

**Indigenous families and the  
welfare system: The Kuranda  
community case study, Stage Two**

**R. Henry and A. Daly**

**No. 216/2001**

ISSN 1036-1774

ISBN 0 7315 2651 1

Rosita Henry is a Lecturer in Anthropology at James Cook University, and a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR), The Australian National University. Anne Daly is Senior Lecturer in the School of Economics and Marketing, Division of Management and Technology, University of Canberra, and a Fellow at CAEPR.



## Foreword

Australia is currently reassessing the relationship between all Australians and the welfare state. Given the low overall socioeconomic status of Indigenous families, a function of numerous factors including historic legacy, cultural difference, and location, it appears likely that many will remain welfare-reliant for many years to come. How to deal with Indigenous families and their diversity of circumstances in an equitable way will continue to be a critical challenge for any government committed to broad notions of universalism in the delivery of social services and income support. At the same time as the Federal government is considering a potentially significant reformulation of welfare policy and service delivery, there is little accurate information on the extent of Indigenous people's reliance on welfare or its impacts on families and communities. It remains debatable whether the government's new initiatives, under the broad rubric of 'mutual obligation' are applicable to the diverse circumstances and needs of Indigenous Australian families.

This Discussion Paper reports on elements of the second year of community-based research by the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) at the Australian National University (ANU). The first year's findings were comprehensively reported in CAEPR Research Monograph No. 17, *Indigenous Families and the Welfare System*, edited by Diane Smith (CAEPR, ANU 2000). The overall research objectives of the project are to identify, at the community level, the particular factors influencing Indigenous families' access to, and receipt of, welfare income transfers paid for the care of their children, and the potential implications for appropriate policy and service delivery.

An important aspect of this project is the intention that research will be carried out over a number of years with visits being made to the same households in the participating communities by the same researchers. Such intentions, of course, are dependent in part on some stability in household composition, an ongoing willingness of household members to participate in the project and on the same researchers being available.

This Discussion Paper is one of two that report on the second period of fieldwork and household-based data collection associated with the project. It follows closely on from the first stage of the Kuranda community case study as reported in Chapter 3 of CAEPR Research Monograph 17. In this case there has been some change in research personnel; CAEPR has been fortunate to have recruited Rosita Henry from James Cook University of North Queensland, an anthropologist with a considerable research history at Kuranda, to collaborate with Anne Daly on this project.

This Discussion Paper provides valuable insights into the dynamic and culturally-based aspects of Indigenous people's interaction with the welfare system. The timing of the completion of this publication, just after the Federal government's May 2001 election year budget, should facilitate informed debates during an election year concerning a particular 'at risk' section of the total population.

Professor Jon Altman  
Director, CAEPR  
June 2001



## Table of contents

Foreword.....	iii
Abbreviations and acronyms .....	vi
Summary .....	vii
Acknowledgments .....	vii
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Research methodology</b> .....	2
The survey .....	2
Sampling issues and limitations of survey research .....	3
Participant consent.....	4
Analysis of data: Preliminary remarks.....	5
<b>Household and family</b> .....	5
<b>The cultural parameters of child care</b> .....	8
<b>Patterns of mobility</b> .....	9
Housing: A scarce resource.....	11
The impact of mobility on child care and the delivery of welfare payments.....	12
<b>The welfare economy</b> .....	14
<b>A holistic approach to policy and practice</b> .....	15
Services for youth .....	15
The role of the CDEP scheme .....	15
Participation in voluntary work.....	17
Respondent perceptions of Centrelink service delivery .....	17
<b>Conclusions for service delivery and policy</b> .....	18
Mutual obligation .....	18
Welfare Service Transaction Centres and Community Agents.....	19
A flexible package of options .....	19
Notes.....	21
References.....	22

## Tables

Table 1. Sources of income for Indigenous adults in Kuranda, 2000 .....	14
---	----

## Figures

Fig. 1. Household 36 genealogy: Age and gender, Kuranda, November 2000 ...	7
Fig. 2. Movement of Indigenous people in Kuranda, 1999 to 2000.....	10
Fig. 3. Movement of Indigenous children, Kuranda, 1999 to 2000.....	13

**Abbreviations and acronyms**

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ABSTUDY	Aboriginal Study Assistance Scheme
AIAS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies
ANU	The Australian National University
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
CAEPR	Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, ANU
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects
DFACS	Department of Family and Community Services
KMKM	Kowrowa, Mantaka, Koah and Mona Mona (CDEP)
JCU	James Cook University, Qld
NNTT	National Native Title Tribunal
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
WSTC	Welfare Service Transaction Centre

## Summary

This discussion paper presents the results from the second year (Stage Two) of the Kuranda community case study for the project on Indigenous families and the welfare system. Twenty-nine key reference people were interviewed about the factors influencing the delivery of welfare income by government to Indigenous families for the care of children.

Many of the key findings of the initial 1999 survey were confirmed in this follow-up study. Families and households remain highly dependent on income support via the CDEP scheme or benefits and pensions. The key role played by older women in the care of children was emphasised once again. The additional year of data enabled the documentation of the high level of mobility within the community. Between the 1999 and 2000 surveys, 84 individuals or 47 per cent of the 1999 survey participants had changed their place of residence. Some of these people moved as individuals and others as part of a family group. The results emphasise the importance of the extended family network in the care of children.

The results raise a number of important issues for policy and service delivery. The fact that child-care is family-based rather than household-based needs to be recognised in the delivery of services to children. Many children have multiple carers who are in need of financial support for the period in which they are responsible for a child. There therefore needs to be flexibility in the arrangements so that the relevant family payments are going to the person actually caring for a child. The paper emphasises the need for a holistic approach to delivering assistance to children. This includes the importance of increasing the opportunities for employment and training among Indigenous adults, of providing recreational and support facilities for young people, and of facilitating the interaction between Indigenous people and the welfare system.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Research (CAEPR) and the Department of Family and Community Services (DFACS) for the support they have given us to undertake this research. We have benefited from extensive discussions with people in CAEPR, DFACS, and Centrelink and would like to thank them all for their valuable input. We would particularly like to thank Gail Wason for organising a meeting with Centrelink staff in Cairns. At DFACS Ian Boyson, Cordelia Hull, Bob Griffith, and Terry Kapeen have all been extremely supportive of the project, and Cathy Newman provided us with valuable information on the progress of the 'Statement of Care' pilot.

We are grateful to Jon Altman, Diane Smith, Tim Rowse, and John Taylor for their insightful comments on an earlier draft. Nic Peterson also provided valuable feedback. We have also benefited from comments of participants at a CAEPR seminar in February 2001.

In particular we would like to thank the people of Kuranda who gave up their valuable time to help us in this research, and acknowledge their patience in explaining to us many complex matters of household organisation. We also acknowledge the field assistance of Michelle Collins and Marella Brim, without whom we would not have been able to conduct the research. While in Kuranda we were very pleased to be able to discuss the project with people at the local Kowrowa, Mantaka, Koah and Mona Mona (KMKM) CDEP organisation and the Ngonbi Aboriginal Housing Cooperative. Robin Noble and her team at the Cairns Centrelink office also provided useful input. We would also like to thank Romesh Guneratne for his assistance in collating the data from the questionnaires, and Frances Morphy, Wendy Forster, and Sally Ward for their editorial and layout assistance.



## Introduction

This paper reports on the second year of research undertaken in Kuranda as part of a longer-term study on Indigenous families and the welfare system in two communities, Yuendumu and Kuranda. The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) at the Australian National University (ANU) is conducting the study with part funding from the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (DFACS). The terms of reference, objectives and methodology of the research project are discussed in detail in CAEPR Research Monograph 17 (Smith 2000), which provides a 'research benchmark' for this study. The research objective of the overall project is to identify the factors influencing the delivery of welfare income by government to Indigenous families for the care of their children, and to draw out the implications of these factors for family welfare policy and service delivery (Smith 2000: 1). More specifically, the research aims to investigate in each community:

- the household and family organisational structures and composition;
- the nature of the household welfare economy based on the sources of incomes of the individual members;
- the key cultural parameters of child care;
- the patterns of mobility of children and their parents;
- the impact of that mobility on child care and the delivery of welfare payments for the care of children;
- the wider availability of services to Indigenous families, focusing on those relevant to the welfare and care of children; and
- the household members' own perceptions of local Centrelink service delivery and other issues relevant to their family's wellbeing.

Smith (2000) presents the results of the first year of the project and discusses the implications for Indigenous Australians of welfare reform in the context of a substantial agenda for change proposed by government (see Commonwealth of Australia 2000; McClure 2000). A fundamental concern of the research team arising out of this agenda is how effective service delivery and policies for Indigenous communities can be developed, on the basis of historical, social, and cultural realities, without the imposition of a problematic interventionist regime. One of the key issues highlighted by Smith (2000: 7) was what the terms 'family' and 'household' mean in Indigenous societies. This question requires further consideration before any proposed macro-policy frameworks and service delivery models can be applied to Indigenous Australians, and it is explored here in the light of research findings for 2000 and in relation to the complexity of patterns of residential mobility of Indigenous adults and children in Kuranda. The paper considers social and cultural factors that affect mobility and influence the roles and responsibilities of adults in caring for children. It then moves on to an analysis of the social situation of Indigenous people in Kuranda with regard to welfare policy and service delivery. In particular, the implications of proposed welfare reform are considered, especially the principle of 'mutual obligation' and

proposed incentives for encouraging the transition from welfare dependence to paid employment. Finally, the paper presents suggestions for welfare policy and improved service delivery. Some of these build on the baseline recommendations made in Smith (2000); others explore new avenues.

## **Research methodology**

In both 1999 and 2000 a mix of research techniques was used to obtain fine-grained qualitative and quantitative data. This research strategy was designed to explore questions concerning the social arrangements of Indigenous people that are relevant to formulating suitable welfare policy and service delivery. Such techniques included interviews with the staff of community organisations (including the manager of the local Community Development and Employment Project (CDEP) scheme) and regional agencies (including Centrelink), participant observation, informal focus groups, elicitation of household genealogies, and the repeat administration of household surveys via key reference people, with the assistance of Indigenous facilitators. The first phase of the Kuranda fieldwork was coordinated by Finlayson and carried out by Finlayson, Daly and Smith over a combined period of four weeks in June–July 1999 (see Finlayson, Daly & Smith 2000 for a discussion of the results). Daly and Henry conducted the second phase of research in November 2000 over a ten-day period. Although limited time was available for the researchers to conduct interviews, Henry's contribution to the case study is enhanced by an interpretive understanding based on recently completed doctoral anthropological research in Kuranda (see Henry 1999) and over 20 years of informal association with the community.

## **The survey**

For the purposes of the project, the research team decided to focus on the household as the main unit of analysis. In 1999, 28 structured interviews were conducted with key reference people in Kuranda with the intention of tracking their associated households, with a total of 180 members, over a period of three to four years. Although it was recognised that the twin concepts of household and house (in the sense of a physical structure) need to be distinguished, since in many cultural contexts they do not empirically coincide, the team minimally defined 'household' as 'the group of two or more related or unrelated people (including all visitors) who resided in the same dwelling the night previous to the questionnaire interview, who regard themselves as a household, and who make common provisions for food and other essentials of living' (Daly & Smith 2000: 13). With these three defining criteria, the survey allowed collection of data on co-residence, and of some data on shared child-care activities and common provision for rent and electricity. Accurate data on other shared activities of people as members of households, or, indeed, whether 'household' has relevance as an emic category for Indigenous people in Kuranda, requires longer-term fieldwork. In this paper, therefore, we simply use the term household to refer to a co-residential unit—a group of people who live in the same house.

The initial questionnaire from the 1999 study was refined and updated for 2000, to accommodate changes in the structure and packaging of welfare payments for families, and so as to enable further exploration of topics identified in the 1999 survey as requiring attention. Thus, the interview tool used in 2000 maintained a core set of baseline questions but addressed a number of issues that were not a focus in 1999. In particular, the 2000 survey followed up in more detail the circumstances and family roles of young people, young parents and the aged, and the relationship between the CDEP scheme and other welfare programs.<sup>1</sup> The research conducted in 2000, in turn, has generated a number of issues for further research, such as reciprocity between adults and youth, and the implications of ABSTUDY payments for domestic economies. These issues will be pursued further in the questionnaire for 2001.

### **Sampling issues and limitations of survey research**

Daly and Smith (2000) discuss some of the strengths and limitations of the project methodology (see also Finlayson & Auld 1999; Hunter & Smith 2000). The longitudinal nature of the project overcomes some of the limitations of the one-hit survey approach in that it adds a time dimension to the study. However, it still only captures snapshots at one-year intervals. A fuller understanding of the dynamics of family relations, daily patterns of mobility, and the complexity of child-care arrangements requires a case-study approach involving fine-grained ethnography (see e.g. Finlayson 1991; Martin 1993; Sansom 1980).

Other limitations of the CAEPR project, noted by Daly and Smith (2000), are logistical problems arising from the longitudinal approach (see also Hunter & Smith 2000). Given the difficulties in locating and interviewing all the co-residents of a house, it was decided, during the first phase of the study, to focus on interviewing a 'key reference person' for each house. In the Kuranda community case study, a key reference person could be any adult person living in the house, either male or female. Daly and Smith (2000) predicted that difficulties might be encountered in subsequent years of the survey in relocating key reference people and/or individual household members and thus in reproducing the initial sample over time. This, indeed, proved to be the case. Six of the 1999 key reference people were simply unavailable in 2000. One key reference person (28.1) was in bereavement. Two key reference people (16.1 and 21.1) lived in a place that was inaccessible to the researchers because of inclement weather and resulting poor road conditions. Another person (26.1) had moved out of her mother's household to Cairns (we interviewed her mother instead so were able to gather another round of data on this household). One person (9.1) was too busy to meet us during the field period; and the last (8.1) had dissolved her household and become a member of her mother's (17.1) household. In addition, four key reference people had joined different households, either as members (20.1 and 23.1) or as 'boarders' (13.1 and 15.1), but agreed to be interviewed about their new households. The distinction between members and boarders was made by the respondents themselves and is discussed below.

To compensate for the loss of key reference people, six new people were interviewed as a supplement to the second survey in order to maintain a similar sample size to that of 1999. Thus, the total number of interviews for 2000 was 29, representing 28 households with a total of 179 members (105 adults and 74 children). Of these, 108 members (66 adults and 42 children) were the same individuals as in the 1999 survey.<sup>2</sup>

The new key reference people were not randomly selected, but were chosen by the Indigenous facilitators and the researchers, so as to specifically add more households with children and young adults to the sample. The final sample, therefore, cannot be described as statistically random. Rather, it focuses on a select sample of welfare recipients (primarily female) caring for children or young adults. The 2000 key reference people included three men and 25 women. All three men were under 30 years old, while the women were all over 30. Two of the men were on wages but none of the women had waged work.

### **Participant consent**

The research team took a number of initiatives to obtain informed consent for the project. In the second year of the study, researchers followed earlier procedures, again contacting relevant agencies and organisations, and engaging two Indigenous facilitators to help locate the key reference people, to provide introductions or re-introductions, and to request permission from each person to do the follow-up interviews.

A leaflet describing the nature of the research project was given to each key reference person, as well as to any other interested parties. It provided contact details for project researchers, and set out the commitment of the research team to maintaining individual confidentiality. Importantly, a copy of the results of the first phase of the study (Smith 2000) was given to every key reference person. This proved an invaluable means of reintroducing the project and a source of discussion and indeed, debate, as people had the opportunity to reflect upon the results of the 1999 survey and initiatives proposed to improve welfare service delivery.

The interview tool was used in an informal manner. The aim was to elicit relevant data at the same time as allowing more open-ended and spontaneous discussion. Interviews with individuals were conducted mainly in the houses where the key reference people were living, but a number were conducted by appointment at a local café owned and run by the CDEP organisation. In most cases, other household members were present during the interviews, listening and commenting. These people were accepted as additional 'respondents' to each questionnaire and researchers kept notes of their views and the issues they raised. This approach is one commonly used by social scientists, and is particularly appropriate in fieldwork situations or cultural contexts where it is difficult or inappropriate to elicit information from individuals in isolation from others.

### **Analysis of data: Preliminary remarks**

Following the field research, all questionnaires and household genealogies were analysed, and data from both years were extracted and collated for comparative purposes. As in 1999, it was apparent that in the great majority of cases, household members were close kin. People who might have been classified by Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) procedures as 'visitors' to households were kin or their conjugal partners, and were classified by respondents as being co-residents, not visitors. In 1999, for the purposes of research analysis, and in harmony with the respondents' own cultural categories, 'visitors' were classified as 'usual residents'. However, the research results for 2000 have produced a refinement of these categories. Some 'usual residents' defined themselves as 'boarders', or were defined as such by other household members. Except for one household, which had taken in a European tourist as a boarder, boarders are kin who, unlike other household members who contribute on a demand-share basis, have made an agreement with the tenant of the house to pay a regular set rent for a bedroom and use of other facilities in the house.<sup>3</sup>

In 2000, the sample revealed two such situations. One was a single man (15.1) boarding in his first cousin's (father's brother's son's) house, and the other was a family group (a married couple and their two grandchildren) boarding with the wife's cousin (her mother's brother's daughter). The family usually bought its own food and cooked separately. According to the ABS (1991: 60) definition of a 'household', such a 'hearth group' would comprise a separate household. However, cross-cultural studies reveal that the activity spheres of 'households' and 'hearth groups' are not necessarily the same (Helliwell 1990; Wilk 1984). Residents who purchase, prepare and consume food separately from their co-residents might share other types of activity with them. These are matters that the research team plans to investigate further in 2001.

### **Household and family**

Policy and service delivery requires the translation of social life into administrative categories, and 'top down' definitions may reflect the cognitive maps of administrators, bureaucrats and researchers rather than the reality of people's everyday lives. The research team's investigation into social relations in Yuendumu and Kuranda is an attempt to overcome this problem. Our assumption is that a more culturally-informed match between welfare administrative units and particular Indigenous social realities will lead to more effective delivery of welfare payments. Effective delivery can be assessed according to the criterion, which was stressed by respondents themselves during the survey, that the people who actually do the 'looking after' of children (by feeding, clothing and sheltering them) should be the ones who receive the payments.

Daly and Smith (2000), and Hunter and Smith (2000), have discussed problems with the concepts of 'family' and 'household' that are in use as analytical and administrative categories. These categories have also been critically assessed in a

number of earlier CAEPR publications (see Daly & Smith 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999; Martin & Taylor 1995; Smith 1992; Smith & Daly 1996). They have long been widely debated among anthropologists and other social scientists (see Bender 1967; Netting, Wilk & Arnould 1984; Rowse 1998, Yanagisako 1979). As Yanagisako points out, Malinowski contended as early as 1913 that 'careful investigation of the facts of family life in Australia was urgently needed', because of the problematic attribution of 'European characteristics to the Aboriginal family without adequate investigation of the *details* of actual family relationships' (1979: 161).

It must be remembered that 'household' and 'family' are not mere concepts, but are social and economic categories that have important implications for research, and for policy formulation and service delivery to Indigenous people. The choice of unit for analysis for social policy purposes can have significant impact on research findings, and may be subject to political manipulation. For example, in research on poverty, estimates of the numbers in poverty based on families are very different from those based on households (see e.g. Marsh & Arber 1992: 11).

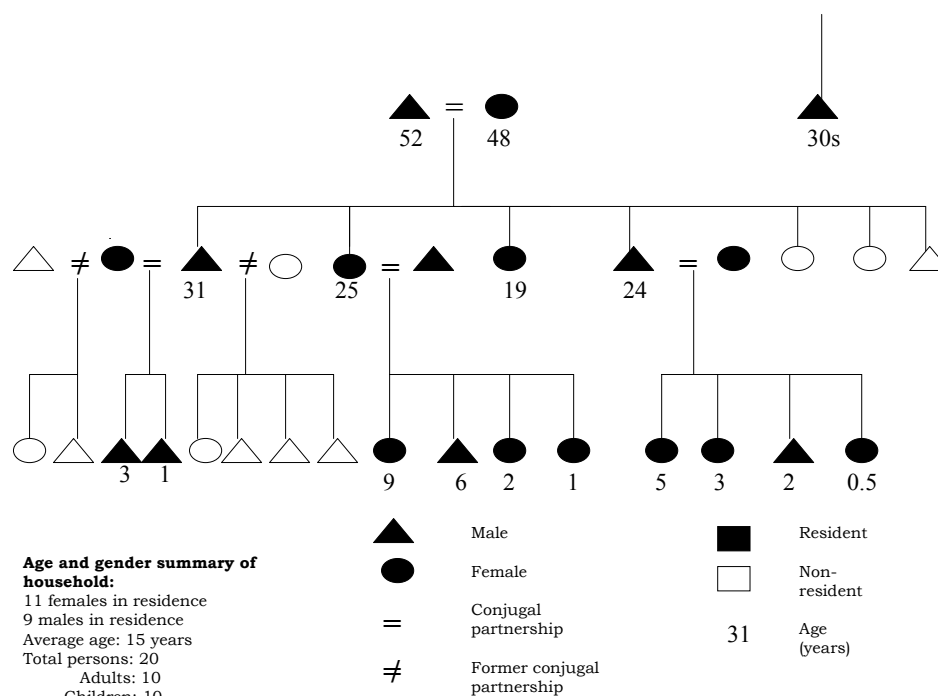
The results of the second phase of research in Kuranda have emphasised the frequent occurrence of multi-generational households and of extensive child-care networks beyond the nuclear family and beyond the household. In the sample of 28 households in 1999, 15 (57%) had three or more generations of related kin, while in the 28 households in the 2000 sample, 12 (42%) contained three or more generations. Fig. 1 is an example of one such household. There were 20 individuals residing in this household: ten adults and ten children. All members of the household were close kin.

The fact that child care extends beyond the boundaries of such households leads us to question the salience of households as child-care units in the Indigenous context in Kuranda. This is not to discount the importance of households entirely, but to stress that the ultimate experiential location of domestic order and care for children among Indigenous people in Kuranda lies somewhere else. Households in Kuranda are integrated into wider socio-economic and kinship networks, or 'families'. A less household-centred picture of social and economic life may lead to more appropriate and effective delivery of welfare payments. The flexible package of options suggested below, which recognises the significance of extended family networks in child care, is an attempt to address this problem.

The concept of 'family' is a more socially, culturally, and politically relevant concept for Indigenous people in Kuranda than that of 'household'. The concept as used here does not equate with the 'nuclear family' or other types of family units as defined by the ABS (1991: 47), but rather with the kind of family Sutton (1998) called 'the family of polity'. To understand patterns of child care among Indigenous people in Kuranda it is first essential to distinguish between the 'household dimension of domestic groups' and the 'familial or kinship dimension' (Carter 1984). In the cultural context of Kuranda, it is the content of social relations labelled 'family' that provides the basis for the care of children. Primary care-groups in Kuranda are extended-family centred rather than household

centred. It is in families that rights and responsibilities concerning children, and their socialisation, are located. What, then, are these families?

**Fig. 1. Household 36 genealogy: Age and gender, Kuranda, November 2000**



While Sutton calls for 'fuller and better ethnography' on the subject, he provides an excellent overview of the nature and significance of Aboriginal families, as 'a distinctive form of social organisation that has emerged in urban and rural areas of most of Australia' and that shows 'some remarkable commonalities across the continent' (1998: 55). According to Sutton, families, or surnamed cognatic descent groups, are 'major forces of cohesion and mutual support in post-classical Aboriginal society' (1998: 57). They are not households, but are jural constructs of 'enduring and central importance to the conduct of Aboriginal business' (1998: 60), not just in relation to property rights, but also with regard to responsibilities and duties of care towards their members, including children. Sutton argues that 'families of polity are more enduring and stable than nuclear families or households, and now form the backbone of rural, urban, and in some cases remote Aboriginal social organisation' (1998: 62).

A better understanding of these 'families of polity' will provide some clues as to practices of mobility evident among Kuranda people, and their relation to child-care practices.<sup>4</sup> There are a number of these cognatic descent groups in Kuranda and our survey sample included members from at least five of these. All the members of such extended families do not live together as a single household. A

'family of polity' might comprise a number of different, but connected households distributed widely around Kuranda town itself and outlying villages, as well as in Cairns and Mareeba, and further afield.<sup>5</sup> Members move among these households, some of which are generated around particular focal members of the descent group who also sometimes act as the household heads. Some of the key reference persons in our survey were such focal members and played a major role in the care of children in general.

### **The cultural parameters of child care**

The survey has a number of limitations with regard to ascertaining patterns of child care in Kuranda. It provides only a 'snap shot' of changes in household composition between the two dates on which the surveys were conducted, and identifies the nominal main carer for a child only on those dates. Yet, as Finlayson and Auld (1999: 8) have pointed out, the care of a child may be shared on a daily basis, with different people assuming different responsibilities. Children may sleep mainly in one house, but may pay daily visits to kin in other households to socialise. They may regularly be cared for away from their nominated place of residence. It is necessary, therefore, to supplement survey research with participant observation.

In the 2000 survey some respondents emphasised the need for the project research to further investigate the role of focal family members as carers of children. The importance of these carers was raised in the report on the 1999 survey results. Focal family members, more usually 'grandmothers' but sometimes 'grandfathers', are significant in terms of assuming responsibility for the care of children and youth. At the time of the survey in 2000 about 40 per cent of children aged 16 years and under were living, with or without their biological mothers, in households with a grandparent or someone of the grandparent's generation. This is also a feature of Aboriginal families of polity elsewhere in Australia. Sutton notes that focal individuals 'often make strenuous efforts to keep as many of their descendants as possible under their own descent group identity while they are alive' and that there may be competition between descent groups as to 'which way the kids will go' (1998: 66). These cultural strategies affect household composition and have economic implications in terms of the financial support of children.

In Kuranda there are a number of 'grandmothers' who could be classified as the 'primary carer' of some of their 'grandchildren'. In ten of the households surveyed, there were children under 16 years of age without a biological parent in residence with them at the time of the survey. It was often the grandmother who was receiving family payments for these children (although one key reference person in the sample was struggling to support two grandchildren on her Aged Pension).

Responses of five of the women during their interviews indicated that particular women take great pride in their roles as carers of not just their 'own' children, but of children in general.<sup>6</sup> These women would take into their household any child in



need, and have in fact also provided short-term care for non-Indigenous children in the community. As one woman (22.1) put it:

Children from homes where there is alcohol and abuse—scary for kids. They can't fight off grown-ups. They come to houses where they feel secure. Better to look after them safe than regret it after something happens. Can blame parents but have to help the children. Rather see the child safe and sound in my home than out on the street. If I'm there for that child, at least someone is there for that child.

She added:

No Murris would turn any children away, so people caring for children need some help with expenses. Something has to be done to make sure the payment goes to the people actually caring for the kids.

Another woman (31.1) asserted that she sees her role in life as giving 'love and affection to kids whose parents are too busy for them, missing out because their parents are working hard, or something'.<sup>7</sup>

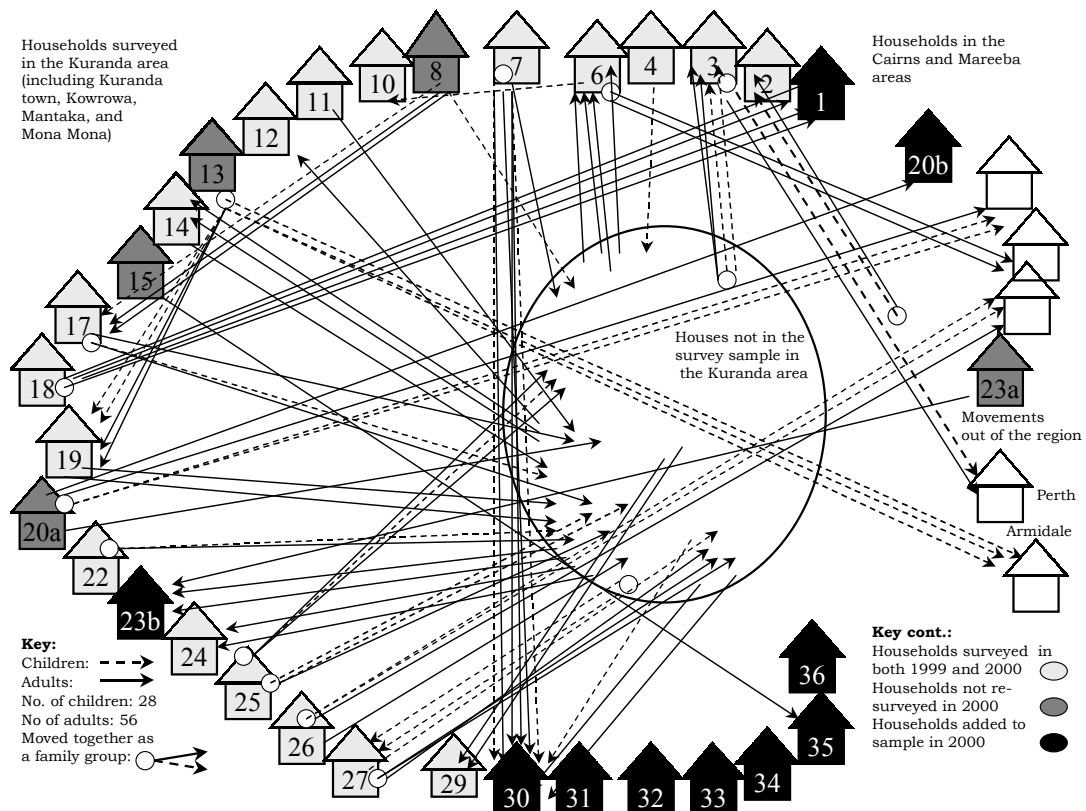
Some of the children that these women 'look after' stay for weeks, months and even years, but others just sleep over for a night or two, or might just spend their days, or after-school time at the house. According to one key reference person (32.1), two non-Indigenous young friends of her children regularly come over to her house for meals and she will also often wash their clothes. These care arrangements have implications for family day-care policy and government proposals for the development of a mutual obligation framework (Commonwealth of Australia 2000; McClure 2000).

## **Patterns of mobility**

In this paper mobility is defined simply as movement from one house to another. Between the survey in 1999 and that conducted in 2000, 84 individuals (56 adults and 28 children), or 47 per cent of the 1999 survey participants, had moved from one place of residence to another. Some of these people moved as individuals and others as part of a family group. Fig. 2 illustrates this movement. It includes all the households for which we have collected data in both years of the survey (18), some of the households which were not resurveyed, and the nine households added to the survey in 2000. The figure shows movements into and out of these households. The households are grouped into the following three geographical clusters; Kuranda area (including Kowrowa, Mantaka, and Mona Mona), Cairns and Mareeba, and 'outside the region'. The arrows—solid lines for adults and dotted lines for children—show the movements that have taken place between the surveys. So for example, two adults and two children have moved into household 3 from other households in the Kuranda area (but not in the survey sample), and an adult and a child have left the household and moved outside the region (to Perth). The 'black' households are new households included in 2000 and the 'dark grey' households were in the 1999 sample but not included in the 2000 sample. All other numbered households were included in both years.

The small circles within or beside households represent family groups which have moved together to a new household.<sup>8</sup> So for example, two adults and two children have moved as a family group from household 13 to household 19, and four adults and two children moved as a family group from household 7 to form a new household (30).

**Fig. 2. Movement of Indigenous people in Kuranda, 1999 to 2000**



Although the results indicate a high level of mobility of individuals and family groups, people rarely move beyond a core of stable households in Kuranda. In fact, if the unit of analysis were taken as the extended family, it could be argued that there is, in fact, very little mobility. People clearly remain within their social and economic milieu, rarely moving outside their family networks in the Kuranda area.<sup>9</sup> On average key reference people had been living in their houses for 7.8 years, and some people have lived in their houses for over 15 years.<sup>10</sup> People do not move in an ad hoc manner. Patterns of mobility are an expression, or manifestation, of kinship networks and also of people's connection to country, and to particular places in the Kuranda area. Children move as part of family

groups to other households within their family network. If they move by themselves, they move between households of specific kin (see Fig. 3 discussed below).

Contemplating the phenomenon of child mobility during the interview, one reference person commented to the researcher that a distinction needed to be made between types of child mobility. She argued: 'There's two types of kids, ones that go just between two households and ones that do the rounds', implying that only the latter type is problematic. The researchers do not view child mobility as pathological. It is not mobility, in and of itself, which makes children objects of social concern. In fact, mobility may be a reflection of the existence of an elaborate network of social support, as well as an expression of individual autonomy. However, the mobility of some children who are 'doing the rounds' may be a reflection of their marginal status and vulnerability.

### **Housing: A scarce resource**

Mobility of Aboriginal people in the contemporary context should not be interpreted simply in terms of intrinsic, often romanticised, Indigenous cultural norms. Mobility is also a result of particular historical, social and economic conditions, in particular, conditions which impact upon the availability of housing.<sup>11</sup> This is also true for the overcrowding of the housing stock. It is poverty and the limited availability of housing that have created overcrowding rather than a preference for people to live together in one house.

Repeatedly during interviews, people raised housing as a key concern for Indigenous people in Kuranda. A detailed analysis of the history and politics of housing in Kuranda is beyond the scope of this paper. Yet a better understanding of the nature of Indigenous households, families, mobility, and child-care patterns requires a holistic approach in which the significance of such factors as housing are taken into account. Historical and social factors concerning the availability and allocation of housing for Kuranda's Indigenous people have had significant effects on contemporary household 'form and function' (see Wilk & Netting 1984).

Mobility and overcrowding in Kuranda are partly a consequence of the dire shortage of housing available for Indigenous people. Although Indigenous people utilise extensive kin networks, and emphasise the fact that they 'live extendedly' (as one key reference person put it) as being what makes them different from non-Indigenous Australians, there is nevertheless a contemporary cultural preference for nuclear family units to have separate dwellings or to keep separate 'hearths' (Sansom 1988).<sup>12</sup> For example, the 20 members in household 36 (see Fig. 1) live in a three-bedroom house. That the adult children of the tenants, with their conjugal partners and offspring, are 'usual residents' in this house is not a matter of cultural choice but of social necessity. As the key reference person (36.1) for this household put it:

There's no more houses built in Kuranda for Aboriginals and rent is too high for ordinary housing. People think we want hand-outs all the time but they don't know the real story behind it. Families are growing every year—you can see how many children are in my house. It's hard to keep clean. They have to sleep on the floor. It's supposed to be getting better not worse. This is our struggle—people are not aware of it.

The very same concerns were raised by respondents in the 1999 survey and clearly constitute a continuing problem in the community.<sup>13</sup>

A significant influence on residence patterns is family connection to 'place'. There is a cultural preference for people to live in the same place as their close kin (although not necessarily in the same house). Particular families are closely associated with particular settlements in the Kuranda area and members of these families would not necessarily be comfortable renting a house in one of the other settlements even if one was available. Similarly, even though some people have moved to Cairns and Mareeba in search of accommodation, there is great reluctance to move outside the Kuranda area.

The scarcity of housing in Kuranda has significant implications for patterns of child mobility. Conflict erupts in households partly because of overcrowding (but also because of other social factors). Children, like adults, choose to escape to more peaceful living conditions. Networks of kin living in different households provide a 'safety net' for children, including some non-Indigenous children.

### **The impact of mobility on child care and the delivery of welfare payments**

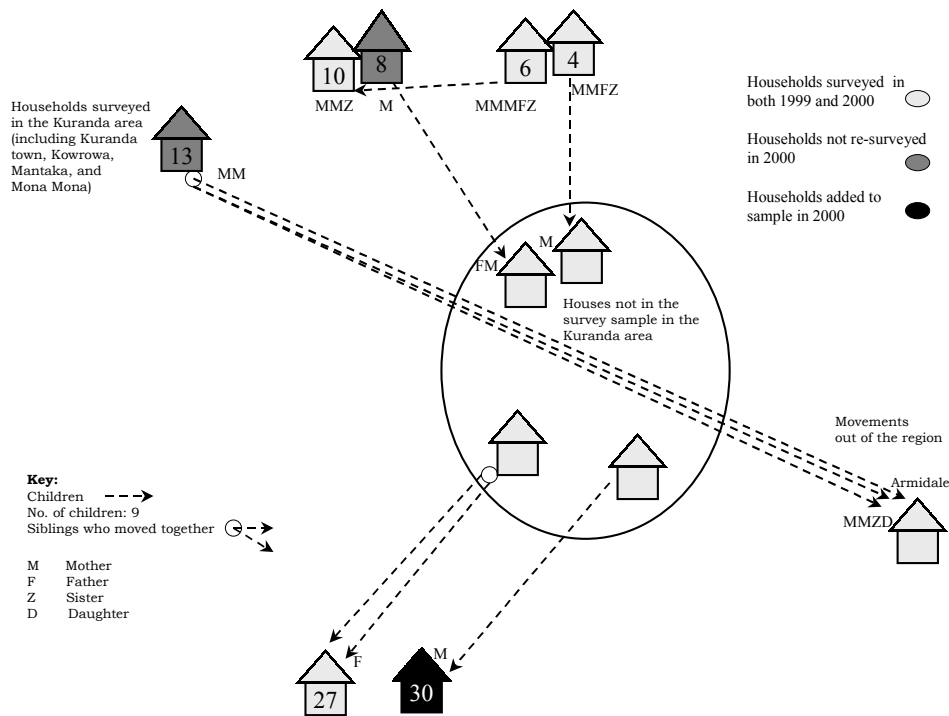
Most children move with their family groups and primary carers. In such cases, of course, there are no implications for the delivery of the Family Tax Benefit or Parenting Payment. However, the mobility of children as individuals between households is another issue. The survey reveals that, between 1999 and 2000, nine children (out of 28 who moved) had moved from one primary carer to another (see Fig. 3).<sup>14</sup> Apart from two children (siblings) who moved to live with their father in household 27, in every other case the children moved between biological or classificatory mothers and grandmothers.

As was made clear by survey respondents, and evidenced in the household genealogies elicited by the researchers, mobility of children is not an ad hoc phenomenon. Children move between specific categories of kin who are culturally recognised as legitimate carers. There were few concerns on the part of respondents in any of these cases with regard to Family Tax Benefits and Parenting Payments, because either the carers had arranged for the payments to be officially transferred to the current primary carers, or private agreements were satisfactorily in place.

A more difficult situation to address, in terms of delivery of welfare payments, is the high mobility of some children on a day-to-day or weekly basis. These include the children that 'do the rounds', as a respondent put it, but also children who regularly visit other households on a day-care basis, or for after-school care.

These care arrangements involve costs to the day-carer which are currently not being met.

**Fig. 3. Movement of Indigenous children, Kuranda, 1999 to 2000**



In such cases it may be possible to provide some assistance to people who provide care for children on a daily basis, via adjustments to the Child Care Benefit scheme. As it stands under the scheme, primary carers can get assistance with up to 20 hours of child-care costs per week. Currently, the maximum standard rate of Child Care Benefit is \$2.44 per hour if a Commonwealth approved child-care service provider is used, and \$0.41 per hour if the child-care provider is not an approved service but has registered with the Family Assistance Office (*Family Buzz* 2000:10). In addition, new flexible care options are available to people who live in rural or regional Australia in the form of assistance for in-home care. However, for registered child-care services under the Child Care Benefit scheme, the onus is on the primary carer to apply for the benefit and produce receipts from the child-care provider. The child care must also be work related. It is suggested here that the financial burden on some households, where children are regularly provided with day-care or after-school care, might be eased if new flexible care options were developed and made available to Indigenous carers under the Child Care Benefit scheme. For example, a grandmother might wish to register as an in-home carer, or carers might need to apply for the benefit directly, where parents are unable to do so. Some consideration might also be given to how

the scheme could be more widely applied to parents who are not employed, or how it could be made more widely available to people who work in the CDEP scheme.

### The welfare economy

The low levels of income implicit in the discussion of child-care issues become explicit when sources of income are considered. The results of the 2000 survey confirm the earlier findings of a high level of welfare dependence among Indigenous people in Kuranda. Table 1 presents the sources of income for the 105 adults included in the survey. It shows that over one-third of the income sources were CDEP, with most of the remaining sources being pensions and benefits received from Centrelink. Wages from mainstream employment only accounted for 6 per cent of income sources. There were some adults for whom an independent source of income was not reported.

**Table 1. Sources of income for Indigenous adults in Kuranda, 2000**

Income source	Share of total sources (%)
CDEP	36
Parenting payment	11
Newstart	6
Disability	7
Old Age Pension	4
Carers	4
Youth Allowance	1
ABSTUDY	6
Family Tax Benefit	19
Wage	6
Total (%)	100
Number of sources <sup>a</sup>	132

Notes: (a) Some people have more than one source of income, so the number of income sources exceeds the number of individuals. Some adults had no independent source of income.

The few adults in wage employment were in a range of full and part-time jobs including as cleaners, park rangers and workers at the Djabugay Cultural Park. The CDEP scheme also offered a range of opportunities including office work traineeships, cleaning at a local tourist resort, gardening and general maintenance work, working in the hardware and souvenir shop run by the CDEP organisation, and art and craft work.

In addition to the income sources reported in Table 1, another important source of income for those under 16 years was ABSTUDY payments (called Schooling A

Award for this group). There were 13 additional younger Indigenous people who qualified for these payments, which include a school term allowance and a school fees allowance. In the case of young people 16 years or older, and in full time study, the ABSTUDY payments (called Schooling B Award) are generally paid directly into the student's account (with parental approval for those under 18). The contribution of children to the domestic economy, and patterns of reciprocity between children and adults, is an important topic which requires further exploration.

## **A holistic approach to policy and practice**

We have argued, adopting a holistic approach, that child care cannot be considered in isolation from other aspects of community life. Accordingly, in both 1999 and 2000 the questionnaire covered topics of a more general nature that also impact on the care of Indigenous children. We provided the opportunity for respondents to participate in discussion and to express their views on other services that they considered necessary for the social wellbeing of young people in their families and community.

### **Services for youth**

In the 1999 wave of the survey, there were many comments made about the position of young Indigenous people in the Kuranda community, and it was decided to follow these up in 2000 with a number of specific questions on youth. Many of the respondents expressed deep concerns for the future of young people in Kuranda (see Loftus (1994) for similar results from an earlier survey on this topic). Of the 27 responses to the question: 'Have things got better or worse for young people in Kuranda since we last spoke to you?' three-quarters of respondents felt that things had got worse for young people. The reasons they cited were the lack of work and activities for youth. Also mentioned were the problems of overcrowding in houses, and rising alcohol and drug abuse among the young.<sup>15</sup>

In response to the question about services needed for young people in Kuranda, every respondent stated the need for a recreation centre or youth club with sporting facilities. Some specifically argued for a swimming pool. The need for counselling and rehabilitation services was also mentioned as a high priority by many of the respondents. Only one respondent specifically commented on the need for help in finding work.

### **The role of the CDEP scheme**

As suggested by Table 1, the CDEP scheme plays a central role in the Indigenous community in Kuranda. It offers a range of work experience for participants, from outdoor labouring to office work. It also offers training opportunities. Of the respondents who were on the CDEP scheme, 40 per cent had received some sort of training. While one respondent commented that they had done enough training, there was in general, support for more training under the CDEP scheme.

As one respondent put it: 'We need training. At the moment we are playing with whipper-snippers, that's not on.' Driving skills and literacy and numeracy were particular areas where it was felt the CDEP scheme could provide more training.

If CDEP organisations are going to be under increasing pressure to get participants into mainstream work, the Kuranda CDEP may need to receive recurrent funds for the training of participants for mainstream jobs. One existing example of success is the office traineeships undertaken in the CDEP office. These have provided a stepping stone for three people into full-time jobs in Centrelink. On the other hand, one of the respondents argued that young people should be supported to take up mainstream training opportunities, such as offered through Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions and universities, rather than being encouraged to rely on CDEP training.

In response to the question: 'What do you think about CDEP work?' the majority of respondents were positive about the program overall. In particular, people liked the flexibility of the program and the fact that it allows them to work in, and for, their own communities, accompanied by their children. However, many interviewees qualified their responses, arguing that although CDEP was good for them personally, they do not want their children, and particularly their sons, to have to rely on CDEP. One respondent said that she preferred her son to have 'a proper wage earning job'. Another noted that young people have 'too much time on their hands to waste at the pub', and that CDEP 'should be structured properly to get these extra hours' for young people so they are working more than two days a week. Yet another respondent argued that CDEP is 'OK as a start', but she preferred her children to have other jobs where they can get 'proper leave, long service leave, good pay'. She said:

CDEP is only good for certain people. People are sick of gardening, mowing. They get tired of working in their own community really. If they only work in their own community, they do not learn responsibility. They know they can play up.

She argued that working close to home is good for women with children but that CDEP should be placing young people, especially young men, 'in jobs outside the community—spread them all around Kuranda'.<sup>16</sup> One respondent said that she would like to see CDEP develop into a profit-making community business company. She wanted the CDEP scheme in Kuranda eventually to be able to sustain itself independently of ATSIC funding.

Another frustration expressed by respondents was that although many Indigenous people had done training courses of various kinds, and some had recognised qualifications from tertiary institutions, they still have to rely on CDEP work. Respondents in both the 1999 and 2000 surveys raised strong concerns about lack of access to 'mainstream' jobs in Kuranda. Some attributed this to racist stereotypes of Indigenous people among potential employers. Others said that there are just not many jobs in Kuranda. An understanding of factors



affecting Indigenous employment in Kuranda requires an analysis of wider market forces and labour force participation in general—matters beyond the scope of this paper.

### **Participation in voluntary work**

Over half of the key reference people responded positively to the question: ‘Do you do any voluntary (for free) work?’ About one-third of these respondents said that they did child-related voluntary work, for example at the school, or caring for other people’s children. Two respondents answered that they looked after elderly relatives. Over half of the respondents did voluntary work for a community organisation. In Kuranda there are at present seven different incorporated bodies servicing an Aboriginal population of less than 420.<sup>17</sup> The existence of so many incorporated bodies involves an onerous amount of work for the few Aboriginal people who have the skills, and the energy and dedication, to ensure the legislative requirements with regard to incorporated bodies are met. Moreover, people are expected to attend additional meetings called by the Native Title Representative Body in relation to native title claims, as well as endless other special working group meetings. This raises important issues for the proposed changes in the welfare system, especially the application of the principle of mutual obligation, which underpins the current government’s proposed approach to social policy reform.

### **Respondent perceptions of Centrelink service delivery**

In response to the survey question: ‘Have you heard of the new Family Tax Benefit (A/B)?’ no respondents had ever heard of it. In general, the researchers observed that many people seemed uncertain as to the kinds of welfare payments to which they were entitled.

In response to questions about the quality of Centrelink service, 54 per cent of respondents had never seen or were unaware of the availability of the services of a Centrelink project officer in Kuranda. In general people expressed satisfaction with Centrelink services in Cairns–Smithfield. Only 14 per cent of respondents thought services had deteriorated. Respondents highlighted a variety of areas that they considered could do with improvement. For example, respondents mentioned impersonal treatment from Centrelink staff, and transport problems, and expressed a preference for locally-based Indigenous personnel. Respondents in the 1999 survey had also expressed that preference.

Another concern was the provision of feedback by Centrelink to its clients. Several respondents expressed a desire for more regular feedback from Centrelink to explain their entitlements, and in particular, why they were not entitled to certain payments. One respondent raised this problem in relation to the requirement for clients to estimate yearly income. The respondent noted that it was difficult for casual workers to estimate their income and that any underestimation results in financial difficulty for families since it potentially places them in debt to Centrelink. The respondent suggested that statements be issued more regularly

so that people can check if they are being overpaid or underpaid. Another complaint concerned the complexity of the paperwork and the time-lag in the processing of entitlements. As one respondent put it: 'Centrelink makes mistakes and then overpays and then deducts down the track, which makes families suffer. People pay for Centrelink's mistakes.' More regular feedback of status could also assist with this problem.

### **Conclusions for service delivery and policy**

Improved service delivery to Indigenous communities requires a holistic understanding of the historical, social and cultural factors influencing child-care practices. This research project was developed as a response to a desire on the part of the Indigenous Policy Unit in DFACS to recognise the reality of cultural difference, and to adjust policy and service delivery to differences in family structure, household composition, and child-care practices. However, we have stressed that although cultural factors, such as connection to country and kinship relatedness, play a significant part in the explanation of Indigenous household and family forms and patterns of child care, the prevalence of multi-generational households must not be read simply as an Indigenous cultural preference. Such households are also a response to poverty and destitution, in a social situation of 'dependent development' (Hackenberg, Murphy & Selby 1984).<sup>18</sup>

A comparative analysis based on the fieldwork and surveys conducted in 1999 and 2000 has enabled the researchers to arrive at some tentative conclusions regarding the relationship between child-care arrangements and mobility in the Kuranda area. We have argued that child care is a family-centred rather than a household-centred activity and that the mobility of children is an expression of family networks.

This is not to say that households have no emic significance at all for Indigenous people. Some activities and economic arrangements are household-centred. Much remains to be discovered about the nature of these arrangements. Classification of households in terms of their changing kinship composition and size is not enough on its own to provide understanding of the relationship between patterns of mobility and child-care practices. This requires further development of the survey. However, it is recognised that a survey, even a longitudinal one, can provide only a very limited view of such practices. A fuller understanding of the complexities of the dynamics of family relations and child-care arrangements and mobility, as an expression of the salience of kinship networks in contemporary life, requires fine-grained ethnography.

### **Mutual obligation**

The research has highlighted the continuing welfare dependence of Aboriginal families and households in Kuranda and continuing high levels of unemployment. However, it has also revealed extensive participation by Indigenous people in voluntary activities and involvement in community service.

In its response to the final report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform (McClure 2000), the Government has outlined a new participation framework (Commonwealth of Australia 2000). The Kuranda case study raises the question of what activities might be recognised within this framework as ‘participation activities’ for the purposes of satisfying mutual obligation criteria. The menu could include, for example:

- activities associated with the care and education of children over 6 years of age, and in particular, 13–15 year-olds and young adults (such activities might involve the teaching of Aboriginal dance, language, and other cultural knowledge to young people);
- voluntary activities connected with membership in Indigenous and other community organisations (such as attendance at committee meetings and participation in various working parties and community action groups);
- activities involving the regular care of other people’s children;
- CDEP work (the McClure Report suggests it would satisfy mutual obligation requirements but there was no mention of it in the government response to the Report).

How the CDEP scheme might interface with the proposed mutual obligation framework is a key issue for the future of CDEP (see Altman 2001; Altman & Johnson 2000; Daly 2000; Hunter 2000; Smith 2000).

### **Welfare Service Transaction Centres and Community Agents**

On the basis of the research conducted in 1999, the research team proposed a range of targeted initiatives to improve welfare service delivery and outcomes for Indigenous families with children (Smith 2000). These included the establishment of Welfare Service Transaction Centres (WSTCs) in key regional communities. The 2000 Kuranda survey revealed that Indigenous Centrelink clients are continuing to experience a number of problems with service delivery, which could be addressed with the establishment of such a centre in Kuranda. The research team also recommends that a number of local Indigenous Centrelink agents be trained and employed part-time (initially perhaps via the CDEP scheme), and that they be based not only in Kuranda, but also in the outlying settlements.

### **A flexible package of options**

On the basis of the research undertaken in 2000, the research team has been able to reassess a recommendation from 1999 for the introduction of a ‘Kids’ Care Card’ (an initiative originally proposed by Musharbash (2000) in response to the social situation at Yuendumu). As Musharbash describes it:

The card would function as a re-useable debit card into which Centrelink would deposit the relevant welfare payments attributable to a child ... Each child would be allocated a card (but not be the authorised signatory) and that card would have a set number of ‘designated carers’ as signatories (2000: 80).

Musharbash (2001) has refined her recommendation for such a card by extending it to cover not just children, but all individuals. However, the social situation in Yuendumu is very different from that of Kuranda. The population of Yuendumu is even more mobile, and household composition even less stable. The Kids' Care Card, as Musharbash (2001) describes it, is revolutionary: it requires abandoning the family-structure-dependent payments currently in place in favour of a payment structure based simply on age-graded individual needs. The possible impact of such a proposal on Indigenous family relations in communities such as Kuranda remains to be carefully explored. In particular, the implications for Indigenous sociality, and for exacerbation of the tensions between relatedness and individual autonomy need to be considered.<sup>19</sup> At this stage of the Kuranda case study, it is clear that if payments continue to be dependent on family structure, then, at the very least, a flexible system of payment delivery is required—one which is adjusted to cultural differences in family structure and which accommodates extended family care arrangements for children.

Surveys conducted in the second year of the Kuranda case study have revealed further complexities in child-care arrangements, and these findings emphasise the need for a holistic and flexible approach to the development of proposals for more appropriate welfare service delivery oriented to children. Strategies are required to develop partnerships between Centrelink, DFACS, ATSIC, Indigenous communities, and organisations responsible for health and housing, so as to develop a means of addressing these issues as they impact upon child-care arrangements.

More effective and culturally informed delivery of child-care services also requires the development of a flexible package of options, which take into account the high value Indigenous people place not only on relatedness, but also on individual autonomy (both of these find expression in child-care arrangements and mobility patterns). Such a package should be developed and piloted in consultation with Indigenous communities and with particular care to avoid possible negative impacts. The majority of respondents in Kuranda preferred to make their own agreements regarding the financial implications of shared child-care, and such agreements are part of the cultural work associated with relatedness and family polity. Initiatives to improve welfare delivery need to be careful to avoid imposing restrictions on family and individual autonomy in these matters. The package might include a 'Kids' Care Card', adjustments to the Child Care Benefit, and the introduction of a 'Statement of Care' option available on a voluntary basis.

A Statement of Care approach to paying Family Tax Benefit and other payments for Indigenous families is currently being tested by DFACS in a number of pilot sites, with early results indicating that the supportive case management approach provides positive outcomes for some Indigenous families. In fact one of the respondents in the Kuranda survey, who is a grandmother experiencing difficulty supporting her two grandchildren on an Aged Pension, with no financial assistance from the mother of the children, herself suggested that such an approach might help alleviate her situation. However, it is suggested that

supportive case management would only be required in Kuranda for particular shared-care situations, where families seek help in conflict resolution.

The Statement of Care is based on a recognition that the care of children in Indigenous communities is a shared responsibility. In operation, it provides a means of facilitating an agreement among the various carers of a child on how Family Tax Benefit and related payments will be shared. However, as the Kuranda case study has revealed, among the carers of a child might also be people who look after the child regularly on a day-care or after-school basis, and who are often placed under financial strain as a result. How might this situation be addressed? These carers might be given financial assistance via adjustments to the Child Care Benefits scheme. They might also be included as participants in a 'Statement of Care' where such an agreement is made.

The Kids' Care Card proposal is one that is particularly amenable to packaging with a Statement of Care and Child Care Benefit. Particular parties to the Statement of Care, designated as carers, could be authorised as joint signatories for the Kids' Care Card. However, such a package needs careful piloting.

The research undertaken in Kuranda in 2000 has confirmed many of the key findings of the initial study undertaken in 1999. Families and households remain highly dependent on income support, via either CDEP or benefits and pensions. The additional year of data has enabled a comparative empirical perspective, allowing a fuller documentation of the nature of mobility among Kuranda families and children. It has also confirmed the central role played by older women in the care of children, and provides analysis that supports the need for further exploration of shared-care alternatives. The results raise important issues for future research, for example, the role of ABSTUDY in the household economy, and the implications of the principle of mutual obligation and how it might apply in practice in a community such as Kuranda.

## Notes

1. A copy of the two questionnaires used in the 2000 survey may be found on the CAEPR website at <http://www.anu.edu.au/caepr>.
2. Two key reference people were from the same household. Of the 28 households in 2000, 18 were retained from 1999 and 10 were new households. Of these ten, four were the new households of the four 1999 key reference people who had moved house.
3. See Macdonald (2000); Martin (1995); Peterson (1997); Sansom (1988); and Schwab (1995) for discussions on demand sharing in Aboriginal societies.
4. See Birdsall (1988) for an ethnographic description of such families in Western Australia.
5. These have also been referred to in the anthropological literature as 'linked households' or 'household clusters'; see O'Connell (1979) and Smith (1992: 73-4).
6. When women refer to 'own' children they refer not just to their biological children, but sometimes also to their sisters' children (ZC), their children's children (CC), or fostered children.

7. Taken from rough notes of added comments made during the survey.
8. 'Family group' as used in this paper denotes a small group of close kin consisting of a nuclear family, a single parent plus a child or children, or grandparents plus grandchildren.
9. In only four cases have the researchers been able to identify movement of small family groups out of the Kuranda area. Two of these moved to Cairns, one to Armidale, and one to Perth.
10. These statistics need to be interpreted in the light of the age of the house. In fact, many Kuranda Aboriginal people have lived at the same house site, although not in the same house, since they were removed from Mona Mona Mission in 1962. Old houses have been demolished and new ones built.
11. Henry (1999) discusses the history and politics of Indigenous housing since 1962, when Aboriginal people were removed from Mona Mona Mission to various house sites, and housing estates in and around Kuranda, which now constitute the distinctive settlements of Top Kowrowa, Bottom Kowrowa, Mantaka, and Koah (see also Finlayson 1991). Musharbash (2001) also highlights the important relationship between housing and mobility in Yuendumu.
12. Sansom (1980: 246–47, 1988: 171) describes a cultural preference, among Aboriginal people in the fringe camps of Darwin, for conjugal units to keep separate, self-supporting 'hearth-holds'.
13. The *Community Housing Infrastructure Needs Survey* (CHINS) (ABS 1999) showed the following results for the villages surrounding Kuranda. Mantaka had a usual population of 60 people living in 8 dwellings (an average of 7.5 people per dwelling). Kowrowa had a usual population of 200 people living in 14 dwellings (an average of 14.3 people per dwelling). Koah had a usual population of 22 living in 4 dwellings (an average of 5.5 people per dwelling) and Mona Mona had a usual population of 80 people living in 33 dwellings (an average of 2.4 people per dwelling). While all the dwellings in the other villages were 'permanent dwellings', only four of the dwellings at Mona Mona were permanent, the remainder being 'temporary dwellings' such as caravans, tin sheds, cabins and improvised shelters.
14. Since this is a snap-shot one-year indicator of mobility, the extent of children's mobility is likely to be much greater.
15. This particular survey question placed unreasonable expectations on the respondents to reflect upon social changes that might have occurred over only a one-year period. Although the question asked respondents to consider whether things had got worse over the past year, most respondents answered the question without reference to the specific time frame. The researchers have accordingly revised the questionnaire for 2001.
16. By 'community', the respondent is referring to the communities within the Kuranda area such as Mona Mona, Kowrowa, Mantaka, or Koah, and is not suggesting that young people be sent to work outside of the Kuranda area.
17. These are: the Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Organisation, the Buda:dji Aboriginal Development Association Aboriginal Corporation, the Ngoonbi Cooperative Housing Society Ltd, the Mona Mona Aboriginal Corporation, the Mantaka Shanty Association Aboriginal Corporation, the Kowrowa Aboriginal Corporation, and finally the KMKM Aboriginal Corporation.

18. See also Morris (1989) for an excellent study of the political economy of forms of power leading to dependency in the context of the social history of the Dhan-Gadi of northern New South Wales.
19. See Martin (1995) for a discussion of this tension, which a number of researchers have argued is typical of Aboriginal societies.

## References

- Altman, J. 2001 (forthcoming). 'Mutual Obligation, the CDEP scheme and development: Prospects in remote Australia', in F. Morphy and W.Sanders (eds), *The Indigenous Welfare Economy and the CDEP Scheme*, CAEPR Research Monograph No 20, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- and Johnson, V. 2000. 'CDEP in town and country Arnhem Land: Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 209*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 1991. *1991 Census Dictionary*, Cat no. 2901.0, ABS, Canberra.
- 1999. *Community Housing Infrastructure Needs Survey (CHINS)*, ABS, Canberra.
- Bender, D.R. 1967. 'A refinement of the concept of household: Families, co-residence and domestic functions', *American Anthropologist*, 69: 493–504.
- Birdsall, C. 1988. 'All one family', in I. Keen (ed.), *Being Black: Aboriginal Cultures in 'Settled' Australia*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.
- Carter, A.T. 1984. 'Household histories', in R.McC. Netting, R.R. Wilk and E.J. Arnould (eds), *Households: Comparative and Historical Studies of the Domestic Group*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Commonwealth of Australia 2000. *Welfare Reform: A Stronger, Fairer Australia*, DFACS, <http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/esp-booklet.htm>.
- Daly, A.E. 2000. 'The winner's curse? Indigenous Australians in the welfare system', *Australian Economic Review*, 33 (4): 349–54.
- and Smith, D.E. 1995. 'The economic status of Indigenous Australian families', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 93*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- and — 1997. 'Indigenous sole-parent families: Invisible and disadvantaged', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 134*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- and — 1998. 'The continuing disadvantage of Indigenous sole parents: A preliminary analysis of 1996 census data', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 153*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- and — 1999. 'Indigenous household demography and socioeconomic status: The policy implications of 1996 Census data', *CAEPR discussion Paper No. 181*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- and — 2000. 'Research methodology', in D.E. Smith (ed.), *Indigenous Families and the Welfare System: Two Community Case Studies*, CAEPR Research Monograph No.17, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

- Family Buzz*, Centrelink, December 2000.
- Finlayson, J.D. 1991. Don't Depend on Me: Autonomy and Independence in an Aboriginal Community in Northern Queensland, PhD thesis, ANU, Canberra.
- and Auld, A.J. 1999. 'Shoe or Stew? Balancing wants and needs in Indigenous households: A study of appropriate income support payments and policies for families', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 182*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- Finlayson, J.D., Daly, A.E. and Smith, D.E. 2000. 'The Kuranda community case study', in D.E. Smith (ed.), *Indigenous Families and the Welfare System: Two Community Case Studies*, CAEPR Research Monograph No. 17, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- Hackenberg, R., Murphy, A.D. and Selby, H. A. 1984. 'The urban household in dependent development', in R.McC. Netting, R.R. Wilk and E.J. Arnould (eds), *Households: Comparative and Historical Studies of the Domestic Group*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Helliwell, C. 1990. The Ricefield and the Hearth: Social Relations in a Borneo Dayak Community, PhD thesis, ANU, Canberra.
- Henry, R. 1999. Practising Place, Performing Memory: Identity Politics in an Australian Town, the 'Village in the Rainforest', PhD thesis, JCU, Townsville, Qld.
- Hunter, B.H. 2000. 'Social exclusion, social capital, and Indigenous Australians: Measuring the social costs of unemployment', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 204*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- and Smith, D.E. 2000. 'Surveying mobile populations: Lessons from recent longitudinal surveys of Indigenous Australians', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 203*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- Loftus, K. 1994. Kuranda and District Youth Needs Study, Batchelor of Community Welfare Honours thesis, JCU, Cairns, Qld.
- Macdonald, G. 2000. 'An economy out of kilter: Demand sharing among the Wiradjuri', seminar paper presented at the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, ANU, October 2000.
- Marsh, C. and Arber, S. 1992. *Families and Households: Divisions and Change*, Macmillan, London.
- Martin, D.F. 1993. Autonomy and Relatedness: An Ethnography of Aurukun, Western Cape York Peninsula, PhD thesis, ANU, Canberra.
- 1995. 'Money Business and culture: Issues for Aboriginal economic policy', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 101*, CAEPR, Canberra.
- and Taylor, J. 1995. 'Enumerating the Aboriginal population of remote Australia: Methodological and conceptual issues', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 91*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- McClure, P. (Chairman) 2000. Participation Support for a More Equitable Society: Final Report of the Reference Group on Welfare Reform, July 2000, DFACS, Canberra.
- Morris, B. 1989. *Domesticating Resistance: The Dhan-Gadi Aborigines and the Australian State*, Berg, Oxford.



- Netting, R.McC, Wilk, R.R. and Arnould, E.J. (eds) 1984. *Households: Comparative and Historical Studies of the Domestic Group*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Musharbash, Y. 2000. 'The Yuendumu community case study', in D.E. Smith (ed.), *Indigenous Families and the Welfare System: Two Community Case Studies*, CAEPR Research Monograph No. 17, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- 2001. 'Indigenous families and the welfare system: The Yuendumu community case study, Stage Two', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 217*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- O'Connell, J.F. 1979. 'Room to move: Contemporary Alyawarra settlement patterns and their implications for Aboriginal housing policy', in M. Heppell (ed.), *A Black Reality: Aboriginal Camps and Housing in Remote Australia*, AIAS, Canberra.
- Peterson, N. 1997. 'Demand sharing: Sociobiology and the pressure for generosity among foragers?' in F. Merlan, J. Morton and A. Rumsey (eds), *Scholar and Sceptic: Australian Aboriginal Studies in Honour of L.R. Hiatt*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.
- Rowse, T. 1998. *White Flour, White Power: From Rations to Citizenship in Central Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Sansom, B. 1980. *The Camp at Wallaby Cross: Aboriginal Fringe Dwellers in Darwin*, AIAS, Canberra.
- 1988. 'A grammar of exchange', in I. Keen (ed.), *Being Black: Aboriginal Cultures in 'Settled' Australia*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.
- Schwab, R.G. 1995. 'The calculus of reciprocity: Principles and implications of Aboriginal sharing', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 100*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- Smith, D.E. 1992. 'The cultural appropriateness of existing survey questions and concepts', in J.C. Altman (ed.), *A National Survey of Indigenous Australians: Options and Implications*, CAEPR Research Monograph No. 3, CAEPR, Canberra.
- (ed.) 2000. *Indigenous Families and the Welfare System: Two Community Case Studies*, CAEPR Research Monograph No. 17, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- and Daly, A.E. 1996. 'The economic status of Indigenous Australian households: A statistical and ethnographic analysis', *CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 109*, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.
- Sutton, P. 1998. 'Families of polity: Post-classical Aboriginal society and native title', in National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT), *Native Title and the Descent of Rights*, NNTT, Perth.
- Wilk, R.R. 1984. 'Households in process: Agricultural change and domestic transformation among the Kekchi Maya of Belize', in R.McC. Netting, R.R. Wilk and E.J. Arnould (eds), *Households: Comparative and Historical Studies of the Domestic Group*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- and Netting, R.McC. 1984. 'Households: Changing forms and functions', in R.McC. Netting, R.R. Wilk and E.J. Arnould (eds), *Households: Comparative and Historical Studies of the Domestic Group*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Yanagisako, S.J. 1979. 'Family and household: The analysis of domestic groups', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 8: 161–205.



## **Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research Publications**

**For information on earlier CAEPR Discussion Papers and Research Monographs please contact:**

Publication Sale, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, 0200, Telephone: 02-6125 8211, Facsimile: 02-6125 2789. Information on CAEPR, abstracts or summaries of all CAEPR print publications and those published electronically, can be found at the following WWW address: <http://online.anu.edu.au/caepr/>

### **MONOGRAPH SERIES**

4. *Indigenous Australians in the Economy: Abstracts of Research, 1991-92*, L.M. Roach and K.A. Probst, 1993.
5. *The Relative Economic Status of Indigenous Australians, 1986-91*, J. Taylor, 1993.
6. *Regional Change in the Economic Status of Indigenous Australians, 1986-91*, J. Taylor, 1993.
7. *Mabo and Native Title: Origins and Institutional Implications*, W. Sanders (ed.), 1994.
8. *The Housing Need of Indigenous Australians, 1991*, R. Jones, 1994.
9. *Indigenous Australians in the Economy: Abstracts of Research, 1993-94*, L.M. Roach and H.J. Bek, 1995.
10. *Native Title: Emerging Issues for Research, Policy and Practice*, J. Finlayson and D.E. Smith (eds), 1995.
11. *The 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey: Findings and Future Prospects*, J.C. Altman and J. Taylor (eds), 1996.
12. *Fighting Over Country: Anthropological Perspectives*, D.E. Smith and J.D. Finlayson (eds), 1997.
13. *Connections in Native Title: Genealogies, Kinship and Groups*, J.D. Finlayson, B. Rigsby and H.J. Bek (eds), 1999.
14. *Land Rights at Risk? Evaluations of the Reeves Report*, J.C. Altman, F. Morphy and T. Rowse (eds), 1999.
15. *Unemployment Payments, the Activity Test and Indigenous Australians: Understanding Breach Rates*, W. Sanders, 1999.
16. *Why Only One in Three? The Complex Reasons for Low Indigenous School Retention*, R.G. Schwab, 1999.
17. *Indigenous Families and the Welfare System: Two Community Case Studies*, D.E. Smith (ed.), 1999.
18. *Ngukurr at the Millennium: A Baseline Profile for Social Impact Planning in South East Arnhem Land*, J. Taylor, J. Bern and K.A. Senior, 2000.
19. *Aboriginal Nutrition and the Nyirranggulung Health Strategy in Jawoyn Country*, J. Taylor and N. Westbury, 2000.

## **RECENT DISCUSSION PAPER SERIES**

- 189/1999**      *Changing places: Indigenous population movement in the 1990s*, J. Taylor and M. Bell.
- 190/1999**      *Career, aspirations and the meaning of work in remote Australia: Torres Strait*, W.S. Arthur.
- 191/1999**      *The allocation and management of royalties under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act: Options for reform*, J.C. Altman and R.I. Levitus.
- 192/1999**      *Regionalisation of Northern Territory land councils*, R.I. Levitus, D.F. Martin and D.P. Pollack.
- 193/2000**      *The economic status of Indigenous Australians*, J.C. Altman.
- 194/2000**      *Transformations of the Indigenous population: Recent and future trends*, J. Taylor.
- 195/2000**      *The effects of the CDEP scheme on the economic status of Indigenous Australians: Some analyses using the 1996 Census*, J.C. Altman and M.C. Gray.
- 196/2000**      *Towards an index of relative Indigenous socioeconomic disadvantage*, M.C. Gray and A.J. Auld.
- 197/2000**      *Estimating Indigenous housing need for public funding allocation: A multi-measure approach*, M. Neutze, W. Sanders and R. Jones.
- 198/2000**      *Participation and representation in ATSI elections: A ten-year perspective*, W. Sanders, J. Taylor and K. Ross.
- 199/2000**      *Location and socioeconomic status: Torres Strait Islanders, 1996*, W.S. Arthur.
- 200/2000**      *Industrial relations in workplaces employing Indigenous Australians*, B.H. Hunter and A.E. Hawke.
- 201/2000**      *A comparative analysis of the industrial relations experiences of Indigenous and other Australian workers*, B.H. Hunter and A.E. Hawke.
- 202/2000**      *The reform agenda for vocational education and training: Implications for Indigenous Australians*, S. Campbell.
- 203/2000**      *Surveying mobile populations: Lessons from recent longitudinal surveys of Indigenous Australians*, B.H. Hunter and D.E. Smith.
- 204/2000**      *Social exclusion, social capital, and Indigenous Australians: Measuring the social costs of unemployment*, B.H. Hunter.
- 205/2000**      *Job-searching and careers: Young Torres Strait Islanders, 1999*, W.S. Arthur and J. David-Petero.
- 206/2000**      *Career aspirations and orientation to work: Young Torres Strait Islanders, 1999*, W.S. Arthur and J. David-Petero.
- 207/2000**      *Education, training and careers: Young Torres Strait Islanders, 1999*, W.S. Arthur and J. David-Petero.

- 208/2000** *A case study of the Bungala CDEP: Economic and social impacts*, M.C. Gray and E. Thacker.
- 209/2000** *The CDEP in town and country Arnhem Land: Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation*, J.C. Altman and V. Johnson.
- 210/2000** *'If it wasn't for CDEP': A case study of Worn Gundidj CDEP, Victoria*, R. Madden.
- 211/2001** *Anangu population dynamics and future growth in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park*, J. Taylor.
- 212/2001** *Indigenous Australians and the rules of the social security system: Universalism, appropriateness and justice*, W. Sanders.
- 213/2001** *Is welfare dependency 'welfare poison'? An assessment of Noel Pearson's proposals for Aboriginal welfare reform*, D.F. Martin.
- 214/2001** *Indigenous data from the ABS Labour Force Survey: What can they tell us?* J. Taylor and B.H. Hunter.
- 215/2001** *Autonomy rights in Torres Strait: From whom, for whom, for or over what?* W.G. Sanders and W.S. Arthur.
- 216/2001** *Indigenous families and the welfare system: The Kuranda community case study, Stage Two*, R. Henry and A. Daly.

#### **WORKING PAPER SERIES**

Available at no cost on WWW at <http://online.anu.edu.au/caepr/>

- 1/1999** *Three nations, not one: Indigenous and other Australian poverty*, B.H. Hunter.
- 2/1999** *Further investigations into Indigenous labour supply: What discourages discouraged workers?* B.H. Hunter and M.C. Gray.
- 3/1999** *Dealing with alcohol in Alice Springs: An assessment of policy options and recommendations for action*, M. Brady and D.F. Martin.
- 4/1999** *Aboriginal people in the Kakadu region: Social indicators for impact assessment*, J. Taylor.
- 5/1999** *Reforming the Northern Territory Land Rights Act's financial framework into a more logical and more workable model*, J.C. Altman and D.P. Pollack.
- 6/2000** *Governance and service delivery for remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory: Challenges and opportunities*, N. Westbury and W. Sanders.
- 7/2000** *What's in it for Koories? Barwon Darling Alliance Credit Union and the delivery of financial and banking services in north-west New South Wales*, N. Westbury.
- 8/2000** *The relative social and economic status of Indigenous people in Bourke, Brewarrina and Walgett*, K. Ross and J. Taylor.