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PATTERNS OF ABORIGINAL RESIDENCE IN THE NORTH-WEST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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Introduction

The past half-century has been a period of immense and far-reaching change for Aboriginal people who live in the far north-west of South Australia, a people whose culture had been subject to minimal change in pre-contact times, and which had been protected from some of the major effects of contact by remoteness, during the first century of European settlement in South Australia. However in the past fifty years they have had increasing contact not only with whites, including government officials, missionaries, pastoralists, miners, tourists and a variety of adventurers but also with other Aboriginal groups. They have been exposed to a vast range of new experiences and material goods. A money economy has been introduced. Travel and communication have been revolutionised in the region and they have been encouraged to participate in new systems of employment, education, health and welfare services and religion. At the same time they have struggled to retain aspects of their culture including languages, values, relationships, beliefs and rituals.

My purpose in this paper is to outline the major developments in the region during this period and to trace the movement of people as they responded to these changes. In response to occasional incorrect statements, generalisations and simplistic explanations of some of the developments, I seek to offer some

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accurate dates and details, and explanations that take account of the complexity of the movements and of the motivations behind them.

**Traditional patterns**

Any attempt to outline the traditional patterns of residence in the region can be a reconstruction only, based on reports of early observers, oral histories and anthropological research. There has been no archaeological research undertaken in the area. The people who lived in the extreme north-west corner of South Australia and adjacent areas of the Northern Territory and Western Australia were identified by their neighbours as Pitjantjatjara as they used the word *pitjanėja* = coming, to distinguish them from the Yankunytjatjara (*yankunytja* = going) who occupied the country from the western Musgrave Ranges to the east, and the Ngaatjatjara (*ngaatja* = this one) who lived to the west of the Pitjantjatjara. The suffix *-tjara* denotes possession. Tindale refers to a general movement of the Pitjantjatjara eastward following the 1914-5 drought because of a lack of water.¹ Many of the Yankunytjatjara people were forced further south-east to the Everard Range area.

The Pitjantjatjara country consists of a long chain of mountain ranges, the Musgraves, Mann and Tomkinsons, stretching east to west on the southern side of the Northern Territory border, the Petermann Range further north, isolated ranges and hills, and extensive sandhill plains (see Map 1). A distinction is made between *apu murputja*, the hill people, and *pilatja*, the plains people. Limitations in the availability of water and food supplies normally placed restraints on the size of groups living together and on the length of time groups could remain in one area. Occasionally, exceptionally heavy rains enabled much larger groups to collect at a site for ritual, social and exchange purposes. The smaller local groups or bands camped near a water supply and utilised the resources nearby until forced to move on because of the depletion of resources, death of a member of the group or an obligation to meet up with another group. These bands numbered approximately six to
twenty people. As they met up with other groups there could be some exchange of membership between the groups.

The movement of these groups from place to place was based on an intimate knowledge of the country and its resources. For example, group members were trained to know the whereabouts of any possible supply of water, from the large but ephemeral rock holes in the ranges, through soakages in creek beds, claypans, trees which stored water in their roots or trunks, to the more permanent springs found near the base of some hills or banks of some watercourses. It is likely that use was made of the more ephemeral waters and surrounding resources following rain, with the groups falling back to the more permanent springs and soakages during dry spells. Movement was also determined by the association which each group claimed to specific territories with which they claimed a totemic link. According to the Tjukurpa or Dreaming stories the features of each cluster of sites were viewed as the tracks or metamorphosed bodies of the Ancestral Spirits who had emerged from the earth during the Dreaming and moved across its surface. These beings were identified with the various species of the region, including the humans, for example, as kangaroo-man, emu-man, echidna woman, bowerbird-woman, native fig-man, etc.

The group associated with a particular area believed that they shared a common inheritance from the totemic being of that area with the species of that totemic being. Members of the group had the primary rights and obligations associated with the sites, stories, rituals and resources of the area. This descent group is sometimes referred to as the clan to distinguish it from the group which actually resided in the area and utilised the resources from day to day, as the latter group may have included visitors from other clans and members of the clan may have been absent visiting other groups for social, ritual and exchange purposes. Oral histories suggest that some individuals and families undertook long journeys to visit other sites and groups. On the other hand explorers reported that Aboriginal guides accompanying them were reluctant to enter the territories of other groups. For example Murray, who accompanied R. T. Maurice on an expedition in 1901, wrote as follows:
This strip of country is a tribal boundary practically deserted by blacks, each tribe being much afraid of their neighbours. I have been here twice before, and we could never induce any of the Musgrave blacks, though much stronger numerically than the Mann tribe, to go many miles west from Operanna.  

Early contact history

The earliest white intrusions into the region were the exploring expeditions of William Gosse and Ernest Giles who in 1873 were competing for the honour of being first to cross the western half of the continent from the Overland Telegraph Line to the west coast. Gosse entered the area via Ayers Rock which he named in July, and travelled west along the Mann and Tomkinson ranges until turning back from the Townsend Range in Western Australia because of lack of water and the condition of his horses. Giles entered the Musgrave Ranges in September and continued much further west until being forced back after an attempt to proceed west from the Rawlinson Ranges led to the disappearance of his companion, Gibson. John Forrest led the first successful crossing, travelling from west to east in 1874. The Elder Expedition under L. A. Wells and sponsored by the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (South Australian Branch) skirted the southern boundaries of the region.

Extensive trigonometrical surveys were carried out under a surveyor, J. Carruthers, from 1888 to 1892. S. G. Hubbe led a stock route expedition in 1895-96 and R. T. Maurice led a prospecting expedition in 1901. Basedow visited the area in 1903 as a member of a Government prospecting expedition led by L. A. Wells; Basedow's anthropological notes on the Aboriginal inhabitants of the area were published in the following year. While these early visits did little to disturb the traditional residence patterns in the region they were followed by increasing intrusions by a variety of explorers, adventurers, prospectors and survey parties. Oral histories reveal a growing curiosity about these intruders and the new goods they were dispensing, including flour, tea, sugar, lollies, axes and knives. An increasing desire to
have more regular access to these goods, in addition to the previously mentioned drought, probably encouraged some people to move east to make contact with pastoralists who in turn encouraged men to work on their stations in return for the supply of the goods. Some whites accompanied by part-Aboriginal guides made trips into the region to trade the goods in return for dingo scalps for which they then obtained the government bounty. Pitjantja-jara and Yankunytjatjara people sometimes accompanied these 'doggers', as they were known, on their return journeys to their base camps.

White settlement in the region

These spasmodic contacts led occasionally to disputes, for example, over access to women, violence and killings of blacks and whites. In an attempt to provide some protection for the Aborigines, an area of 56,721 square kilometres was proclaimed as the North-West Aboriginal Reserve in 1921. However white settlement of the land east of the Reserve was encouraged by the granting of water permits and pastoral leases to the 'doggers' and others who could find adequate water supplies by digging wells. A lease was granted at Mt. Chandler, near the present site of Indulkana, in 1912 and a water permit was granted to a Mr. Walkington at Moorilyinna north-west of Mt. Chandler in 1934. This was the base for scalp trading expeditions further west. A pastoral lease was granted to Mr. S. Ferguson in 1933 for an area of 500 square miles around Ernabella, one of the principal Yankunytjatjara water holes in the eastern Musgraves. Three other blocks of the same size outside the eastern boundary of the Reserve were granted as water permits in 1934, Red Ochre, Upsan Downs and Shirley Well. These leases were bases for dingo scalp trading, and pastoral development was limited. Groups of Aboriginal people began to settle in proximity to these stations to have access to the new foods and other goods available at them. Another result of increasing contact was the birth of children of mixed parentage. Under government policy police removed many of these children so that they could be brought up in mission homes in Oodnadatta and Quorn.
Establishment of Ernabella Mission

As reports were received of the exploitation of labour, abuse of women, unfair trading and lack of health services, an Adelaide surgeon, Dr. Charles Duguid, visited the region in 1935 and expressed concern about the drift of people to the white settlements to the east. He advocated the establishment of a mission station as a buffer settlement with an emphasis on medical services. The lease of Ernabella station was purchased and Ernabella Mission established there in 1937 by the Presbyterian Church. Leases for the other three blocks were cancelled in May, 1939 for non-compliance of conditions. A white couple, the Browns, were killed while sleeping in an underground room at Shirley Well in January 1939 when floods washed away the supports of a large log which supported the roof. These blocks were added to the Reserve in 1949.

Dr. Duguid laid down the following principles for the mission:
There was to be no compulsion nor imposition of our way of life on the Aborigines, nor deliberate interference with tribal custom ... only people trained in some particular skill should be on the mission staff, and ... they must learn the tribal language. 5

Sheep were retained as a basis for training and employment as shepherds, fencing contractors, well sinkers and shearers. Dingo scalps could be traded at the mission for full value, less a small handling charge.

Following a visit to Ernabella in 1939, Duguid wrote that:
Ernabella is the first buffer station in Australia deliberately planted between the old and the new civilizations. We are seeking to show the natives how much better off they are in their own country - free to roam at will - than sitting down at a cattle station in rags. 6

He reported that there were 140-150 people at Ernabella during his visit and contact made with 500 during the year. He advocated the establishment of depots further west to provide resources for the people during droughts and to discourage the flow of people to the east. 7 The Ernabella Newsletter of August, 1944 referred to 'disquieting reports ... about the tendency of the
natives to move east to the habitations of the white man instead of west to their own Reserve and homeland'. These comments refute the assertion often made that the missionaries encouraged the people to move from their traditional lands to Ernabella. I do not have space in this paper to explore in greater detail the reasons why people moved from their traditional lands to the encroaching centres of white population. Long considers some of the reasons given and draws attention to relevant references. He concludes that:

Everywhere it appears that emigration from unsettled areas began before any intervention by missions or governments and in many places continued in the face of active discouragement. ⁸

Duguid's 1939 Report noted the number of children living at Ernabella, approximately 50-60, and a school was opened in 1940. Duguid wrote that children should not be removed from their families to be placed in dormitories. Some families lived at wells where they shepherded the sheep to protect them from dingoes. An Ernabella Newsletter of August, 1944 included a report on a medical patrol into the Reserve in May and June of that year, in which just over 100 people were contacted. ⁹ In 1948 a handcraft industry was established to provide employment for women. Both indigenous skills such as spinning, and introduced skills such as weaving were utilised. Food was distributed to workers, children and old people but others were encouraged to either seek work on nearby stations or survive by hunting and gathering.

By the late 1940s and through the 1950s the population at Ernabella had risen to approximately 400. In addition, 7 white staff were employed at Ernabella in 1958 and the total white population was 15. The Aboriginal population increased to 500 in July and at Christmas. Families living on pastoral stations to the east came to Ernabella at these times, swelling the population. Following shearing in July, most families moved west or south-west on a holiday 'walkabout,' travelling on foot, horses, donkeys and camels. The school and craftroom closed down for 4 to 6 weeks. The dingoes pupped at this season and people moved out to their traditional homelands to obtain scalps. They were encouraged to maintain their contact with these sites and missionaries drove out to pre-arranged meeting places to trade flour, sugar,
milk, fresh fruit and other foods for the scalps. Similar holidays followed the Christmas celebrations at Ernabella although the hot weather limited the range of movement. Traditional ceremonies were held during these holidays.

By the late 1950s this was the regular round for most Pitjantjatjara people in the area. Some Pitjantjatjara families had moved from the Petermann Ranges region to Areyonga in the Northern Territory while those from the southern sandhill region had moved south to Ooldea on the Transcontinental railway and in 1952 to Yalata near the southern coast. The latter move was forced on the people to enable atomic testing at Maralinga just to the north of Ooldea. Most Yankunytjatjara and some Pitjantjatjara people lived on cattle stations in the east. Some, such as Granite Downs and Everard Park, had permanent populations of approximately 100 and 60 respectively. Others such as Kenmore Park, Victory Downs, De Rose Hill and Mt. Cavanagh had small permanent camps. Aboriginal men were employed as stockmen when required and younger women were employed in house work. Groups of young men from Ernabella were called upon to work on some of these stations to muster cattle and escort them to the railway stations at Finke and Oodnadatta.

While there was movement across the Reserve for ceremonial and social purposes during these decades, few people stayed there for any length of time. Drought in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s encouraged people to remain at Ernabella to the East, Areyonga to the north and Warburton Mission to the west as food and water were easier to obtain at these centres. The presence of a nickel exploration camp at Mt. Davies in the extreme north-west corner of the Reserve in the 1950s attracted some people as a bore provided permanent water and food was available. However contact between the mining camp and Aboriginal people was discouraged.
Figure 1. Ernabella, 1968.
Figure 2. Travelling on holiday from Ernabella to visit traditional sites, August 1960.
Establishment of new settlements in the 1960s

The congregation of a large population at Ernabella on a semi-permanent basis created problems. Disputes arose amongst the people as members from several local groups lived in close proximity for most of the year. As authority was linked to the sites, stories and rituals of the local groups, the residence of several groups together away from their own sites caused tension. As people from other areas gained power and status through work, education, the church and access to resources at Ernabella, people with traditional links to the Ernabella region felt threatened. Increasing sedentiveness of a growing population placed pressure on the water and firewood resources around the mission. As the desire for introduced goods increased there was a demand for more employment. However mission resources were limited; there were no Commonwealth funds available and State funds were limited to supplying medical supplies, and food and blankets for the aged, infirm and children. By the early 1960s drought and changing methods of handling cattle had decreased the demand for employment on nearby cattle stations.

In 1957 the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Missions, the Rev. V. W. Coombes, revived Duguid's earlier vision of a series of outstations to the west of Ernabella, with Ernabella as an administrative and service base. This would enable people to return to traditional areas and ease the strain on natural resources near Ernabella. Support for the proposal were sought from the Aborigines Protection Board of South Australia. This was not forthcoming.

In 1957 the Protection Board engaged the Mines Department to put down bores for water on the Reserve. There was a demand from pastoral interests that Reserve land should be opened up for pastoral leases and development. In response to this, and to provide surveillance of entry to the Reserve, the government agreed to the establishment of a settlement to be run by the Protection Board on the Reserve. A bore situated in a gap in the western Musgraves was selected as the site as it would enable control over entry into the Reserve. The station was opened in April 1961 and named Musgrave Park.
As the people referred to it as Amata, after a nearby waterhole, the name was changed officially in the mid-1960s. A superintendent and a cattle manager were appointed.

The Protection Board decided that six families from Ernabella should be offered the opportunity to live at Musgrave Park. Several families indicated interest and six were selected and became the nucleus of the Aboriginal population of the new settlement, joining the two white couples. The Aboriginal couples were selected because of their links to land near to, or to the west of, Musgrave Park. Early reports referred to Musgrave Park as a cattle training station where Aboriginal men would be trained to work on nearby cattle stations. However within the Protection Board there was some opposition to this on environmental grounds. Men were employed on fencing and yard building and cattle were introduced in 1964. Relatives of the original families gradually joined them and the 1962 Report of the Aborigines Protection Board stated that the population varied considerably, with 400 camping there during ceremonies and a regular population of 150. A clinic was opened in 1962 but a school was not established until 1968. By then the regular population had risen to approximately 300, and the school enrolment in the first year was 82 including 7 non-Aboriginal children. The administrating body, the Aborigines Protection Board, was replaced in 1963 by the newly established Department of Aboriginal Affairs. This Department was in turn subsumed under the new Department of Community Welfare in 1970.

The presence of the new settlement gradually led to an abandonment of the holiday trips from Ernabella to the west. People now tended to visit relatives at Musgrave Park or join them on ceremonial visits to Areyonga or Warburton. Staff at Musgrave Park gave some encouragement from time to time for small groups to camp in the Mt. Davies area to hunt for dingoes by making store and medical patrols. This increased in the mid-1960s when they were encouraged to mine chrysoprase near Mt. Davies. These periods of residence in that area depended very much on the interest of the staff at Musgrave Park (Amata) at the time and their willingness to provide services. They became less dependent
and the rate of change escalated as Pitjantjatjara people gained more access to a money economy through increasing wages and social service benefits. Following the first purchase of a motor vehicle by an Ernabella man in 1961 a high proportion of this income was set aside for such purchases by the late 1960s.

The establishment of Musgrave Park forestalled plans by the Presbyterian Board of Mission to expand west. They negotiated with the government for the development of an outstation of Ernabella on the Shirley Well block, a section of the Reserve over which they had grazing rights. With government financial assistance, Fregon outstation was built in 1961, opening a few months after Musgrave Park. The aims were to provide a place of residence 60 kilometres south-west of Ernabella for people associated with the sandhill country to the west and training and employment in cattle work. Four staff were employed, an overseer, a cattle manager, a teacher and a nursing sister. The outstation was administered from Ernabella. It was designed for approximately 100 people. The cattle work expanded from the original 200 head purchased in 1961 with regular sales to southern markets in the mid and late 1960s and a herd of 7,000 in the late 1970s. The population rose steadily to approximately 250 over this period.

As employment on cattle stations decreased there was growing dissatisfaction amongst some people living on these properties. Station managers resented attempts by welfare officers to enter Aboriginal camps on stations to provide welfare and health services. People who lived at Granite Downs station moved 20 kilometres west from the main camp to a waterhole on the Indulkana creek. Negotiations with new owners of the station lease led to the excision of an area of 30 square kilometres from the pastoral lease. Indulkana Aboriginal Reserve was gazetted and in 1968 the South Australian Department of Aboriginal Affairs established a settlement with a small staff and approximately 150 residents. A small clinic, store and workshop were erected and a school opened in 1971. The restricted area of land, nature of the terrain and problems with water limited opportunities for economic development and employment. People moved to Indulkana from nearby pastoral properties.
Figure 3. Puta Puta Homeland, 1976.
In 1978 the Pitjantjatjara Homelands Health Service was established at Kalka, a few kilometres north of Pipalyatjara. Caravan-type buildings were provided for a Doctor, Sister, Administrator and Clinic and placed at Kalka so that the Service would be seen as serving all homeland centres and not just one community. A small community has gathered at Kalka and staff advising and serving the smaller communities reside there.

In 1976 the Department of Aboriginal Affairs offered $10,000 each for the establishment of outstation communities at Cave Hill (near Amata), Kunamata, Lake Wilson and Ilturunga (Coffin Hill). This provided for the equipping of bores with windmills and tanks, a vehicle and a shed for each community. Residence at these communities has been variable. Ilturunga is remote and the isolation has encouraged people to return to Fregon after short periods of residence there. Cave Hill, being close to Amata has been more regularly occupied although three or four different groups have lived there since its establishment. Three different sites, including Aparatjara, have been occupied in the Lake Wilson area but all have been vacated recently. Lack of adequate water supplies has frustrated attempts to settle at Kunamata. One factor that has hindered the outstation movement is that while older people wish to return to traditional areas, children and young people have preferred to remain on the larger communities where they have spent most of their lives and have access to a wider range of experiences.

In 1977 a few families from Fregon and other centres moved to establish a camp at Kunytjanu, 90 kilometres south-east of Pipalyatjara because of their association with sites in the region. In May, 1977, 25 people resided there, although the population has declined in recent years as some have moved back to Fregon. Another community has been established at Wartaru (Mt. Lindsay), 80 kilometres south-east of Kunytjanu. In 1979 two brothers who had been living at Indulkana established a community at Walytjitjata, north of Puta Puta and just over the Northern Territory border. They left the community in 1982 but other groups associated with the area have occupied it in recent years. Another site, Kanpi, on the road between Amata and Pipalyatjara has been
Figure 5. Kunytjanu Homeland Garden, 1983.
Figure 6. Waltjitjata Homeland, 1982.
occupied spasmodically since 1977, firstly, by a small group of older people, but since 1987 by two sons of the man who first camped there in 1977, and their families. Houses and a store have been erected and in 1988 a solar power plant provided power for lighting, battery charging, a freezer and a refrigerator. This was a bush camp a few years ago. Now, solar power enables videos to function. Another site a few kilometres east of Kanpi, Nyapari, has been settled spasmodically also since 1979. Families moved here from Fregon. The provision of housing since 1987 has tended to stabilise the community at Nyapari.

A couple who had been prominent residents at Ernabella and Amata have been involved in the establishment of Angatja community in a valley in the north-east corner of the Mann Ranges. The wife's family came from this area. They have sought to develop Angatja as a rehabilitation centre for children affected by petrol sniffing at Amata, but have found it difficult to keep the children there. They have embarked also on a tourism venture, providing some experience of traditional life for small groups of visitors who travel from Alice Springs by coach.

Other developments following from the incorporation of community councils and paralleling the outstation movement of the late 1970s were the formation of the Pitjantjatjara Council in 1976 and negotiations by that body with the South Australian government which led to the passing of the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Bill of 1981. This Bill gave to Pitjantjatjara people the inalienable freehold tenure over the North-West and Indulkana Reserves, as well as the Ernabella, Kenmore Park and Mimili pastoral leases totalling 102,360 square kilometres. The Bill also provided for the addition of the Granite Downs leases to the Pitjantjatjara lands on the expiration of the existing leases. The Granite Downs leases were surrendered by Commonwealth Hill Pty. Ltd. thus enabling the addition of 9,519 square kilometres to the Anangu Pitjantjatjara freehold lands.
Figure 7. Solar-powered freezer at Kanpi, 1989.
Space does not allow a fuller treatment of the motivations for, and history of the outstation or homelands movement. I have outlined them in a paper presented at the Fifth International Conference on Hunting and Gathering Societies in Darwin, 1988. 11 As I indicated in that paper, some explanations of the movement have been simplistic. One model assumes that Pitjantjatjara people were pressured to leave their lands to live at missions and government settlements and that they returned en masse to their traditional lands to escape the social problems of the larger settlements. This model has overlooked the complexity of the eastward movement and the presence of social problems at some homeland communities and has over-estimated the extent of the westward movement. Some people had traditional associations with sites near the settlements such as Ernabella and Amata while others have preferred to remain at these centres where they and their families have grown up rather than return to their patrilineal homelands. Others have moved between the settlements and the outstation centres.

**Satellite communities**

One form of response to the homeland movement by those who wish to escape the pressures of the larger communities but still remain within reach of their services has been the movement during the 1980s of small family groups to satellite communities. In the Ernabella area bores once used for the sheep industry have been re-equipped, new bores sunk and families have moved to these sites, which vary in distance from approximately 6 to 40 kilometres from Ernabella. Katjikatjitjara and Wintuwintutjara were established by men with patrilineal ties. Others such as Eagle Bore and Ngarutjara were established by men whose patrilineal ties are far to the west near Pipalyatjara but who have chosen to remain near Ernabella because of long association there, and in the case of Ngarutjara a claim is made on the basis of birth at the site. Houses have been erected at these satellite communities, solar panels provide power, fruit trees have been planted and some attempts have been made to develop gardens and small sheep and cattle projects. A Homelands advisory service based at Ernabella provides assistance with budgeting, administration and
other support services. Residents at these outstations use the educational, health, handcraft marketing and store services at Ernabella. In June, 1988, informants listed 19 outstations based on Ernabella. Eight were at that time unoccupied. Some have been used as weekenders or during winters as firewood is more plentiful than nearer to Ernabella. The satellite communities have enabled some residents of Ernabella to seek escape from the pressures of the larger community, to establish a degree of independence and separate identity and to gain access to resources.

Reference has been made earlier to the removal of children born to Aboriginal mothers in the area in the 1930s and 1940s because the fathers were white. Having been raised in mission homes down south and having lived for decades in urban areas, some of these people have now returned to Ernabella to reclaim their Pitjantjatjara or Yankunytjatjara heritage. They and their families have settled at three of the Ernabella satellite communities.

The model of satellite communities has been followed at Amata, Fregon, Mimili and Indulkana. Reference has been made already to Cave Hill near Amata. Other satellite communities based on Amata include Katjikuta, Alpara, Wintawatu, Ulkiya, Yurangka and Tupul. A man who had worked for many years on nearby cattle stations established Alpara, 30 kilometres north of Amata as a small cattle enterprise. Tupul has been established by a group of Aboriginal people who have moved to the area from the distant Port Augusta/Hawker region. A man who had relationship ties moved from Hawker to Amata in the 1970s and was followed later by his sons, some of who married local women.

Fregon families have moved out to cattle bores such as Shirley Well, Morrison Bore, Ironwood Bore, Double Tank, Officer Creek and Tjilpil to establish communities. Attempts have been made to develop small cattle projects at some of these places and one has been used as a base for a feral camel project. Cattle bores at Mimili, including Kulitjara, Robb's Well, Pocket Well and Tita Bore have been developed as satellite communities. The small size of the
Figure 9. Amata, 1991.
Indulkana excision limited development there but some families established Amaruna, Paramita and Witjintitja outstations on the southern outskirts of Kenmore Park while others have established centres close to Mintabie opal mining township. They have moved there to protect nearby sacred sites and to participate in mining activity.

Conclusion

The above history of Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara residence over the past half-century demonstrates that they have adapted to the political, social and economic changes in a variety of ways, and responded to the presence in their land of explorers, pastoralists, missionaries, government employees and others by using alternative claims to rights to reside in various places in order to gain access to introduced resources. Most left their traditional sites to reside on pastoral stations, missions and government settlements. Changes in policy and more independent access to resources in recent years have enabled some to return to patrilineal homelands. Others have remained at the larger settlements because of their long residence and association with these settlements. Others have sought to combine the advantages of settlement and outstation life by establishing satellite communities. Some who participated in the homelands movement in its early years have returned to the larger settlements to rejoin other family members. Others have moved to homeland communities recently as the provision of better housing and other facilities such as solar power and telephones have made them more attractive.

It is difficult to make predictions about the future of these communities. It is probable that the infrastructures provided at the larger settlements with their stores, schools, health centres, workshops and housing will assure their survival as major population centres. While some homeland centres have been abandoned because of lack of facilities, deaths, or disputes about the right to reside, others such as Kanpi have become more stable. Aboriginal population figures for the region indicate an increase over the past thirty years of approximately 300%, from 600 to 1,800. In addition to natural increase there
has been an influx of people from other regions. If this trend continues it will put pressure on the resources of the region. The decentralisation movement has relieved pressures in recent decades but this process cannot continue indefinitely.

The increase in the Aboriginal population has been accompanied by a dramatic increase in the non-Aboriginal population in the region. In 1958 when Ernabella was the only Aboriginal settlement in the area there were seven staff employed there and a total white population of 15. Approximately ten whites lived on cattle stations within the area of the present Pitjantjatjara lands. The non-Aboriginal population living in the area has risen to over 200. Much of this increase has been related to Education Department staffing. For example there are 24 non-Anangu Education Department employees at Ernabella. In addition to the staff and their families who live on the communities there is a continual stream of temporary maintenance and other workers through the area. Several outside departments and agencies have become involved in providing services. The local community councils are required to negotiate with a plethora of bureaucracies. Despite the rhetoric of self-management, these demands have increased dependence on others. Tasks once undertaken by local Aboriginal people are now performed by outsiders because of the increasing sophistication of the tasks, or the demand that finance be expended within a certain time.

The dramatic increase in population, changes in the residential patterns and the increasing use of the products of modern societies is placing pressure on the ecology of the region. The quality of water supplies has been affected by the demands on underground catchments. The development of septic ponds close to water bores on larger settlements has led to contamination. The rise in the use of motor vehicles has affected the ground around communities and exacerbated the impact on wood and game resources. Above average rainfall in the last 16 years has hidden to some extent the possibility of future adverse effects of contemporary developments. The return of droughts such as that of the 1950s and 1960s could have disastrous effects on communities. The
possibility of such an eventuality should be taken into account in present planning and developments.

Traditional patterns of residence enabled the efficient utilisation of the resources of the region. Early contact patterns reflected a desire to have access to new foods and other introduced goods and many Pitjantjatjara people settled at centres where work was available in order to gain this access. While some progress was made with the development of sheep, cattle and handcraft industries, droughts, remoteness from markets and limited resources hindered attempts to foster viable industries. The introduction of social security and unemployment benefits undermined much of the motivation to participate in regular employment. As communities experienced problems because of this, Community Development Employment Projects were introduced to replace payments of unemployment benefits. However the positive results have been limited. The absence of a challenging and satisfying economic infrastructure contributes to social and political problems in the region. Stockmen once provided a model for Pitjantjatjara boys. It has not been replaced by a satisfactory model. There is little motivation for formal schooling. The practice of petrol sniffing has been more attractive for many young people. Radical changes to the ways of providing resources in the area may be the only way to counter these adverse effects of contemporary developments, although it would be very difficult to obtain general agreement for such changes. It seems obvious that if Aboriginal people are to be in any way self-sufficient again in the region, the roles of non-Anangu staff must change, and their number be reduced.

It may be assumed that the Aboriginal population in the area will continue to increase with population clusters at the existing larger communities and some of the homeland and satellite communities. Social problems will increase unless serious, informed and resourced attention is given to the demographic, ecological and economic structures of the communities.
Endnotes


7. ibid., p. 13.


