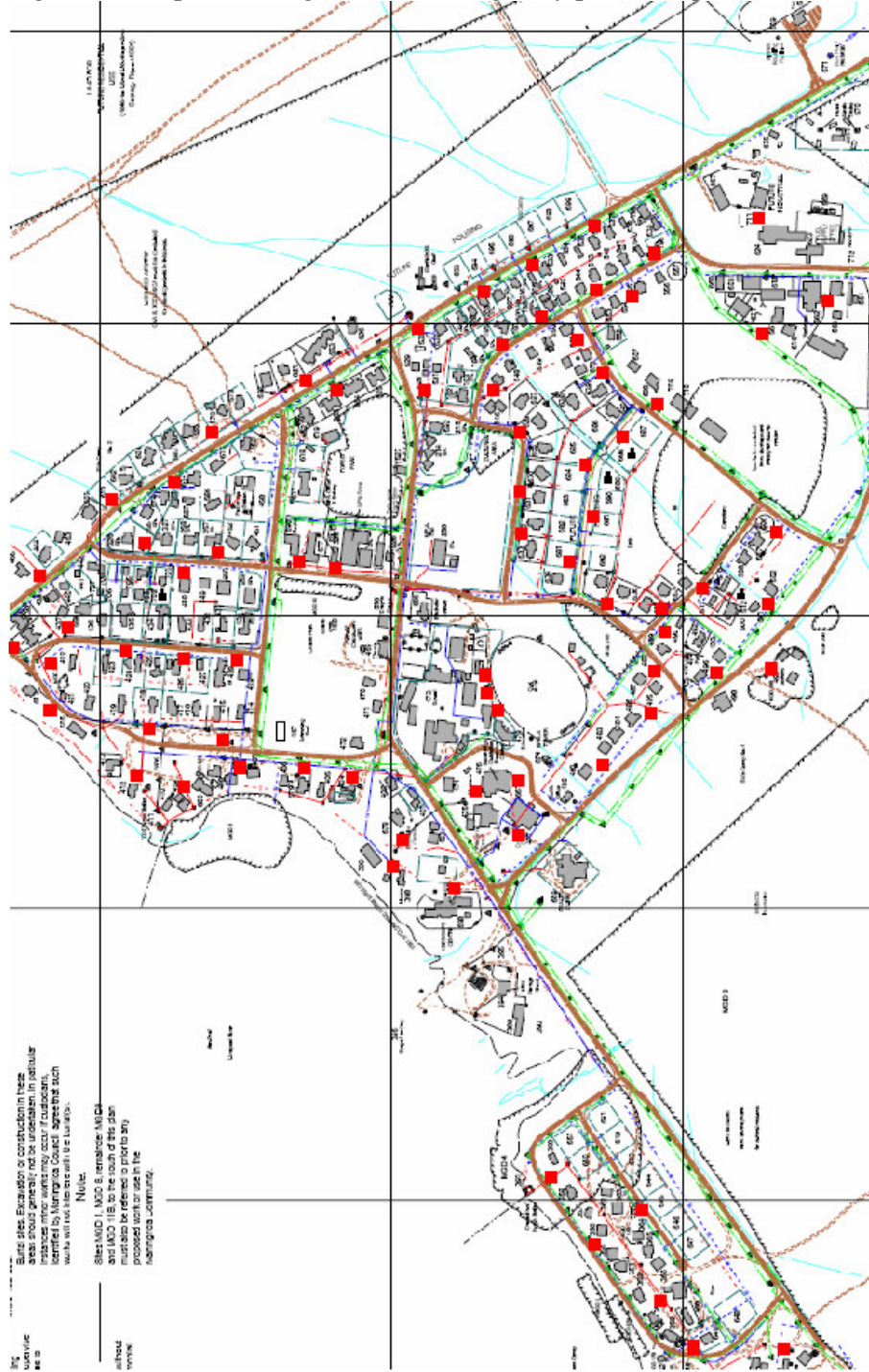
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<sup>49</sup> The tip is approximately 10 minutes out of Maningrida.

<sup>50</sup> 3 cubic meter skips with lids.

<sup>51</sup> For example 3 employees working, 3 rubbish collecting – after 3 hours swap.

Figure 12: Map of Maningrida with strategically placed skips.



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